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# EXHORTATION ON THE PREFACE OF THE SUMMARY.

"Although it is the supreme wisdom and goodness of God, our Creator and Lord, that is to conserve, govern, and promote in his holy service this least Society of Jesus, as it has vouchsafed to begin the same," &c.

Our holy Father declares the same in this first Rule or rather the preface of the Summary, that God, and not he, was the author or first beginner of our least Society; and hence draws this conclusion, which he establishes as a certain principle, that it is the same infinite wisdom and goodness of God, our Creator and Lord, on which we are chiefly to rely for the preservation, government, and advancement of our least Society.

We must, then, as dutiful and loving children of so holy a mother, be tenderly affected towards the Society; we must earnestly desire and often pray for the preservation of it, that as it is increased in the number of its members, and is now spread over all the world, so it may still continue to be governed by the same spirit and principle it was established on at first, and may still become more and more perfect in all virtues, and more and more exact and zealous in the service of God; that so by its means his divine majesty



may be daily more glorified, and we ourselves more rejoiced and encouraged to labour hard in the service of God, according to our Rules and Constitutions. May God never have reason to complain of the Society, for having spread itself over all the world, and increased exceedingly in the number of its children, of having failed of rendering him that service, honour, and glory, and consequently joy, which he received from the zealous endeavours and apostolical labours of our first fathers. God forbid his divine majesty should have any subject of making this complaint, or rather reproach. At the same time, as it is his own infinite wisdom and goodness that is to preserve and perfect the work he has begun, so in this exhortation we will consider what reasons we have to hope for this blessing. But before I enter upon the task I propose, it will not be amiss to consider how necessary it is to be careful in making use of proper and efficacious means to preserve the Society in its first fervour and zeal. Some few reflections will make us sensible of this necessity.

First, then, nothing is more changeable and inconstant than man, says holy Job; he is never long of the same mind; his desires are generally governed by his passions; and these change as often as different objects present themselves before the eyes; for nothing in the world being able to satisfy his mind, he lothes the satisfaction he coveted before, and flies eagerly at the next that presents itself. If he is so inconstant in things agreeable and delightful to sense, much more easily is he carried off

from such things as are disagreeable and repugnant to it; yet virtue is generally so; therefore, without serious reflection, strong resolutions, and earnest endeavours, it is impossible to persevere long in the practice and exercise of a virtuous life. One that would roll a great stone up a high mountain, must not only have sufficient strength, but must continually keep his eye and hand upon his work; for the stone that is not continually forced up, will roll presently down to the very bottom. In the same manner, when one rows against a strong stream, one must never cease to row, if he has no mind to be carried down; and if we have no mind to relent in God's service, it is necessary for us to have a constant watch upon ourselves, and never cease struggling with our evil inclinations, and making diligent use of the means to support and maintain ourselves. Much more, if we reflect that, in a spiritual life, besides the intrinsic hindrances we have from the corruption of sin, the blindness of our understanding, the malice of our will, the disorder of concupiscence, and the violence of <sup>our</sup> passions, we have many enemies to struggle with, as unlawful objects of our senses, false friends, deceitful and crafty enemies, the allurements of the world, and suggestions of the devil. This renders it so very hard for single people to preserve themselves in fervour, and to remain content in the service of God; this obliges them to have a continual guard over their senses, to call often their thoughts, words, and actions to a strict examination, to betake themselves to prayer, to make use of penances, and, in fine, all other means, in order to pre-

serve themselves from going back in the service of God, relenting in the way of virtue, and falling into sin. Daily experience of our frequent falling into faults we so often propose and resolve to correct, shows sufficiently how frail we are, and how necessary it is to be always beginning, saying with the Royal Psalmist: *"Dixi nunc cœpi."*

But if it is so necessary for every particular person to be so much upon his guard, and so diligent in using proper and efficacious means to preserve fervour, how much more does a great body of men, composed of so many different tempers, of so many different nations. If for example, a religious order requires this diligence to preserve itself in the primitive fervour of its first institution, how much more does our least Society require this, which, conformably to its Institute, exposes its subjects to many dangers, other religious orders are defended from by their monastic and retired way of living in their own convents or monasteries, without any communication with people of the world.

Our Constitutions oblige us to treat and converse with seculars of all conditions and humours. In order to give all to God, we must be ready upon a summons to quit any employment or place, to spend our lives in the service of our neighbour, to live in any country, even of barbarians and infidels, who, being deprived of the light of faith and destitute of the first principles of virtue, live like beasts, and commit the greatest abominations publicly and without shame or fear.



. It is in these and such like missions we are called by God to live, whenever our superiors shall so appoint; and it is very plain how dangerous such conversations are, without a strict guard over ourselves, and a serious and constant use of all proper means to prevent our being corrupted by it; and as the preservation and progress of the whole Society depends very much on the religious behaviour of particulars; so every one is obliged to contribute all he can to the common good and preservation of the whole. But then, as we are but poor, frail creatures of ourselves, and in every respect poor and unprofitable servants, our holy father recommends the preservation, government, and increase of our Society to the protection of God, and from his being the author of it, proposes to us a motive of entire confidence in his infinite wisdom and goodness.

. As we find by experience that people have a particular care and concern for such things as belong to them, so God will always have a particular care of the Society, since he was the author of it. "*Ut eam dignatus, est inchoare.*" We may truly say that our Society is the work of God's own hands. He inspired the first model of it to our founder; he brought it forth into the world by moving his vicar upon earth to approve and confirm it; he has given it the name of his own society; and the whole design and scope of it is, the imitation of Christ, by cooperating with him in the salvation and sanctification of souls.

Gods conduct and behaviour to the children of Israel may help very much to raise and confirm our confidence in God; for, all the wonders he wrought

in favour of them,—that extraordinary, nay, miraculous, care he took of them, was all because they were his people, and he their God. "*Vos eritis populus meus at ego ero Deus vester*." As they were his chosen people, he loved to be with them, and he therefore commanded Moses to make for them a sanctuary or tabernacle to dwell in.

Nothing is more astonishing than the protection he gave them during their long pilgrimage to the Land of Promise. He conducted them through the desert by a cloud in the day and a pillar of fire in the night, which continually marched before them. He divided the Red Sea to make a passage for them, the waters standing like the walls of a solid substance whilst they passed, and returned to their natural fluidity to swallow up Pharaoh and the Egyptians who pursued them.

Though that rebellious and stiff-headed people often murmured against Moses, yet, because they were his people, he did not cease to work miracles for their relief and preservation. Thus, he made a dry rock yield plentiful streams of water to quench their thirst, the heavens to rain down manna to serve for their nourishment. He made the Sun stand to give time to Joshua to complete his victory, and ranged the stars in battle array to fight the battles of Israel, according to these words of holy writ: "*De caelo dominatum, et contra eos stella morentes incurso et in ordine suo contra sisaram pugnauerunt*." It was fought against them in heaven. The stars, remaining in their course and in their order, fought against Sisaro; so that 40,000 unarmed men, without either buckler or spear, vanquished numerous armies

of their enemies, and took their towns from them. "*No-  
ra bella cecit Dominus,*" &c.

God's love and goodness for his people extends itself so far as to provide and take care that neither their clothes nor even their shoes should wear out and decay. On the contrary, they grew with them and served for forty years, during their pilgrimage through the desert.

What confidence may we draw hence in the divine providence in regard of the Society, which for so many reasons may very justly be called his; for it was he who first began it; it is he, who has protected it and preserved it; it is he, in fine, who, through his great mercy, called us out of the world, and united us to it. Nor does he yet cease to heap continually new favours on us, protecting us from all our enemies, feeding and supporting us with the heavenly food of holy instructions, and directing and leading us by the secure way of holy obedience to the perfection of our state and to an everlasting reward of all our labours in the next.

The passage I have now mentioned is not the first we have in holy Scripture of God's great love and extraordinary care and providence in regard of such as he particularly calls to his holy service and chooses for his own. Having made choice of Abraham to be a patriarch and common father of all true believers, and called him to a state of great perfection, according to these words, "*Ambula coram me est esto perfectus,*" he commanded him to leave his country, parents, friends, and relations, and to go into a foreign land that he would show him.

Abraham obeyed the call, notwithstanding all ties of flesh and blood, all repugnances of nature, all difficult



ties and objections that opposed his complying with his vocation. God was so well pleased with his fidelity and prompt obedience, that he appeared to him, and bade him not to fear, assuring him that he would protect him in this life and be his reward in the life to come. And accordingly, Divine Providence had so great a care of Abraham and of his children after him, and showed so great a love for them, that afterwards he would be called their God, as if other people did not belong to him. So when he spoke to Moses from the burning bush, he called himself: *Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, Deus Jacob.*"

God, by calling us to the Society, has commanded us to quit all we had in the world for his sake in order to serve him with greater perfection in this life. We have, with the assistance of his holy grace, obeyed his call; we have effectually left our country, our parents, our friends, our all, to serve him. We have, then, just reasons to hope that, according to his constant practice and infinite goodness, he will take us his particular protection, as he took Abraham. He will protect, govern, and promote this least Society. "*Ut eam dignatus est inchoare.*"

The Royal Prophet, in the Psalms, tells God that the poor are left to his care and fatherly providence, and that he is to be the helper or protector of the orphan; and if this be true in respect of all poor and orphans, even more may religious people rely on his holy providence, who are voluntarily become poor and orphans for love of him—that is, in obedience to his call, the better to attend to his service, to imitate more per-

fectly the example of poverty he has left us. We have become orphans by quitting our parents for his sake; we have renounced them for a common Father, who is in heaven. We have voluntarily deprived ourselves of any support from earthly friends; we have preferred the protection of our heavenly Father before theirs; we have thrown ourselves with a generous confidence in to his arms; we have abandoned ourselves to him; therefore his goodness cannot possibly fail us. "*Læta super dominum curam tuam et ipse se committet.*"

Again, the Royal Prophet says, that our Lord has a particular care of strangers; we in a like manner, have a title to his protection and providence on this account, even a greater than most other religious have. We have first quitted all right to our father's house in the world: we have no fixed habitation on earth, not even the house or college where we made our profession, as most other religious have, therefore are called *Filii Monasterii*. We have no right, by our vows, to be in any particular house or college, but may be sent to any part of the world, where our superiors think best for our spiritual good, the service and glory of God; nay, the professed fathers are obliged to a fourth vow to obey the Pope, and thus promptly and without reply, or even demanding a viaticum, should he order us to go into missions, though in the remotest parts of the earth; so that none can pretend to a more perfect imitation of our blessed Saviour than what the Society practises; for, as he had no certain home to rest in, so we have no home, having no right to any house or college of the Society, being at the dispo-







sal of our superiors to be sent to any place. We make then profession in a particular, <sup>manner</sup> of being only strangers and pilgrims, ~~upon earth~~; we have ~~no habitation~~ in this world; the only house we can pretend to is heaven.

It, then, divine providence has so great a care of common strangers and pilgrims, how much more may we hope for its protection and care? We, may, no doubt, with great confidence, rely on his faithful providence; we may assure ourselves of his divine protection, not only in regard of ourselves in particular, but of the whole Society in general. He promised our holy father to be propitious to it at Rome, "*Ego totis foveam propitiuss ero*;" and by evident experience we find that, from home, as from the source, his divine protection has been derived to the whole Society in the different countries and kingdoms it is established in over all the world. The same divine goodness and wisdom that first established it, having often in a visible, I may say in a miraculous manner, hindered our being oppressed and crushed by our enemies - nay, turned the very weapons they used against it, against them, and made the same enemies that they used to overthrow us, serve for our firmer establishment and increase. So truly may we say with St. Paul: God is faithful, by whom you are called to the Society of his Son Jesus Christ.

That we may deserve a continuance of those blessings divine goodness has so bountifully showered down on our Society, let us also be faithful to God, as Abraham was, walking on in his sight with great perfection; that he may continue to be our Father, we can not but behave ourselves to him as dutiful and loving

children, fearing to give him the least displeasure, by our irregularity, and endeavouring with great fervour to promote his honour and glory, first in ourselves, by an exact observance of our holy Rules; afterwards in others, by fervent prayer and apostolical labours. In this manner we shall continue to be his people, his Society, the companions of Jesus, and he will continue to be our God, our protector, and our reward. "*Ego ero protector, tuus et merces tua magna nimis.*"

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## Second Exhortation on the Preface.

"Though on our side the internal <sup>law</sup> of charity and love, which the Holy Ghost is wont <sup>to</sup> write and imprint on our hearts, will help more to the preservation of the Society than any Constitutionss," &c.

The first means to conserve the Society, as I told you in the last exhortation, and which is set down here by our holy father, is the protection of that infinite wisdom and goodness ~~that~~ that first began it; the second is, the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Ghost is accustomed to write and imprint on our hearts; and this very justly required of us, for it is not only fitting, but absolutely necessary, that we should correspond with God, and be as zealous for the preservation, welfare, and happiness of our Society, as we are desirous of God's love, care, and protection of

it. All we can do for the preservation of the Society will signify nothing without God's concurrence, and God will do nothing for us without our cooperation with him. It is only God who can give a blessing to our endeavours, but it belongs to us to bring forth fruit.

Our hope and confidence in the protection of God is grounded on his being chief author of our Society, and his having chosen us to be his people. Wherefore, to render this motive more solid and firm, we must take care to be his chosen people, by owning him, not only exteriorly, but from our hearts, not only in words, but in deeds also, to be our sovereign Lord and Father, and this by the interior law of charity and love, which we must endeavour to procure with fervour and diligence.

To deserve the name of God's servants and being his chosen people, it is not enough to wear the habit, to have a religious exterior comportment, to obey, to observe our Rules, to perform our devotions and penances either out of custom or merely to maintain a good name and an exterior decorum in our way of living; all this must proceed from the interior law of charity and love. Wherefore for your entertainment to-day, I will first speak of the nature of this law; then of the height and importance of it. As to the nature, our holy Father means in this place by the law of charity and love, an ardent desire of our own perfection, thereby to render ourselves more pleasing and acceptable to God; a great zeal to promote the honour, glory, and service of his divine majesty, as much as, with the assistance of his divine grace, we can; consequently it consists in a most inflamed love of God. This ardent love of God



may well be called an interior law ; because it is lodged within our breast, and powerfully binds and obliges us to desire earnestly and pursue with fervour our own perfection, and the honour and glory of God.

This law of charity when once it has taken possession of our hearts, commands all the exterior and interior powers of our soul ; it commands and rules our five senses ; it shuts our eyes to all the alluring vanities of the world, and much more to all dangerous or unlawful objects ; it puts a strict guard over the tongue, and only lets it loose to utter the perfections and praises of God ; the mouth speaks of what the heart is full ; when it is replenished with the love of God, it either speaks of nothing but God, or draws all it says to the praise and honour of God. It sets our hands and feet at work ; for he who truly loves God, will neglect no opportunity of testifying his love for him ; he is ready for any work of piety and charity ; for any humble or painful employments ; he goes readily wherever he is ordered ; no order of superiors seem hard to him. *Amor meus portat meum*, says St. Austin ; for the weight and force of love carries him on with ease and pleasure through all difficulties ; for, ~~as the same saint says, that~~ love disposes the body to suffer any pain for God's sake, nay, death itself, for animated with this inflamed love of God, what have the blessed saints undergone and suffered for God's sake, and this not only constantly and courageously, but with joy and pleasure.

This same divine love commands the interior powers or faculties of the soul ; for one who is inflamed with divine love employs his memory in thinking of God, exercises his understanding in holy meditations of *him*, and his will,

in producing devout affections and generous resolutions of serving and suffering for him. This is the <sup>law of</sup> charity and love which the holy Ghost is wont to write and imprint on the hearts of his faithful servants. It is first written then printed: written in beginners, printed in the perfect.

For the better understanding of this, you are to observe the difference between writing and printing. The writing of a sheet of paper is a long work; for one must train one letter after another. From a letter one goes to a syllable; from a syllable to a word; from a word to a period; from a period to a page. Besides written characters are generally unequal; often crooked and accompanied with blots.

In the same manner, in beginners, the Holy Ghost writes this interior law with great difficulty, at least with many imperfections, according to the proportion of their dispositions. Their love of God is imperfect, their desires are weak; bad habits make the practice of virtue hard, the executing of good purposes difficult. In fine, their best actions are full of many imperfections, and it is only step by step, or, in other terms, letter and letter, that these divine characters of the law of charity are written in the hearts of beginners; whereas in the perfect one turn of the press, their hearts being thoroughly purged of terrene affections, and their souls duly prepared by the practice of all solid virtues, a whole sheet is printed at once in fair and well proportioned letters, or, in other terms, fills their hearts with so pure love and ardent affections, the will with so enflamed and solid desires of serving and pleasing God still more and more, that it renders the observance of religious discipline easy, all labour, pain, and suffering, for the glory of God, most agreeable and sweet.

It is this that carries them on to the exact performance of all religious duties, to the exercise of all good works, to undertake great and heroic enterprises for the service of God, not only courageously, but cheerfully, with constancy and zeal.

It was this law of charity and love, this constant desire of perfection, this burning zeal for the glory of God, that animated our holy founder and the first fathers and pillars of our Society. They had no other rule for some years to direct themselves by, and needed no other spur to push them on in their apostolical labours and enterprises. The zeal they had for their perfection and God's glory set them all on fire, and shone forth with such splendour as astonished the world.

During the time our holy father was writing our Constitutions, our first fathers had no other rule to direct themselves by than this interior law of charity and love; and yet how happily and with what edification and benefit to others did our holy father in Europe, and St. Xavierius in the Indies, govern the Society at that time! How perfectly did these two great saints, at so vast a distance, agree in all their sentiments and methods of government! What abundance of good did they and their subjects do! What edification did they give, and how much did the Society increase and flourish by it in all places.

It is, then, with great reason that our holy father in this place relies more upon this interior law than upon any written constitutions; and it is, no doubt, upon this account that, in so many places of them, he puts us in mind of the greater glory of God, of the service,

praise, worship, and love of our Creator and Lord; and no doubt, as our hearts are replenished with an ardent zeal for those, the Society will flourish; the moment we fail in this, the Society will fall to decay. The best rules and constitutions in the world, all the prudence, care, and vigilance of superiors, will not be able to prevent.

This was the foundation on which our Society was built, and therefore without it, it cannot stand, External rules, penances, reprehensions, and the like, may support an exterior decorum or a laudable form of government; but, without this interior law, all is no more than whitened walls; they cannot support the interior government which renders a religious life so pleasing to God, so useful to man, so beneficial to the Church. I may say more, that, without a sincere desire and zeal to please God and perfect our vows, we shall never be able to withstand the assaults of our ghostly enemies, and hold out against them, let our external Constitutions and Rules be ever so good, for, whilst there is a slothful and tepid heart within, no external means or helps can secure our souls.

Let a town have ever so good walls, ramparts, and bastions; let the garrison within be ever so well armed; if they have not courage and resolution enough to defend themselves, the town will fall a prey to the enemy.

It is this interior law of charity and love that must animate us against our passions, enable us to overcome temptations, and give us victory over all our ghostly enemies.

Our holy father, then, recommends this to us throughout all his Constitutions, and this, as he declares in the sixth part of the Institute, was the reason he would



not have our Rules to oblige under sin, He would not have us act as slaves, but as children—that is, with affectional, not servile fear, or rather by a principle of duty, love, and reverence, to our heavenly father. In this manner he would have us act; with this spirit he would have us keep our Rules, apply ourselves to ~~ourselves~~ to our studies, and perform all duties and functions of the Society; being fully persuaded that this would contribute more effectually to the conservation of our order, to the perfect sanctification of particulars, than any written Constitutions or Rules.

From what has been said, we may easily gather how beneficial, and of what importance this interior law of charity and love is to the Society. With it there is no absolute need of a Rule or written Constitution, because it effectually supplies the want of all exterior means or helps; without it, no exterior means, no Rules, no care of Superiors, no ordination, no exhortations or directors, or reprehensions or penances, will signify any thing; they will not be sufficient to preserve the spirit of the Society, or render us truly virtuous.

The reason is, because, as St<sup>t</sup> Paul says, “*Vinculum perfectionis*,” the knot of perfection, the most sure and excellent way of attaining all virtues.

All virtues meet and center in charity; it nourishes them afterwards and brings them to perfection; for, as Saint Gregory says, no branch of good works has any greenness or flourishing freshness, unless it remains in the root of charity. Without charity, all virtues decay and wither as the branch that is severed from the vine; they become dry, and are good for nothing, neither pleasing to God, or beneficial to man.

Hence, it plainly appears how necessary it is to procure with all diligence and endeavours this holy love of God our Creator and Lord; first, by humble and fervent prayer, beseeching the divine goodness to impart it to us. Second, by endeavouring to walk always in the presence of God, or having him always before our eyes, in whatever employment or business we are about. Third, By exercising ourselves frequently in fervent acts of the love of God, in ardent desires of pleasing his divine majesty, of advancing your own perfection, his honor and glory in yourselves and others. Fourth, In actually mortifying your senses, conquering your passions, resisting evil inclinations, and omitting no opportunity or occasion of exercising yourselves in good works, according to our holy Rule and Institute; and this with a pure intention and a sincere desire of pleasing the divine majesty in every thing more and more.

Virtue is never sooner learned than by the exercise and practice of it; for, good habits are soonest got by multiplication of acts, especially when they are sincere and solid; for God is wonderfully pleased with our good desires, and never fails to communicate his favours in great abundance to a well disposed soul. Wherefore let us often examine ourselves in this point, and consider the motives we govern ourselves by. A serious reflection upon our interior comportment will easily discover the interior state of our souls, and the motives which influences most of our actions.

The rule St. Bernard proposes for this purpose is,

to observe what we love and what we fear most, what it is that gives us most joy, and what afflicts us. If we sincerely and truly love God, we shall love such things, means, and helps as unite us most to God, and we shall rejoice when they offer themselves, or are ordered by superiors. We shall, for example, not only embrace willingly, but joyfully, humiliations, contradictions, corrections, and penances. We shall be glad when times come of extraordinary devotion and retirement.

If on the contrary, we are in fear of a penance when we have failed in our duty, are disgusted when we meet with a humiliation, repine at a mortification given by our superiors, are angry or resent a contradiction from an equal, are sad and melancholy when times come for extraordinary recollection, it is a certain mark that our desire of perfection is not great, that the interior law of charity is not well imprinted on the heart.

If again, you find by experience that you are more upon your guard in public than you are in your chamber, more recollected and devout when you are abroad than when you are at home by yourselves, if you are more intent upon external mortifications and penances, which are seen by others, than you are upon mortifying your passions and the irregular motion of your mind, you have great reason to fear that your intention of pleasing God is not so sincere and pure as it ought to be. This interior law of charity or ~~charity~~ love is not deeply imprinted in your heart; it seems only written in very

imperfect and fading characters; so that if great care is not taken of it in time, it will have little or no effect upon your actions.

Therefore, let us examine ourselves well on this matter; let us procure with all our endeavours a most sincere love of God. Let it direct you in all your doubts, encourage and help you in all your undertakings, till it bring you to the highest perfection our Institute and Rules aim at; which God of his infinite goodness grant.

Amen.



## THIRD EXHORTATION.

“BUT because the sweet disposition of divine providence requires the coöperation of his creature, we think it necessary that Constitutions should be written. The third means to preserve the Society is a written Rule, which, though much inferior in perfection to the interior law of charity and love, is, notwithstanding, necessary to the government of the Society.”

Our holy father in this place mentions four reasons for making use of this external means of written Constitutions and Rules. That you may better conceive the strength of these reasons, I take them for the subject of your entertainment to-day.

The first reason our holy father sets down for writing his Constitutions and Rules, was, because the sweet disposition of Providence requires our coöperation with him; for, though God was pleased by himself alone to create us, without any coöperation on our side, he will not, as Saint Austin observes very well, save us, unless we coöperate and contribute something to our own salvation.

In the creation, especially in regard of necessary causes, God manifests chiefly his power. In regard of man, who is endowed with free will, he shows likewise his infinite goodness and sweetness in his providence. Hence, the Wise Man, speaking of the providence of God, says that it reaches from end to end, disposing all things efficaciously, yet sweetly.

In every thing that God does in regard of man, he proposes to himself these two ends—his own glory and our salvation and perfection. Of the first he never fails, because with a strong arm he procures it, in spite of all opposition made by the malice of creatures. He fails sometimes in the other, because it is more for his own glory to use sweetness than force, in procuring the salvation and perfection of men.

As he has endowed us with free will, he will not force a consent from us. He chooses rather to want our service, nay, to suffer injuries and slights from us, than to have it against our will. He will not be served by men as he is by other creatures.

They of necessity do what they were created for ; they never oppose the will of God, but merit nothing by fulfilling it. *Men* often rebel against his orders, resist obstinately his holy grace, and thereby merit a reward when they comply with it, and obey.

Notwithstanding this freedom and liberty of our will, God has an absolute and most perfect dominion over the hearts of men. There is no act of virtue, no good resolution or consent, he cannot procure from us by means of his efficacious graces. Without destroying our liberty, he can persuade our understanding, and efficaciously move our will to coöperate with him, and to do infallibly whatever he requires of us ; and this he effectually does as often as we do any thing that is holy and good. He can, if he pleases, effect this by unusual ways, as he did the conversion of Saint Paul, by appearing to him on the road to Damascus, and striking him off his horse ; but he generally does it by ordinary means adapted to our nature. For example, our nature is composed of a human body and a rational soul ; one part of us is spiritual, the other is corporal ; the whole is endowed with exterior senses and interior powers : so that his ordinary providence governs and directs us, partly by spiritual, partly by sensible means. The spiritual is that interior law of charity which our spiritual guide — viz., the Holy Ghost — is pleased to write and imprint on our hearts ; the sensible are the written law and living voice of our superiors.

The sweet disposition, then, of Divine Providence required of our holy father his coöperation in order to render the government of the Society perfect and suitable to the nature of men ; that is, it required he should write Rules and Constitutions for us, which as a sensible means might help and direct us to go on with greater profit in the way begun of God's service.

That this method is altogether conformable to divine providence, may be clearly gathered from this, that, from the beginning of the world, God himself always made use of it, especially in the direction and government of his chosen people, the Jews, and since them, in the law of grace, of all the Christian commonwealth, but particularly all religious orders.

God, from the beginning, as one may say, of the world, ordained in all well-ordered commonwealths, states, and kingdoms, that the people should be governed by a written law ; and

he himself was pleased to write one for the children of Israel with his own fingers on two tables of stone, according to those words of Exodus : "Our Lord gave to Moses two tables of stone, written by the finger of God."

Divine Goodness did not think that his chosen people were sufficiently provided for by the law of nature, or that interior law the Creator of all things had written in clear but sensible characters in the heart or in the soul of man, whereby he was directed from the first creation to fly evil and embrace good, to hate sin and love virtue, to be just to men and obedient to God ; and this, notwithstanding the law of nature, was a clear light, a bright beam darted upon his soul immediately from the force of God. In the same manner, though the law of grace was much brighter because of the countenance of God, and was in so wonderful a manner imprinted on the hearts of the faithful at the coming of the Holy Ghost ; notwithstanding the law of charity and love was so deeply imprinted in their hearts by the same divine spirit of love ; notwithstanding this heavenly flame of divine love broke forth in so wonderful a manner, and produced so admirable effects in their conversation and lives ; notwithstanding all this, our blessed Saviour ordered after his ascension the holy Gospel to be written, that it might serve for a direction and rule to guide ourselves by in the observance of the evangelical law, precepts, and counsels ; nay, though God continues still to inspire and direct the holy Church, he will have all other laws, both civil and ecclesiastic, for its preservation and government, and, in fine, though he has actually erected many religious orders in the Church by revelations and miracles, he still inspired the founders of those orders to write constitutions for their religious : all which plainly shows that the sweet disposition of providence required that our holy father should do the same.

The second reason why our holy father wrote the constitutions was, because the pope would have him do it. Paul III. highly approved of the design and platform of the Society, as it was laid down by our blessed founder ; he was extremely edified at the life and conversation of our first fathers, at a time when they had no other rule to govern themselves by than that of interior charity and love. Notwithstanding, he judged it necessary that constitutions should be written, and accordingly ordered our holy

father to write them ; which he, in submission and obedience to the pope, did, and afterwards got the pope to approve and confirm them. This approbation and confirmation of our Institute is a great comfort to the Society, and is of great use and benefit to it.

It is a great comfort to the whole Society to have the Constitutions approved by the see apostolic ; for whatever the head approves in this kind, is also received and approved by the whole Church ; and since this cannot err in matters of religious worship, we are assured by the greatest authority upon earth, that our Constitutions are holy and pleasing to God ; that they contain no error contrary to faith or good manners ; on the contrary, contain true doctrines, and help very much to the attaining of evangelical perfection. And though we are very well assured of this by the revelations our holy father had of these matters, yet this solemn approbation of so many popes, who have examined and confirmed our Institute, is a far greater and more certain authority than any private revelation.

The popes' judgment on these occasions, according to Saint Thomas, is infallible. His answer is, because it belongs to the assistance of the Holy Ghost to preserve the Church from such errors as would be very injurious to God's honour and highly prejudicial to the salvation of souls. Both these inconveniences would follow from approving a bad and erroneous Institute, since, by approving a religious order, especially the Society, he proposes to the Church its religious as safe guides and directors of the faithful. Moreover, by confirming an institute, it is made a fixed state of life and a religious order, which is a great benefit to any society, and helps extremely to its preservation and progress. Wherefore our holy founder had sufficient reason to write our Constitutions and Rules, had he done it only in obedience to the pope, who required this of him.

Our holy father had also the example of other founders of religious orders to move him to write a Rule for us. All founders of religious orders had written constitutions and rules. For example, Saint Basil, Saint Austin, Saint Bennet, Saint Dominick, Saint Francis, Saint Bruno, and so of all the rest ; all had written rules.

Our holy father had too great a veneration for the memory of



so many wise and holy men, not to approve of what they had done. He had sufficient reason to follow their example ; nay, he could not, without rashness, or at least without the suspicion of singularity, leave so beaten a path to follow an unknown way, especially after finding by long experience the many advantages and great good their holy orders received by their constitutions and rules.

The fourth reason our holy father mentions in this place is, because reason itself shows that it was necessary to write rules, that it is almost impossible for the greatest wits to learn any art or science without the help of rules. The science of saints, the study of perfection, is not only the most sublime, but also the hardest to be learned ; and yet nothing more dangerous than to miss in it.

They are extremely exposed to the illusions of the enemy, who enter into the way of virtue without a safe guide ; and though a confessarius, a director, a superior often prevent our being deluded, yet in many cases they cannot. They are not always with us, and cannot so easily be come at.

Religious people, who have a written rule approved by the Catholic Church, have always by them an infallible guide ; they are sure of pleasing God in adhering to their rule ; it directs them safely to the perfection God requires of them, and defends them from all the deceits of the enemy.

The interior law of charity and love, though so very necessary and useful in a spiritual life, is not sufficient to do this, because we can have no certainty that our good desires come from God. We know very well that the Devil often transforms himself into an angel of light, and inflames us with a false zeal that is not according to knowledge, in order to hinder us from doing the will of God, which we never fail to do when we keep our Rule.

Secondly, The same reasons that show the necessity of written laws for a commonwealth or kingdom, prove the necessity of a written rule in any religious order. It is much more convenient both for the superior and subject to have a rule, than to have none. It teaches the former to govern, and justifies his conduct in odious matters. For example, in using reprehensions and penances, nothing can be said against them, no one will dare complain or murmur, when he knows he has acted

against his rule, and thereby deserved the reprehension or penance ; whereas, if there was no rule, they would be apt to think the superior acted by humour or passion, and had unduly used his authority over them. The rule, then, makes both easy, and maintains a good correspondence between superior and subject.

Thirdly, Rules and written laws have greater authority than a command from a superior, because they are void of all inordinate affection, particular interest, or the like. They speak to all in the same manner ; they are impartial, do not change according to humour and circumstances, as superiors are liable to. Moreover, they are written with less precipitation, far more consideration and light, than a superior can have in many circumstances, especially the rules of religious orders, and particularly those of our Society, which were written with all the precautions of a natural and supernatural prudence, nay, with all the light of divine illustration and revelation.

Fourthly, Aristotle proves the necessity of written laws, from the hardness of virtue, and the weakness and inconstancy of our nature. The practice of virtue requires many hard things of us, — as, denying our own will, overcoming our passions, labour and pains. Men, on the contrary, love ease and their own will ; they are unwilling to labour and to take pains, unless they are obliged and as it were forced to it by laws. If this, according to the philosopher, is a good reason for laws in a natural life, how much more necessary are they in a religious state, wherein not an ordinary virtue, but great perfection, is required ; where so many things highly repugnant to flesh and blood are exacted, — as, an absolute victory over our passions, a perfect denial of our own will, a solemn renunciation of the goods of the earth and pleasures of the flesh, with an entire sacrifice of our understanding and will in the law of obedience. How necessary, I say, are written rules and constitutions to help frail and corrupt nature in so hard and so glorious an enterprise.

Many other reasons may be brought for the writing of our Constitutions : these may suffice to show the necessity of them, to make us very sensible of our happiness, thankful to God for inspiring our holy father to write them, and you very punctual and zealous in the observance of them.

## FIRST EXHORTATION ON THE FIRST RULE.

“THE end of the Society is not only to attend, with the assistance of God’s grace, to the perfection of our own souls, but likewise to apply ourselves with great diligence to the salvation and perfection of our neighbour.”

As the stamp gives merit to the coin, so it is the intention that regulates in great part the merit or demerit of human actions. If our intention is good, our action is also good ; if the end for which we do any indifferent action be holy, the action itself becomes holy ; and, on the contrary, the best and most holy actions become vicious and bad, if our intention be so. Hence, our intention is to our actions as the eye to the body. If our eye be simple and clear, our whole body is enlightened, says our blessed Saviour. If our intention is good, our actions are bright and pleasing to God.

In the same manner, to conceive a clear idea of a state of life, one must consider the end it aims at ; for nothing discovers better the nature and worth of it than the end it was instituted and designed for, because, as Saint Gregory says, “ *Vita nostra*,” &c. The reason is, because in all well-ordered institutes and states, the means are always regulated by the end. The more holy, perfect, and excellent the end is, the means also are more holy, perfect, and excellent.

To make us, then, have a high esteem of our vocation, or to conceive a great idea of our Institute, our holy father would begin the Summary of his Constitutions by proposing to us the end of the Society. He would have us keep our eyes continually fixed upon this end, not doubting but the remembrance of it will excite us extremely, and push us on to learn those admirable virtues proposed to us in the following Rules, since an ardent desire of acquiring the end will make us fervent in using the means.

The end of the Society, as it is here set down in clear terms, is divided into two branches. The first contains our own, the second our neighbour’s, salvation and perfection. The two

branches correspond to the double law of charity, in which the plenitude of the law of God, or Christian perfection, is comprised, according to our blessed Saviour's express words. It may, therefore, be compared to the double spirit of Elias, which our divine Elias and Saviour bestowed on us as his disciples and companions, when he cast upon us the cloak of a vocation to the Society.

We must continually keep our eyes fixed upon our end, and regard the two branches of it as the two great lights God erected in the beginning of the world for ruling the days and nights; for they must direct us during the whole course of our mortal life; for all our actions, studies, labours, and devotions are to be directed by them; all must serve towards the salvation and perfection of our own and our neighbour's souls.

As well-ordered charity begins at home, we will treat to-day only of the first part of the end of the Society, or that which relates to our own perfection and salvation. I am fully persuaded that this was the great design and end of your coming to the Society; for, ask any one why he left the world, and embraced this state of life. He will without hesitation answer, that it was to save his soul, and to avoid those many dangers of offending God which he would unavoidably have been exposed to, had he remained in the world. It was to serve God in a more perfect manner, to live a spiritual and holy life, and to procure a happy death.

This I dare say was the end you proposed to yourselves when you came to the noviceship, and this we must endeavour carefully to procure; all our thoughts are to be directed to this end; it must be the scope of all our actions. Nor is this end hard to be obtained in a religious state; for, first, as to the salvation of our own souls, most learned and spiritual men are of opinion, that dying in a religious state is one of the greatest marks of predestination, and consequently we cannot have a greater assurance of our salvation. Saint Laurence Justinian says, that he who through the great mercy of God was called to the society of the just in this life, may securely hope that after his peregrination here, he will be assumed and admitted into the heavenly Jerusalem after his death. But we have many stronger assurances in the Gospel to confirm us in this hope: first, our blessed Saviour promises all such as leave their fathers, brothers,



sisters, their houses and possessions in the world, a hundred fold in this life, and life everlasting in the next. This promise is made to all religious people, for they leave all these things for God's sake; it was made by our blessed Redeemer, who is most faithful to his promises; wherefore, if we do but live up to our vocation, and are as truly disengaged interiorly from the world, as by our outward profession we seem to be, we may with great security depend on this promise, and claim a right to an everlasting inheritance. Amongst the beatitudes, the first and last confirm very much what I have here advanced—the first even promises the kingdom of heaven to the humble of heart; the last promises the very same to all such as suffer persecution for justice sake.

There is no state of life so humble as that of religion; no one is more exposed to persecution and suffering. Religious people, by their profession, exercise themselves in all sorts of humble employments and offices, both at home and abroad; are frequently obliged, by their Rules and superiors, to suffer humiliations; and therefore, if virtue is best known by effects, we have reason to believe them endowed with that humility of heart, whose reward is the kingdom of heaven. We may truly say, that without this virtue it is impossible to continue any long time in humble offices, or bear humiliations virtuously; when we find religious people do it, we have reason to hope that they are interiorly what they make an outward profession of, and that they will obtain the kingdom of heaven for their reward.

We have also our share of persecution in this world, we of the Society in particular; for we do not read of any order in the church of God that has been so persecuted as the Society. As it has the honour to bear the name of the Society of Jesus, so it seems in a particular manner to resemble Jesus Christ in this, that it is set up as a mark for wicked people to shoot all their venom at; the Divine Goodness supporting us, notwithstanding, for the benefit of his Church, in all our persecutions and sufferings. From its very beginning it has been persecuted, as our history testifies, is still persecuted, and no doubt will continue to be so to the end of the world.

Our holy father, as he himself owned, having obtained this favour of God: and no doubt it is a very great favour when

rightly considered, and a most efficacious means to keep us on our guard, and to preserve fervour and regularity amongst us. Persecution is a certain mark of God's peculiar love, for he is accustomed to try and chastise whom he loves; the greater share we have of suffering here, the greater shall we have hereafter of his consolations. Wherefore, the persecutions and contradictions we suffer for God's sake, must not deject and discourage us; on the contrary, they ought to animate us very much to go on with great joy and fervour in the way begun of God's service, relying on the faithful charity of our Lord, who has promised the kingdom of heaven to all such as suffer persecution for his sake.

These considerations, no doubt, give us great hopes for obtaining the end we came to religion for, viz., the salvation of our own souls; but then we must be careful to make right use of the helps and means that our holy Institute affords us to secure it; it affords us all sorts of spiritual armour against our ghostly enemies. We cannot fail of gaining a complete victory, if we are not deficient in making right use of them; but as the best armour will signify nothing if we will not take pains to use it, so the best Constitutions and Rules will avail us little, if we neglect to keep them. As then you value your salvation, let me exhort you with Saint Peter, to be very careful, busy, and solicitous to secure it by an exact observance of the Rules. It is not enough to use a moderate care and diligence in securing our vocation, and, consequently, our election and salvation. The word *satagite*, which the apostle makes use of in this place, implies an extraordinary or a solicitous care and diligence. An affair of great consequence requires much greater care and diligence than a business of small importance; the salvation of our souls is an affair of the greatest consequence; it is our only business in this life; therefore we must take it more to heart than any other thing we have to do; it was for this end God placed us in the world, and it was to secure this we came to the Society. Endeavour then solicitously to secure your vocation by good works, that you may not render void your election or salvation; we can never be secure enough of it as long as we have a corrupt nature, vicious habits, and predominant passions to struggle with; therefore no precaution is too great.

For this reason our holy founder proposing to us here the end of the Society, begins with what concerns us most, nay, concerns us so much, that it will avail us nothing to succeed in the second part of the end, if we fail in this ; it would profit us nothing to convert the whole world, if, after all, we should lose our own soul. If we are wise then, let us be wise to ourselves : one cannot be wise if he neglects himself, nor can we be good to others, if we are naughty. Saint Bernard, in a book he wrote of consideration for Pope Eugenius, who had been his disciple, bids him begin his considerations from himself, and finish them in himself—that is, in the care and government of the Church ; he was always to be mindful of himself, never to let his care and solicitude for others make him forget his own soul. Let us take this same holy doctor's advice to ourselves ; our vocation obliges us to take pains and labour much for the salvation and perfection of others ; this requires a great share of our time, as well as of our thoughts, but it must not take up all, nor the first and last of them. Whilst we are seeking the salvation of our neighbour, we must not be unmindful of our own ; whilst we are leading them to perfection, we must take care not to be left behind ; your own salvation must be your first and last care ; whatever good design you have for others, whatever business you undertake for them, let all be done with reference to your own soul. In fine, let the care of your own souls be the *primam mobile* that rules all the actions of your life ; let all roll upon this, let it govern and regulate your whole life. We cannot have a safer rule to govern ourselves by ; there is no safety for us if we leave this.

For this very reason our holy father puts this very care of our own salvation in the first place, and that of our neighbour in the second only, and plainly insinuates in the Constitution itself, that this latter must be subordinate to the first ; he would have us very zealous in helping our neighbour, but still would have this zeal for them proceed from the zeal and concern we have for our own souls.

When people come to religion, and find themselves in a state of life remote from the many dangers they were exposed to in the world, and withal provided with all sorts of helps and means to secure their salvation, they are sometimes apt to think all is secure, and there is nothing more to fear. This security often



puts them off their guard, and, if not taken notice of in time, exposes them to great danger of losing their souls, even in religion itself; for we must not think there is any place or state of life so holy, that can give us an entire security; for, in whatever state we are, we still retain our corrupt nature, our inclinations, and passions, which, if not carefully looked into, and kept with a watchful and strong hand in due subjection, will inevitably expose us to great danger of falling into sin and losing our souls. Moreover, there is no state of life secure from temptations. Our ghostly enemy is always watchful, always going about like a roaring lion, that is, hunting for prey. We can have no truce with the Devil, much less a peace, as long as we have a desire and do endeavour to serve God. Wherefore, if we are not continually on our guard, and are not very diligent in making use of the means and helps that religion affords us, we are most certainly exposed to great danger of being surprised and overcome by temptation. Wherefore, you must endeavour to ground yourselves well in the fear of God.

Let us remember we must work out our salvation in fear and trembling. Blessed is the man who is always fearful. The greatest saints were always subject to this holy fear; and many for want of it, presuming upon their virtues, were lost. Let this holy fear, first, make you very careful to correct every bad habit you may have brought with you to religion. Secondly, Let it render you very watchful over your passions, especially that which is most predominant in you, and exposes you most to the danger of offending God.

Whatever this passion is, it must be conquered, or, sooner or later, it will get a victory over you. Assure yourselves, as long as it is alive in you, you have a treacherous enemy in your breasts, that will betray you at last,—a dangerous spark, that will break out into a flame when you think least of it. Do not think it so easy a thing to conquer these passions: it is almost as hard to do it as to change our nature. At the same time, it must be done, and the sooner we endeavour to do it the better.

A young tree, that has not fixed its root, may easily be plucked up: but when it has been for some years in the ground, there is no moving it. Wherefore, let not your passions take



deep root ; break them now whilst they are young, and you will have little trouble with them the remainder of your life.

Let me particularly recommend to you a diligent care in overcoming such passions as by long experience are found to have made people lose their vocation, or render them very useless or troublesome in the Society. For example, an immoderate love of ease, and indulging sensuality ; this will first make you slothful in all your exercises of devotion and mortification, it will make you neglect them upon any frivolous pretence or difficulty. From this springs another ill habit of indulging our appetite, which is often the occasion of scandalous excesses of intemperance, and exposes the body to many temptations. This is a passion very blameable in any Christian, but abominable and scandalous in a religious. The only way to overcome this is to accustom ourselves to the use of corporal mortifications and penances.

The second passion you must particularly endeavour to overcome, is the desire of praise and honours. Many have left the Society for want of humility. They could not bear that others should be preferred before them ; and though they had often by vow promised to be content with any degree the Society should give them, yet could not suffer the imaginary confusion of losing their profession.

Lastly, Let such also as find themselves inclined to melancholy, take great care to overcome themselves in time ; for, nothing exposes one more to the illusions of the Devil. It will render you uneasy to yourselves, troublesome to your superiors, and unprofitable to the Society.

There are many other passions that are very dangerous, and as we come to the Society to save our souls, we must be very watchful to curb them in time, and, as much as with the assistance of God's grace we can, root them out of the soul. And this you must endeavour to do in your noviceship, whilst you are in your primitive fervour ; otherwise, it is much to be feared they will get the better of you, and endanger your salvation ; which God, through his infinite mercy, avert.

## SECOND EXHORTATION ON THE FIRST RULE.

“THE end of our Society is not only to attend, with the assistance of God’s grace, to the salvation and perfection of our own souls,” &c.

In my last exhortation I told you that the end of our Society contained two parts, or was divided into two branches. The first regards our own salvation and perfection ; the second the salvation and perfection of our neighbour.

Not being able to comprise in one exhortation what I had to say of the first branch, I am obliged to make a subdivision ; and whereas I spoke last of the attention we are to have to our salvation, I shall speak to-day of the perfection we are to aspire to. Nor can we make use of a more compendious and safer way to secure our salvation, than by applying ourselves with great diligence to the study of our perfection.

The aiming at perfection in a religious state is not only an efficacious, but also a necessary means to secure our salvation ; for, though in respect of others, perfection is only of counsel ; yet, in respect of religious, it is so far a precept, that they are obliged to aim at the perfection of their state of life ; for divines generally agree that a religious man cannot neglect his perfection without sin.

I do not think it necessary to insist upon proving this truth ; because I am persuaded you act upon more generous principles with God, as you have dedicated yourself to his service, in this least Society. You are fully resolved, with the assistance of divine grace, to attain to the perfection it requires of you, whether of strict obligation or not.

Wherefore, waving this question, we will treat to-day, first, of the nature of perfection ; then we will consider how pleasing it is to God, how advantageous to ourselves in particular, and how beneficial to the Church in general.

The perfection we are to aim at consists, first, in having our passions in due subjection to reason and faith ; second, in having a habit of doing all our actions out of a motive of true

virtue. The first is, as it were, the material part of perfection, the second the formal. I will explain my meaning by some familiar comparisons.

The natural perfection of a man consists, first, in having all the parts of his body complete, that is, all his limbs rightly disposed, and in due proportion to one another: the sinews, veins, and arteries of a right bigness, and fit for the uses they were designed for; the blood, humours and spirits in right temper, neither too thick, nor too thin, over hot, nor yet wanting sufficient warmth. From organization of the body arises a free use of the senses, and of the other faculties of the soul; for the soul, acting dependently of the body, by how much more exact and perfect the organs are, by so much more perfectly does the soul exercise its faculties. For example, it sees better, hears better, speaks better, and the like. To these external accomplishments of his body must correspond the interior faculties of the soul, a lively apprehension, a good memory, a ready wit, and a solid judgment. When all these good qualities meet in one, he is said to be a complete or perfect man.

I speak here of natural perfection. If by the direction of reason and command of free will, his actions are good and conformable to the light of reason, then the person is not only perfect in a natural, but also in a moral sense. If his reason be further improved with the supernatural light of divine faith, and his will strengthened and helped with divine grace, he overcomes his passion and performs his actions habitually out of a pure motive of the love of God, he is said to be perfect, not only in a natural and moral, but also in a spiritual and supernatural sense; and this is the perfection we are by our Rule to aspire to, and must endeavour to obtain by a constant application of our mind to the study of perfection; and the reason is, because a person who acts habitually well, must have subjected sensuality to reason, his reason to faith, and so must have united his soul to God by charity, which, as Saint Paul tells us, is the bond of perfection and plenitude of the law.

Hence it follows, that perfection requires, first, a due subjection or subordination of our passions to the law of God—that is, we must so overcome self-love, sensuality, concupiscence, the love of esteem, honour, and the like, that these passions are no longer any impediment to us in the way of

virtue, nor hinder us from complying readily and cheerfully with our duty to God or man. It is not by once or twice overcoming these passions, that we can bring them to this subjection; in some more, in some less, pains are required, according as these passions are more or less violent, as in reality they are in some much more violent than in others. God, when he pleases, can so inflame a soul with divine love, that the fervour of its charity shall, in a moment, consume all its dross, and set it at perfect liberty to apply itself to all the exercises of devotion and charity, as it effectually changed in a moment Saint Paul from a persecutor of the Church into a vessel of election. But an extraordinary way we are not to expect, much less depend on it. The ordinary method to overcome our passions and evil inclinations, to root out bad habits, is, by often resisting them, and frequently exercising ourselves in the contrary acts of them, for habits are contracted by frequent repetition of these acts; if we often make acts of any vice, for example, impurity, anger, or the like, we shall contract a vicious habit of falling frequently into these sins; if, on the contrary, we often exercise ourselves in acts of the opposite virtues, we shall acquire the habit of these virtues; and for this reason our holy father, in the fourteenth Rule of the Summary, ordains, that such as are given to pride should be exercised in humble and mean offices.

This overcoming of our passions and rooting out of all vicious habits, is rather a necessary preparation to perfection, than a part of it: it can only be called a part, inasmuch as it comprehends many acts of virtue, by which our passions are at last subdued and vicious habits corrected, which acts are not sufficient to denominate a man perfect, because they are produced with difficulty, by reason of the opposition made by his passions and vicious habits. One is not said to be perfect in any virtue, till he produces with ease the acts of that virtue; and is not said to be simpliciter perfect, till he can produce easily the acts of any virtue; for in the science of saints it is the same as in other arts and sciences. One is not said to be perfect in any art till he can with great facility perform the operations of that art. For example, one is not said to be a perfect musician, who cannot play the notes without study and reflection upon the rules of music. One is



not said to be a perfect grammarian, who is obliged to reflect and study by what rule the construction is to be made.

In the same manner, in the science of saints, to become perfect, it is not enough to produce acts of virtue, but one must produce them by habit or with ease ; because the facility of producing them shows that the habit is acquired.

But here you are to observe that perfection includes several degrees, as the glory of the saints in heaven differs in clarity according to their merits in this life. The least degree of heavenly glory renders a saint as truly happy as the highest would do ; and so the lowest degree of perfection renders a man as truly perfect as the highest. At the same time, there is as vast a difference between one just man and another, as there is between two saints.

The apostle Saint Paul explicates to us this difference by the difference we see amongst the celestial bodies, which far surpass one another in bulk and brightness. Some of the saints, for example, shine in celestial glory like the Sun, others like the Moon, others as the stars. In the same manner, the just upon earth rise like the morning Sun, and go on increasing in perfection till they enlighten the whole world, and even dazzle the eyes of all, with the splendour of their sanctity ; others do not shine with so clear a light as those, yet are very observant in all points of religious duty, and do a great deal of good by their virtuous lives, and are of great edification to all, and may justly be compared to the Moon, by reason of the kind influence that noble planet has upon the earth : others, in fine, are like so many stars in the firmament of the Church, for, though they do not cast so good a light as the former, nay, disappear and seem nothing, compared to them, yet, compared with the imperfect, shine with a pure light, without either spot or blemish.

Our blessed Saviour gives us another similitude, to explicate to us the different degrees of perfection or sanctity his holy servants arrive at. He calls the congregation of the just, the house of his heavenly Father, and the particular members of it, he compares to the different apartments or chambers of this house. In royal palaces there are many rooms and apartments ; all are great, noble, and becoming the grandeur of the person that is master of them, but are differently adorned and

furnished according to the different uses they are designed for. The rooms of state, for example, the bed chamber and closet, require much more noble furniture than the apartments of other princes of the king's court ; these have richer hangings than those of the nobility ; and these are better furnished than the outward rooms designed for the common courtiers or guards. In like manner, the souls of the just all belong to God's house, for he resides in them ; they are richly adorned with virtues, they are all beautiful and perfect ; but some are adorned with far more choice and precious virtues than others, according to the fervour and intenseness of their charity.

It is this divine virtue that adorns the soul with all supernatural gifts, beautifies it with the precious habit of sanctifying grace, and gives it a new life and vigour to run on with swiftness and ease in the way of God's commandments, and in the course of a holy and spiritual life. In fine, this queen of virtues is never alone in the soul, but always attended by her heavenly retinue of all other virtues, both theological and moral ; and according to its fervour and intenseness, all other virtues are more or less perfect.

Hence, charity, or an intense love of God, is a heavenly flame that consumes all our terrene affections, devours the remnants of vicious habits, and purifies the soul of its irregular passions, and leaves it at liberty of uniting itself at all times with God, and of performing with purity of mind all its actions and obligations of the state of life it is in ; and with what fervour, constancy, and heroic fortitude, with how great exactness and punctuality have not the holy servants of God applied themselves to the observance of religious discipline ? to works of mercy and apostolical employments, carried on by the vehemence of this charity, and the strength of their love ? So that we may truly say that fervent charity is the perfection we aim at, since it will infallibly purify our souls from the dross of sin, and make us perform our duty, not only fully, but perfectly, with great fervour, quickness, and facility ; doing all to please more and more his divine majesty, to testify our love for him, and to do all things for his greater honour and glory ; and this is what our holy founder expresses in several places of our holy Rules, as when he says, "*Major Dei gloria, majus Dei obsequius,*" and the like.

Having now spoken of the nature of perfection, considering how pleasing it is to God, how advantageous to ourselves, and how beneficial to others, I propose in these three considerations to excite and spur you on in the way of perfection, to move you more efficaciously to the acquiring of an ardent love of God, and to perform all your religious duties in the most perfect manner you can. As to the first, it is the opinion of the saints and spiritual men, that God is more glorified and better pleased with one perfect soul, than he is with a whole community of imperfect religious, or a whole nation of tepid Christians.

God may be said to be more glorified three different ways. First, He receives more honour, praise, and glory from others by means of the holy life and zealous endeavours of our great saint, than from the exhortations and sermons of innumerable preachers of a common and tepid life; for example, one Saint Francis Xavier has done more for the honour and glory of God, more people have been converted and brought to love and praise God by his holy life and apostolical labours, than by hundreds of other tepid and imperfect preachers.

Second, A saint is a greater credit and honour to God, because he represents better the divine attributes and perfections, just as one excellent picture does more honour to the painter, than a hundred pieces that are imperfect and full of faults. God is also incomparably more delighted with one perfect soul, than he is with innumerable others who are imperfect, though in the state of grace; he is better pleased with them and loves them more. I will explain my meaning by a comparison. Let us suppose a prince has several sons; all but one are deformed, have ill humours and naughty ways; this one is perfectly well made, is very handsome, has excellent wit, and all the good qualities one can desire in a child. Does not he deserve his father's love incomparably more than his other brothers? Will not his father have a particular love for him? Will he not be a greater comfort and joy to him than all the rest?

In the same manner, though all such as are in the state of grace are the adopted sons of God; yet the perfect are far more dear to God than all the imperfect. Hence it also follows, that perfection is infinitely advantageous to the perfect, first, because

God heaps his graces and blessings on them in far greater abundance ; for, as they perform their devotions with more fervour, are more earnest and punctual in all religious observances, perform their ordinary actions with a purer intention and a greater love of God, they merit incomparably more by every thing they do, and lay up vast treasures in heaven of celestial glory : whilst the tepid and imperfect lose a great part of their time by their sloth and negligence, and merit very little by their best and most holy duties.

I may truly say that one perfect religious man may merit more than all the rest of the community besides ; since, by the great fervour with which he acts, he purchases a higher degree of glory than what the rest of the community do merit ; for, as merit is personal, the rest of the community cannot be said to merit a greater reward than what is due to the particular merit of each. Wherefore, as the reward due to one perfect religious man far surpasses, and is of a higher degree than, that of an imperfect religious person ; so the perfect religious person may be truly said to merit more than all the community besides.

A story we read in Rodriguez will help very much to clear this point. Whilst certain religious persons were reading the divine office in the choir, one of them saw an angel writing in a book what every one sang. Some had theirs written in golden characters, to signify the great devotion and fervour with which they uttered the praises of God ; some had theirs written with good ink, and some with bad, or rather with water, to express the little devotion they had at the divine service.

As the characters of ink, much more those of water, are so inferior to golden characters, that they can never come up to the perfection of them ; so the devotions and good works of the perfect do so far excel the merits of the tepid, that these can never equal them. They seem to be of another nature,—of a value as much superior to the merit of the imperfect, as the nature of gold surpasses that of ink or water.

How much, then, does it behove us to apply ourselves with great alacrity and fervour to the study of perfection, to the overcoming of our passions, to the rooting out of vicious habits, and to the acquiring of all virtues, especially true humility, abnegation of your own wills, a most perfect charity, or an



ardent love of God ; that so, by performing all your devotions and religious duties with fervour, you may deserve to have your whole life written down in characters of gold, and thereby lay up immense treasures of glory in heaven.

Saints and perfect souls are not only most dear to God and happy as to themselves, but also extremely beneficial to others ; for example, to the community they live in, more so than hundreds of others, who may, notwithstanding, be endowed with far greater learning and other natural parts and talents.

One perfect religious man, by his holy life, is sufficient oftentimes to influence a whole house with the love of God, to inspire devotion into the most tepid, to reform a whole religious order. Besides, it often happens that God, in regard of such, will forbear to punish a whole nation, as effectually as he forbore to destroy the whole Jewish nation at the intercession or prayer of Moses. And we have many examples in Church history of towns and provinces saved for the sake of one holy man, as Venice was by the prayers of Saint Laurence Justinian, their patriarch.

We have also many examples to convince us that, in regard of one holy man God blesses a whole family, as he did the Jews in regard of Abraham, Egypt for the sake of Joseph, and so many others both in the Old and New Testament ; which made Saint Teresa weep when she heard of the death of Father Baltassar ; for, being asked by one of her religious how she came to be so much concerned at the news of the death, she said, she wept because she knew how great a loss he was to the Church. By the same prodigies and miracles wrought by divers saints, it is evident God has greater regard for them than he has for a whole community or a whole town or country ; for when did we hear of the lame or blind cured, or of dead people being restored again to life, by the prayers of a community or town ? whereas in the lives of saints we read many examples of this kind ; and this therefore proves sufficiently how beneficial the perfect are to such as they live with. Wherefore, let us seriously endeavour to render ourselves as perfect in all virtues, as with the assistance of God's holy grace we can ; for we must not content ourselves with an ordinary virtue, with a low degree of perfection. This is the chief end of our coming to the Society ; by this, and only by this, can we render ourselves worthy of being the

companions of Jesus. He is the model of perfection we are to copy after, and therefore we must set no limits to our desires or endeavours ; for, as it is impossible ever to arrive at the height of his perfection, so with the assistance of his holy grace we shall always have it in our power to resemble him daily more and more during our whole life ; we shall always have some small faults to correct ; we shall either fail in the purity of our intention or the intenseness of our love, so must never *sufficit*, but go on continually improving both, till we come as near as we can to the perfection of our blessed Saviour as frail nature is capable of.

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### EXHORTATION ON THE THIRD RULE.

EACH person must be ready to pay a most prompt and humble obedience to the superioress, at all times and all places, as to all things that may seem expedient to her in our Lord for the greater glory of God, the salvation of their neighbour, and the observance and advantage of the Rule.

It would appear unnecessary to make a particular exhortation on this Rule, as it might seem sufficient to class it with the section of obedience hereafter to be explained. But as this virtue is to characterize this Institute, and by the perfection to which it is carried in our holy Rule, to serve as a substitute for great bodily austerities, which are not consistent with our labours in teaching, therefore the Constitutions mark that it is necessary all who are of this Institute should be well trained to it. I cannot therefore dispense with holding it up as a subject for serious attention, and I remark first, that in every state, family as well as moral body, there must always be a head to govern. If insubordination of inferiors comes, confusion takes place, and members are divided ; and how shall a kingdom

## EXHORTATION ON THE 2.<sup>nd</sup> RULE.

"But that this end may the more easily be obtained, all are to choose the most glorious Queen of Heaven, as the chief cooperatrix to the redemption of mankind, for their special Patroness and Mother, and not only to love and reverence her with all their strength; but likewise with a filial confidence fly unto her, in all their necessities."

Besides the title cooperatrix given her in the rule, the holy Fathers assure us that the Church attributes to Mary, the glorious title of Mediatrix; Reparatrix, and Dispensatrix of all graces; not by right as Jesus Christ, but by favour and privilege. Mediatrix, by the credit of her intercession with Jesus Christ. Cooperatrix because it was by giving her consent to become the Mother of God, that our salvation was begun. Reparatrix, because she gave the world a redeemer Jesus Christ, and Dispensatrix, because it was by her the author of grace was born to us, and it was by her also that God will dispense all graces to us.

I mean in this exhortation to propose from Father Seeman, some of the principal and most efficacious motives to excite you to that reverence, love, and confidence, which is required of us in this rule, for if it be true that devotion always springs from love, as from its immediate cause; it follows that the same motives which will induce us to love the Blessed Virgin, will have force to enkindle in our hearts a sincere reverence, devotion, and confidence. Now as every object of our love desires its amiable

ity, either because it is good in itself, or good to us, so in every love we may consider two sorts of perfection, the one which is called love of esteem, the other a love of tenderness. I shall therefore represent the Blessed Virgin as the most accomplished that ever was, of a pure creature, amiable in every respect, both in regard of herself, and with reference to us. The motives we have to love the Blessed Virgin are 1<sup>st</sup>. the singular love which Almighty God himself bears her. As in the old law no weights were reputed just, or lawful to be used, but what had been wisely valued in the balance of the Sanctuary, to the end the value we set upon things may be just and true, it must be brought to the infalible test of the divine judgment, and there weighed by the esteem Almighty God himself has of them. Now in how great esteem the Blessed Virgin is in the heart of her divine Son cannot be better understood than by setting her in a parallel with all other creatures and not to search after many, St. Bonaventure, St. Austin, and St. Anselm say that this glorious Queen alone is dearest to her divine Spouse than all the rest of his heavenly court, put together, and as such she is the first born in the order of nature, in the order of grace, and in the order of glory.

That the Blessed Virgin was not absolutely the first born amongst creatures, in the order of time is manifest, since her temporal birth was many years posterior to the birth of the world; yet, she is said to be the first, and even to have been



created from the beginning, "From the beginning and before the world was I created," is applied by the Church to Mary, because though she was not the first in the execution of the divine decrees, yet, she was the first born in the intention of them, and the first production of God's omnipotence, in the order of pure creatures, and as such was ever the end of all the other productions. For her, says St. Bernard was the whole world made, not indeed as for its last end (for that can be no other than God himself) but for her as a secondary cause and subordinate to him.

Our Blessed Saviour speaking of the Seraphical St. Teresa, as it were to ease himself of those vehement flames of love towards her which burned within his breast told her, "If had not already created the world, I would create it for thee alone." After this, can there be any excess in saying that the divine word has done, out of a special regard to his own Blessed Mother, that which for an occasion he would not have stuck to have done for a poor handmaid of that same Mother, and for her alone. St. Bernard in a sermon on the Blessed Virgin, says, that Almighty God, has created two worlds, one for man, which is thich we inhabit, the other for himself, which is the soul of Mary, and this as the most exact copy of the increated Idea, served as it were as an original to draw the others by. If this be supposed, who can call in question the truth of anothe no less sublime, than pious thought of St. Bernadine, who doubts not to affirm, that if

Almighty God after the disobedience of our first Parents did not destroy the world, it was in a most singular manner, for the sake of the most Blessed Virgin Mary. But it had been no such great honor that for her the world had been created at first, and afterwards preserved from destruction for her sake, if as she was most singularly beloved and privileged in the order of grace.

For the foundation of this, we must suppose that the Virgin never had any other place in the place of Almighty God, than in quality of his own Mother, and this is the rank she has possessed from all Eternity in the order of creatures. This being granted, who can express, or even conceive the degree of perfection which the Virgin possesses on this account in the heart of Almighty God, above all his other Saints, and favourites. The other saints if compared to the Virgin, are like the stars in presence of the Sun. they are in the firmament indeed, but they give no light, because the excessive light of the sun not only outshines every one of them in particular, but eclipses them altogether. Nay it may be said that the other saints were so far from challenging any right to the promipeniture in the divine ideas that they did not so much as appear in quality of children, but on the contrary as enemies of God and slaves of the devil, for the eternal foreknowledge which the Almighty had of them, he first saw them sinners, before he saw them just. The Virgin alone never appear in the quality of a sinner, but her first beginnings were as it were in greatness,

sanctity, and glory, therefore she alone was completely amiable in herself and always perfectly beloved by God, she was the only object of divine love which never had the least mixture of any thing that was repugnant to that love, as never being guilty of the least sin, or shadow of sin, consequently it is her singular prerogative to glory that Almighty God has always enjoyed the actual possession of her, the other saints indeed have always belonged to God, in propriety and sovereign dominion, but he has not always had the actual possessions of them, since all and every one of them, the Virgin Mary alone excepted, have been for some time in the power of the internal enemy, who by the fall of Adam robbed man of his original justice, and God in a manner of his right to his own image. So that of the whole race of mankind no one but the virgin can say with truth. "The Lord hath possessed me from the beginning" because the same sovereign dominion, God had over her, and his actual possession of her by grace and adoption were never separated one from another, not for the least indivisible moment of time. Whence it is, if the other Saints and elect were afterwards redeemed by Jesus Christ, the redeemer of mankind, with what sort of reparative redemption whereby they were rescued from a slavery actually incurred. Mary by the singular privilege of her birthright was redeemed with another more perfect soul of preservative redemption, whereby she was especially prevented from ever incurring that very slavery. Christ did this

with so great an excess of his love towards her, that he hastened his coming into the world, Nay St. Bernard tells us, he not only hastened it, but even effected it for her sake, since he came into the world more to redeem Mary alone with that more noble redemption already mentioned, than to redeem all the rest of mankind. On her was truly well spent all that Christ did, and suffered, upon earth. — His labours, his sweat, his torments, his passion, his death, and in effect, Christ has conferred upon the Virgin alone incomparably more grace, and more glory out of the measure capital of his infinite merits than upon all other men, and Angels together. In a word, to weigh the sanctity of Mary, the holy doctors observe no other rule than that of a certain proportion between her, and Christ, the Mother and the Son,

Would you know, says St. Eucharis who this Mother is? Consider who the Son is. This is the balance which that holy Father puts into our hands as the only proper one to judge of the great sanctity of Mary. It remains to speak of her as she is, the first in the order of glory. In the Kingdom of glory there is no seat so high for any pure creature, as even to serve as a footstool to her throne. Between the Mother of God, says St. John Damascene, and the other servants of God, there is an infinite distance, so that the Blessed Virgin being exalted as she is makes a Choir, of herself giving light to others, and receiving it from no



one but from the fountain - itself of all light , Other Saints are clothed indeed with light , but the Virgin is clothed with the sun itself, from whom their light is derived . Now can we spend our time better than in honoring to the best of our power this heavenly queen, and in advancing this stupendous work of the divine power in which God himself appears so great . We are sure never to be mistaken in loving her whom God himself, the author of all love, shows us the way how to love, and it cannot but be a great honor to us to follow this example .

The second motive of love to the Blessed Virgin is her great dignity . The dignity of the Mother of God, says St Thomas, carries with it a sort of infinity, and the reason is, because it rises to such a prodigious height, that God himself can not make it greater . In making her Almighty God has made a last effort of his Omnipotent power, He can when he pleases, and that with a single fiat, make a firmament more spacious than this, and furnished with brighter stars, he can make an ocean of a larger extent than this we sail upon, and an earth more fruitful and delicious, than what we inhabit . All this and infinitely more he can do with a finger or a breath of his mouth, but he cannot make a greater Mother than the Virgin Mary . It must therefore be acknowledged that the august title of Mother of God is an abyss of perfection, and is the origin and source of all the extraordinary favors done to Mary

And consequently, who can pretend to set a just value upon her incomparable merits? Truly no one, but that God himself who made her so great. Wherefore the Angels themselves, those clear-sighted spirits and penetrating understandings, must never hope to arrive at a full comprehension of Mary.

Observe how they seem equally amazed on the solemn triumph of the Son, and the Mother entering into Heaven. Who is it that cometh from Edom with his garments dyed from Bosra, beautiful in his apparel, and walking in the great power of his strength? This is the amazement of the Angels at the triumph of Christ. Who is it that ascends from the desert flowing with delights, and leaning upon her beloved?

"This is the astonishment of the same Angels at the glorious triumphs of Mary. All the difference observed by the Angels is, that Mary is leaning upon her beloved: and Christ walketh in the power of his own strength. As for the rest, their magnificent pomp, and glorious appearance was so excessive in both, that the Angels seemed to be equally surprised at both. But why do I say the Angels! Even Mary herself, great as she is, cannot comprehend her own greatness. For though she could not conceive and lodge within herself a God made man, yet she could never conceive within her understanding, how great a thing it was to conceive a God within her womb; and therefore when gratitude obliged her to a grateful acknowledgment for the

great honor she found herself assumed to, she could not, as St. Augustine observes, find terms to express, the height of her own dignity; she was forced to comprise all in the general terms of great things operated in her by the Almighty.

This maternity, considered in its natural sense, is so sublime, and so great, that no human thought could reach it. For it is certain that some part of the original body of Mary, was hypostatically united to the divine person, both in the original formation of Christ's body, by the divine power, and afterwards in the increasing of it by the nourishment he received from the Virgin immediately after. The flesh of Christ, says St. Augustine, is the flesh of Mary.

Almighty God, says St. Peter Damian, is in all other things in three different ways—by his essence, presence, and power, but in the Virgin, he was in a fourth special manner, to wit, by identity, as being one and the same thing with her. Therefore let every creature be silent and tremble, and not dare to behold a dignity so immensely above his capacity to comprehend! What then will this maternity be, if considered in a moral sense, that is inasmuch as it implies all those prerogatives which are due to it. St. Thomas could not find any more proper terms to express it in than by saying of it, that by its operation, it came the nearest of any thing to the divinity. It is a general opinion amongst divines, that the Blessed Virgin merited this august title of Mother of God: not indeed as we say in schools in rigour of justice, (because Almighty God

has never promised any greater to human merit than that of life everlasting; but by a sort of congruity of reason. Because the Blessed Virgin on her part did effectually bring such dispositions for the receiving that extraordinary dignity, that it was but very reasonable and congruous, that Almighty God should confer it upon her. It is certain that the Church, in her congratulations to the Virgin, constantly repeats to us, that she merited to bear Jesus in her womb. Several Saints and holy writers doubt not to call her, sometimes a worthy habitation for the most High to dwell in, sometimes a worthy tabernacle, and often a worthy throne of the divinity. Who will be able to tell us what degree of perfection was necessary in the Blessed Virgin, to conceive and bring forth a God. Here now St. Bernard does it in these words: "That a woman should conceive a God, was a miracle of miracles. It was necessary, therefore, that the Virgin should be raised, as I may say, to an equality with God, by a certain kind of infinity and immensity of perfections, which no creature had ever experienced before." So great is the sanctity, purity, splendor, and grace, which is requisite, to dispose a creature to so divine a work, that it cannot be expected, that, our imperfect works should ever give any great light unto the matter; therefore, I shall proceed to the third motive of love and devotion to the Blessed Virgin, viz: her sanctity. Three reasons will discover this fullness of grace and sanctity



in Mary, the end of this grace, the cause of it, and Mary's cooperation. In the first place, this fullness of grace must be gathered from the end of it, since it properly belongs to God to distribute his gifts and favors in proportion to the employments he designs to give them. For this reason he conferred so many privileges upon St. John Baptist, because he was to be his Precursor; upon St. Peter as head of the Church; and what excess of sanctity, think you, will be necessary for the divine Maternity! It was certainly very fitting, that this Mother should bear the most perfect resemblance with him in all things, and approach to him, in every respect, as near as might be consistent with the nature of a pure creature, which we must always allow to be limited. The second reason for the fulness of grace in Mary, we must gather from the origin whence it is derived, viz, the love which Christ himself had for her, a love into which the sanctity of Mary was most exactly corresponding, since in God it is one and the same thing to love a person, and by that very same love, to communicate to the same person wherewith to be worthy of his love. The general tie which binds all children to their parents, seems to have been stronger upon Christ than upon any other, for two reasons, 1<sup>st</sup> because the obligation of Christ was not divided between Father and Mother, as it is in other children. To Mary alone he owed his natural being upon earth; the second reason, why Christ may be said to have greater obligations

to Mary, than other children have to their parents is, because Mary not only gave him the first and best of gifts, that is, his very being, but she gave it to him in the best and most perfect manner possible, to wit, by love; — and this was so pleasing to Christ, that, to the end she might say to him, as all other Mothers may truly say to their children: “I know not how you appeared in my womb” He would not descend into her virginal womb till she had given her express consent, that so he might owe himself more to the heart of Mary than to her womb, tho’ he was truly the fruit of it. Tell me now, if you can, what grateful acknowledgements were returned by such a Son to such a Mother. If a glass of cold water given him upon earth shall not, as he has promised, go without a reward, what oceans of graces has he not poured down upon her, who gave him the very blood of his veins, first by converting it into flesh for him when she conceived him, and afterwards into milk for his nourishment. And if Jesus Christ gave his life even for those, who took it from him, what must he have done her who gave him that very life! Since therefore it can not be doubted that Jesus had a heart infinitely grateful, it must be owned that what he has given to Mary in exchange for what he has received from her, is ineffable, and beyond the power of human eloquence to express, — what wonderful effects were wrought by the ineffable grace of sanctification in the body of the Blessed Virgin, when the Word was made flesh, therein, is only known to

Him, who borrowed his human nature from her, says St. Augustin. The third reason for the fullness of grace in Mary was, her industry to improve, to the best advantage, the prodigious stock of grace that was given her at first to traffic with, that so we may at soberance and acknowledge that if in any other holy souls have heaped up riches, Mary has surpassed them all. Albertus Magnus looks upon it as a sort of first principle, and selfevident truth, that the graces of all the saints in Heaven were conferred upon Mary in a more perfect manner than upon all the rest together: and this first and unspeakable grace in the Virgin Mary constantly went on redoubling in her, from the first moment she received it, till her dying breath. Indeed it cannot be doubted that the Virgin was moved with extraordinary speed to make daily, and hourly, <sup>new</sup> purchases of grace, since being as she was free from the root of sin, she was moved in her progress to sanctity without opposition. This was the difference between the Virgins way of acting, and that which is proper to the rest of men, among whom, tho' some may be found who advance by great steps, nay, even run, in the way of sanctity, and perfection; yet, they never advance with perfect speed, because in their progress they still meet with some opposition, some kind of a drag, which retards their motion, having within them that bent or inclination which every one has from his corrupt nature, not to God, the true center of his soul, but to himself, and to sin. In the Virgin there was no such thing, for she from

the first moment of her conception being truly free from sin, and all inclination to sin, never met with the least resistance which could stop her for an instant in her happy and speedy career. Behold whereon is founded that noble sentiment which the devout clients of Mary have conceived of her when they say, that at every act of her life, she redoubled her grace.

But what will you say, devout clients of Mary, when you reflect, that to this prodigious multiplication of merit which I have mentioned, I add that grace which in schools is, "*Ex opere Operata*," a grace which was given her, not upon account of the industry which she herself used in her meritorious actions, but upon Christs own account, who wrought those effects which he thought most convenient, according to his divine pleasure. Who can conceive how many favors, graces, and heavenly blessings the eternal word poured into the sacred Virgins breast, when she first received him into her virginal womb, how many while he remained there; ! How many when she brought him forth ! How many when, being risen from the dead, he came to comfort her in his glorious triumph ! How many, when, leaving her upon earth, he ascended into Heaven ! How many, when from Heaven he sent down the Holy Ghost upon her, with a whole torrent of heavenly gifts ; how many, when she received into her breast our Lord and her own divine Son in the sacrament ! It is most probable, that, according to the custom of the primitive Christians, she



communicated every day. Now, it is well known, that the Sacrament of the Altar, grace is distributed in proportion to the disposition of the person who approaches to it, Wherefore, as the dispositions of the Blessed Virgin was certainly beyond all that we can conceive, it cannot be doubted that the treasures of grace she received from her divine Son, were beyond all experience. How many in time, when He came down himself in person to receive her blessed spirit, which, like a celestial fire, not able to remain any longer out of its sphere, left this earth, to take its place next to Him in Heaven. Here I will conclude, having proved, as I proposed, that our glorious Mother is worthy of our respect, and confidence, and love, on account of her dignity, being the first in the order of nature, in the order of grace, and in the order of glory. Seeing none above her, but her Son, to whom she is indebted for all,— and to whom be praise and glory for ever.

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## SECOND EXHORTATION ON THE SECOND RULE.

In the last exhortation, I spoke of the motives which were calculated to excite you to love and reverence the Blessed Virgin, with a love of esteem, by reason of her dignity &c. — Now I shall suggest from the same pious Client of Mary, other

motives which have a reference to ourselves to ourselves, which, consequently, would move us to a love of tenderness; and then I shall point out the effect which these two loves should produce in our hearts.

The first motive to excite a love of tenderness is the benefits we receive from the Blessed Virgin. These I think, may be all comprised in these few words: "Of whom Jesus was born;" Which are, at once, and the same time an absolute compendium of Mary's greatness, and happiness. She has given us our Jesus - and in giving Him, what has she not given us? - - But, to weigh this in a just balance, we should first comprehend the depth of misery and confusion; all mankind lay buried in, and would still continue to groan under to this day, were it not for this Jesus, this Saviour, whom Mary has given us, - If this were well considered, and understood, we should be convinced of the blessings of their greatness which this Aurora, brought unto us, by bringing with her this divine Son, in the dead of that dark night of sin, in which mankind lay involved for so many ages! "By me, may she say, was He at length made visible to the eyes of the body, who before was only visible to those of the mind." And it at present this divine Sun, tho' under the cloud of the Eucharistic accidents, ceases not to enlighten our earthly Jerusalem, little less than he does the heavenly one above; where he is seen unveiled and face to face; to whom are we beholden for this immense favor, but to this glorious Mother? from

her was borrowed that most pure flesh which is given us for food, and that most precious blood, which is given us to drink; and therefore for the great share she has in this most stupendous Banquet of the divine Eucharist, she may also justly invite us to it, as a Banquet of her own preparing for us. "Come and eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have prepared for you." The holy Fathers also proclaim her the mediatrix, between God, and Man, and channel of all those graces of which Jesus Christ alone is the source. These sources are chiefly two; viz: the Incarnation, and Passion, of Jesus Christ. we have seen how, in the first, she has given us our Saviour by clothing the divine word with human flesh: let us now inquire into the second source, which is the passion of the same Saviour, in that Tragedy which was acted on Mount Calvary; the Virgin Mary was not barely a spectator, but truly and properly an actress. For as the Eternal Father, for his own glory, and salvation of mankind, delivered up his only begotten Son unto death: so Mary did the same, and for the same ends. And certainly if the eternal Word required her consent before he would begin to live in her, it is highly probable he would not die a death so infamous, without having obtained her consent, so that the leave he took of her before his passion, was a positive consent on the Virgin's side, for him to lay down his life, which as it was truly the life of a Son, so it did in some manner belong to the Mother. And because the Virgin both then,

and much more afterwards, at the foot of the cross, offer up that part of the divine Victim that belonged to her, and offered it with so much readiness and constancy of mind, that, had it been the will and pleasure of the eternal Father, she would have sacrificed him with her own hands.—for this reason, and in recompense for such unheard of generosity, she was admitted to share in the application of the merits of this great sacrifice, and to be an instrument of the divine mercy for the execution of all those favours and blessings which were designed for man.

The second motive is, the great love she bears us: she was constituted our Mother, by a most solemn public act from the throne of the cross; so that when she reflects that the last words her dying Son spoke to her were: "Woman, behold thy Son," and that this was his last will and testament, and the only thing he had to recommend to her, how is it possible she should not be moved to love us with the greatest tenderness and affection.

I shall now proceed, to speak of the honor which is paid to virtue. The antiquity of it, the universality, and the sublimity of it. All these are found in the honor which the Church pays to Mary. The worship of this great Virgin was certainly very ancient, since we may say it began with our first parents; for, Almighty God, desirous, to apply a remedy to the mortal wound they had given themselves, and their posterity, by their sin, was wonderfully pleased to comfort those unfortunate



exiles by giving them notice of an other woman, who being Mother, tho' Virgin, to another man, and more than man, should repair their losses with greater advantage than if they had not fallen, and this extraordinary knowledge imparted to our first parents, was successively communicated, from age, to age, to the Patriarchs, and Prophets had as clear a knowledge of the Virgin Mary as they had of the future Massias. But when the fulness of time was come the Church Militant having learned from the Church Triumphant how to honor the Virgin, the Apostles, as they were the first in dignity, and authority amongst the faithful, so were they the first also in zeal to teach them by their own example how to honor the Virgin. Thus the great St. Denis attests, that he himself being present, many of them came from divers parts of the world to visit her, and amongst the rest St. Peter, the head of them all, for no other reason than to behold anew this greatest work of the divine magnificence, and to extol the author thereof. It is well known what sublime titles St. James gives her in his liturgy, as also the temple he dedicated in her honor at Saragossa, as did St. John in Asia, and St. Peter in Rome. This is the milk with which, we may say, the Church was nurced from her cradle, viz, devotion to Mary. But what is still more wonderful is, that tho' it is so long standing, it does not decay, for modern Christians seem to be as zealous as the primitive. It is sufficient to run over the annals of the Church, to be convinced with what tenderness of affection this great queen of heaven has

always been honored and beloved in the Church, by all the most illustrious personages in it, either for dignity, learning, or sanctity. In every corner of the world are seen her images, and statues, She is drawn out by the hands of the most eminent painters; her name and praises are daily sounded in our ears by the most harmonious music. She is called upon by all in distress, and thus I find, that with the antiquity of her worship, I have also demonstrated the universality of it.

It now remains that I explain, from the same Father, the kind of worship which the Church has always paid to the Virgin. Now the Church pays unto Mary all the honor and worship that can be allowed her, without running against the rock of idolatry. She has decreed unto her a worship peculiar to her alone, inferior to that paid to God, but superior to any that is paid to the Angels and Saints; which is therefore called Hyperdulia; she applies to her those abstracting terms, which, otherwise only belong to God, - our life, - our hope, - our sweetness, our way, - our comfort, She honors her in our daily sacrifice at the Altar, nor is she content with this, but she calls upon her next to God, in the solemn prayers of the office. She dedicates to her name, one day in every week, and in memory of her, she prescribes not one, but many, feasts throughout the year, and many of precept, She invites all the faithful, morning, noon and night, by the ringing of bells to salute her with the Angels. Finally, in all her greatest neces-

sities and public calamities, she has recourse to the Virgin Mary, by processions, prayers, and public vows, to show by these demonstrations of honor and worship, how she looks upon the Virgin to be next in power and dignity to Almighty God himself. Thus therefore does the Church honor the Virgin Mary, because God to whom it belongs to direct his Church will have her so to be honored. I feel confident you desire no other proofs to be convinced how zealous the Church, which is the best Judge of merit, has always been to promote the honor of the Virgin, and that you only wish to know by what means you may attain a true devotion to this ever glorious Queen; wherefore to satisfy your desire, I will point out two, the first is meditation, for according to St. Thomas, it is the Milk by which true devotion is nourished. We ought in this exercise to propose to ourselves two sorts of matter, the one comprehending the grandure and virtue of the Virgin, the other her charity and love towards us. By a perfect repetition of these considerations, we shall conceive in our hearts a perfect love for the blessed Virgin; consequently, we shall come to have a true devotion to her. Another means is spiritual reading, but let the books which treat of the Blessed Virgin be well chosen, read them leisurely and with attention: who knows but one of these lectures, well made, will prove of great advantage. — I myself says Liguoré, know more than one, who are at this present time beholden to the frequent reading of some little treatise in praise

of the Blessed Virgin, for their vocation to the religious life, which is certainly the most assured pledge we can have in this world of entering one day into the mansion of eternal bliss. I might bring many texts of scripture to prove that devotion to the Blessed Virgin is a mark of predetermination, but I shall content myself with one, which the Church recites on the feasts of this glorious Virgin, taken from the proverbs: "He that finds me, finds life, and obtains salvation from the Lord," St. Bernard says, when we have found favour with Mary, we may be assured that we have found the means of obtaining all good things. The reason for this is drawn from her goodness, and her power, when a person has both good will, and full power, we may hope for much. Now the Mother of God, is all goodness towards mankind in general. She has no quality which obliges her to exercise rigor, but she holds the office of Mediator and Advocate between God and man; in virtue of these two titles, she desires nothing more than to do good to all, but she has peculiar goodness and tenderness for those who are particularly devoted to her, and she will never suffer to be outdone in liberality by her faithful servants. As to her power; St. Peter Damian assures she has all power in Heaven and on earth, and St. Bernard affirms that power cannot be wanting to her any more than good will, unless we can bring ourselves to believe that the Son of God, is wanting in respect to his Mother, and unless we think that he has not infused into her the most ten-



der bowels of charity, whilst he remained nine months shut up in her womb. Let me then exhort you to cherish a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Glory in having her for your Mother and first Patroness in the happy engagements you have taken upon yourselves with her Son. Invoke her powerful intercession with the same. All graces indeed are gifts of God, but Mary is the channel through which they pass, for it is his will, says, St. Bernard, that we should have all things through Mary. In all dangers, doubts, and perplexities, says the same saint, think on Mary, run to Mary, invoke Mary. Let her name never depart from your mouth, nor from your heart, "But that your devotion may be true and perfect, it must have these two qualities: it must be cordial, and constant, First it must be cordial, that is, from the heart, and not merely with the lips. Prayers and other practices are good, but they ought to spring from, and be accompanied with a true desire of pleasing the Blessed Virgin and avoiding whatever may displease her. Secondly, your devotion should be constant, so that it never relent, either with age, or time, much less through negligence; for if devotion to the Blessed Virgin is a mark and means of salvation, as we have seen; to relent in it, evinces that we are careless about salvation, or that we do not believe that this devotion towards the Blessed Virgin are numerous, the first and principal is, to consecrate ourselves to her, that she may regard us as belonging to her, consequently take us under her <sup>particular</sup> protection;

This you did on the day you entered your scholarship; in consequence of having chosen her for your Mother, you should ask her blessing at least morning, and evening, have a picture or image of the Blessed Virgin in your cell, in order to kiss her feet with reverence and devotion when you go in or out of your cell; wear a medal or picture about you, get enrolled in the Scapular or Rosary; recite her Office. It is good to prepare for her feasts by a novena, & to communicate, beginning through her intercession the virtue she chiefly signalized, on that Feast: for example the feast of the Conception, beg she will preserve you from all actual sin, as she was preserved from original. On the feast of her Presentation, beg the perfect consecration of yourself to God, On the Purification, beg purity of body and mind. On the Annunciation, Humility, and on the Assumption the Grace of a happy death; and so of the rest.

But the most unequivocal mark of our love and devotion to this ever glorious Queen, who is also our Mother, is the imitation of her virtues, her inviolable purity, her profound humility, her estrangement from the world and love of retirement, her fidelity in fulfilling her duties, her heroic courage in the practice of self-denial and entire abandonment to the will of God, her gratitude, her ardent love of God, joined to her zeal for the salvation of souls redeemed with the precious blood of her Son; her constancy under trials, the uprightness of her in-

tention in all her actions : these are what we must study, and practice, if we would be the children of Mary. Doing this we may be assured of having her protection in life and in death.

I feel confident it will meet your wishes that I should continue this exhortation by setting forth briefly the merits of St. Joseph, because he was chosen the Father and Patron of the Institute above a hundred years ago, and because it is difficult to have a true devotion for the Mother of God without being touched with sentiments of piety towards her chaste Spouse, and because after devotion to the Blessed Virgin, it is one of the most powerful helps to secure our Salvation.

If we judge of the dignity of men by the importance of the employments which heaven confides to them, what are we to think of the heights of St. Joseph's dignity, who was chosen amongst all men to be the master, the head, the Superior of the holy family ; in fine, the guardian of Jesus and Mary !

This elevation never had, nor never will have its equal : what proves the excellence of St. Joseph's merits are the singular privileges with which he was favoured ; these were to be the Spouse of Mary, and to have Jesus and Mary, the objects of his devotion, continually before his eyes, which no other had, and to die in their arms, - consequently he received a grace of preparation, a grace of perfection, a grace of consummation ; the first grace was measured to him by the eminence of his ministry. St. John Baptist was the precursor

of Christ — but St. Joseph was his nursing Father, the saviour of his — Saviour, when he saved him from the cruelty of Herod. The Apostles were the Ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and co-operators of the mysteries which regarded immediately the person of the divine word; the Angels are his ministering Spirits to execute his will, but St. Joseph shared with the Holy Ghost the title of Spouse of Mary, and with the eternal Father, the glory in some sort of divine Paternity. When we consider that his wisdom, his virtues, his perfections, and graces were proportioned to these titles, and to his alliance with Jesus and Mary, our minds must be ravished and lost in these thoughts. This sublime grace of preparation was never for an instant idle or barren in St. Joseph; it was perfected by continual increasing. Death only procures for the saints the enjoyment of God, but Joseph on earth enjoyed a privilege which equalled him to the Blessed inhabitants of Heaven. An Angel discovered to this great Saint the glory of Jesus and Mary, but how much more intimately was he instructed in this high and sublime mystery by the operation of the Holy Ghost in his mind and heart. Is it possible to live in the midst of flames, and not be consumed? St. Joseph passed the greatest part of his life in the most ardent flames of divine love, with Jesus and Mary. In Jesus was contained the plenitude of all good, because he was a Man-God; in Mary this plenitude was



spread with an abundance incommensurable to all mere creatures, because she was the true Mother of God. In Joseph this same plenitude was spread an abundance much inferior indeed to that of Mary, but superior to that of any other creature, because he was the father, by deputation of God the Father, and by the affection of his heart. In fine the life of St. Joseph, that life composed of days filled with graces and merits, was terminated by a death the most happy and the most glorious.

The Church herself represents to us, Jesus and Mary, at the death bed of this illustrious Saint imparting to his great heart those heavenly flames with which they burned.

His power in Heaven equals his eminent power on earth, as St. Teresa attests, that she never asked any thing through his intercession that she did not obtain; Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, this Trinity which honored the earth with its visible presence, which had but one spirit, and one heart, ought to be the first principle object of our veneration, our confidence, and our love, Pharaoh granted to Joseph of the ancient Testament six great privileges, 1<sup>st</sup>. he made him general Steward of his household, 2<sup>nd</sup>. he created him viceroy of Egypt, 3<sup>rd</sup>. he made over to him the Royal Seal, to grant and seal all favors, 4<sup>th</sup>. he had him seated in the second chariot, and commanded all to bow to him, whom the King would honor, 5<sup>th</sup>. he made him Saviour of Egypt, lastly he sent all those who had any favor to solicit of

his Majesty to Joseph that they might obtain them by his credit, of his wise minister, and be in a measure indebted to him for the grant of their request. Nothing certainly is more astonishing than this memorable event of sacred history, and yet it is but a figure of the much more interesting wonders of St. Joseph.

It is not an earthly King, but the God of Heaven who exalts him, and loads him with the most signal favors. He appointed him Steward or rather grand-master of the holy Family. He was truly the representative of God on earth, and bore the title of Father, to his only begotten Son. He confided to his care the image of his salvation, the eternal word, who is, as it were, the seal of his Sovereign authority, to give us to understand that with this dear Son, and by him he disposes of all graces. Do you not see that the amiable and august name of Saviour belongs to Joseph by a much more just title than the ancient Joseph, since he nourished, educated, and preserved him, who, is the salvation of all men! But the last trait of this comparison, and the most advantageous to us is, that whoever would obtain any favor of heaven should address themselves to St. Joseph, through him to Mary, and through them both to Jesus. It is the way of salvation, the way of perfection, and the way of all grace. I will conclude this exhortation with a few words on devotion to the Angels,

Though they have all a right to our respectful and tender sentiments; it is just nevertheless to distinguish our Guardian Angels, happy they, who, by a life wholly spiritual and truly Angelic, testify their gratitude in a manner most acceptable to these blessed spirits. Happy they who know how to converse familiarly with these spirits of light; how sweetly does this heavenly converse with them serve to detach us from the earth, and its vanities. St. Bernard prescribes us three indispensable duties in their regard, respect for presence, confidence in their power, and protection, love and gratitude for their services, let us add submission, and obedience to their inspirations, and, as practice serve to nourish piety, set apart one day in the week to honor them, by some particular devotions. If we are zealous to please these amiable protectors, we shall address our honours also to other legions of Blessed Spirits, and amongst them in particular, St. Gabriel, who was chosen to announce to Mary the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, that Mystery which is the source of our glory and felicity. St. Raphael whose venerable name signifies Physician of God, because he principally cooperates in the cure of our souls! The Seven Spirits whom the Scripture represents to us as assisting always before the throne of God in a special manner, and who can be so favorable to us; these are they whom we may distinguish in our worship, by reason of their rank and power. But by how many titles should the

great Archangel St. Michael, the head of the heavenly host, the vanquisher of Lucifer and his adherents, the protector of every faithful soul at the divine tribunal of judgment, the protector of the universal Church, and of our house and family in particular, call for our veneration, love, and gratitude ! His miraculous interposition has more than once saved us from destruction, and turned our bitterest enemies into faithful friends devoted to our interest. Cherish then a devotion to this glorious Archangel, hand it down to posterity, as you have received it from us and with your acts of thanksgiving for past favours, join earnest supplications for a continuance of the same. In order to merit this, let us walk in the footsteps of our Ancient Sisters whose eminent virtues, especially the spirit of prayer, mortification and zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, which no labour could weary, no danger could daunt, whose Christian fortitude bore the test of temptations, the loss of temporalities, their liberty, and even risking their lives in the same cause, endeared them to the Almighty. To them, under God, and his holy Archangel are we indebted for the peaceful dwelling we now inhabit, and the many blessings we enjoy in this holy state. Let us not degenerate from their heroic virtues, that we may one day also share their rewards in a blessed immortality.

Amen.





## EXHORTATION ON THE THIRD RULE.

"Each person must be ready to pay a most prompt and humble obedience to the superioress, at all times and all places, as to all things that may seem expedient to her in our Lord for the great glory of God, the salvation of their neighbour, and the observance and advantage of the Rule."

It would appear <sup>unn</sup>ecessary to make a particular exhortation on this Rule, as it might seem sufficient with the section of obedience hereafter to be explained. But as this virtue is to characterize this Institute, and by the perfection to which it is carried in our holy Rule, to serve as a substitute for great bodily austerities, which are not consistent with our labours in teaching, therefore the Constitutions mark that it is necessary all who are of this Institute should be well trained to it.

I cannot therefore dispense with holding it up as a subject for serious attention, and I remark first, that in every state, family, as well as moral body, there must always be a head to govern.

If insubordination of inferiors comes, confusion takes place, and members are divided; and how shall a kingdom

stand, says our Saviour, which is divided against itself? The whole government, therefore, of this Institute is lodged in the superioress, who is the substitute of God, the interpreter of his will, and the instrument he makes use of, not only as an eye to watch over us, but as a spring to give us motion.

It belongs to the superioress to appoint all the different officers, to whom she may give as much of her authority as she pleases, being guided in this by the dispositions, talents, experience, and virtue of the subject; and though all these qualities were united in the one person, no prudent superioress would allow an independent authority, as such independence would do away with the very essence of the religious state; and I may venture to say, no good religious would even venture to accept an office under such conditions, first, because this dependence on the superioress affords the opportunity of practising many excellent virtues as often as we apply to her, of which the subject would be deprived; and again, because she alone would be responsible for whatever ill success or damage might arise to any individual, or the community at large, through her imprudence, want of skill, or any other defect of conduct; whereas, by following the Rule of her office, under the direction of the superioress, she is screened from every censure or complaint, and thus secures her peace of mind.

Indeed the Rules of each respective office express this dependence as follows: "With the advice or approbation of the superioress, let her do so and so; and, elsewhere, let her have recourse to the superioress to know her will, her pleasure, &c." Never, therefore, imagine that in any station or post of your life, you are to be independent of the superioress, since she herself is dependent on the bishop. But as the Rule specifies, let us promptly and humbly obey the superioress at all times—that is, whether ancient or young in religion, in all places—that is, whatever office or employment we fill.

Here I may introduce the fifth Rule to your notice, which, not content with our accepting and fulfilling the post assigned us, requires, moreover, that every one be content with her station, and not desire to be advanced to another. The securest place for a bird is its nest; the more private the better, there it is secure and warm, though only composed of straws; if it moves ever so little, it is exposed to the net or gun. There are

some religious who will not remain in the nest—that is, the station which is assigned them, and which God has placed therein. They like not the superioress who is too exact or severe the sister given them as assistant does not suit their humour; the employment is not to their liking. They desire a change, and they fall into the snare of the enemy. Had they kept their nest with the humble sparrow, they might have lain warm and secure; whereas, if they once become dissipated, if they begin to think they have not justice done them, that they are ill-treated, neglected, and despised, and more especially if they covet something higher, and begin to form projects, and lay schemes to compass it, what a wide gap will such open to let in the enemy? what an entrance to vanity, pride, ambition, envy, and the like base vices, will they give?

Nor is this to be understood of domestic sisters only, who are expressed in this Rule, but of all according to their degree. Even the novices must be content to remain in the noviciate, without wishing for the end of it before the prefixed time, under the specious pretext of doing great things for the Institute or the glory of God. It is a very ordinary illusion of the enemy to suggest such thoughts to novices, as well as to others, in order to divert their thoughts from what is more suitable with their present state, and more perfect in respect of them. For example, the enemy will often represent to anchorets or such as are called to a solitary life, the great things they might do for the glory of God and salvation of souls. On the contrary, to those who are called to an active life, he proposes to them the high perfection of Mary's part, the sanctity they might arrive to by applying themselves to prayer and solitude.

These seemingly pious thoughts and good desires are frequently mere deceits and illusions of the Devil. They want a solid foundation. They are of no use at the present time, and when the time of making use of them comes, they often vanish into smoke, and new ones succeed.

The illusion is proved by their amusing themselves with desires of future perfection and sanctity, whilst they neglect the present opportunity and means of exercising virtue, and making progress in perfection; for, how can we possibly think that such motions come from God, when they are unwilling to use that application of mind necessary to the discharging faithfully



their present duty, and perhaps murmur and complain at the labour it requires, and at a charitable admonition given them for their negligences ?

True inspirations are known by humility and obedience : humility, by paying a deference to the judgment of the superiress ; obedience, in abiding by her decrees. Wherefore, do not let the Devil impose on you, but, casting off all care for the future, make it your business, as the Rule says, to perfect yourselves in your present situation, and to bestow your care in the service and honour of God.

It is obvious from what I have said, that the first part of this Rule is very necessary to the keeping of this latter ; because it is hardly possible to discharge a duty well, unless we apply our thoughts, care, and endeavours entirely to it. As we are to direct all our actions, employments, and offices to the greater glory of God ; so we are to perform them with all the diligence and exactness we can ; for we must not offer any thing to God that is faulty or defective. To avoid this we must not only direct our attention as above, but bend all our thoughts to execute it perfectly. We read of a custom among some heathens, who in time of sacrifice had always one to remind them of their duty, saying : “ Do well what you are about ; have your minds fixed upon the sacrifice you offer.” So necessary it is to have your thoughts fixed on the sacrifice you offer. I now return to the third Rule, from which I made so long a digression to speak of the fifth, which has so close a connexion with it, that they might make but one ; and I beg your attention may follow me in explaining the qualities of our obedience expressed by these words : “ Every one must pay a prompt and humble obedience to the superiress,” &c. Why does the Rule mark these two qualities, when there are others ? Because she who obeys promptly evinces that she obeys willingly and cheerfully ; and she who obeys humbly submits her judgment as well as her will, and thus we have all the qualities in these two.

To obey promptly, we must place no interval between the command and the execution but what is expressed by the superiress, or what the nature of the command dictates to a sound understanding joined to a will well affected to obedience. Our obedience should be prompt, because the least unnecessary delay very much diminishes the merit and the reward ; were you

at the most holy occupation, on your knees at the feet of Jesus Christ, in the most intimate communication with your heavenly spouse, or occupied in shedding torrents of tears for your sins, you should quit all for obedience. I said that this promptitude evinces that we obey willingly and cheerfully ; an air of discontent, a slowness of motion, indicates that self-will is not submissive, that there is an inward trouble and rebellion, that the heart is not content ; and yet a good religious receives the command first in the heart, and this is manifested in the countenance, which is serene and cheerful ; which proves that she is in an habitual disposition to obey ; that she fears no command ; wishes for nothing but to accomplish the will of God, intimated by the superioress.

This method of conduct gives superiors the liberty of commanding her to do what is expedient, without that pain they usually have when duty obliges them to impose acts of obedience which may not be agreeable to those under their charge. This is the argument of Saint Paul when he exhorts us to obey superiors, so that they may discharge their duty with joy, not sorrow ; for that, says he, will do you no good. Nevertheless, what a subject of sorrow would it be to a superioress, if some subjects were so disaffected to obedience, that she might be afraid of exposing them to murmur by giving her orders ; but what a relief to her when the obedient religious steps forward, and prevents the command by offering her services. Thus it was our divine model Jesus Christ received the will of his Father, of dying for us as a command, “*Holocausts, &c.* Then said I, behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of me, &c. I have thy law in the midst of my heart.” The truly obedient religious acts towards the superioress the part of Simon the Cyrenian to Jesus Christ ; she helps the superioress to carry the cross of superiority. You will understand that I speak only of laborious, humble works, or painful employments, not of offices or employments of trust ; for such as these we must wait the express orders of superiors.

Magnanimity and humility are two inseparable virtues, both necessary to perfect our obedience. Magnanimity to undertake great and difficult things when ordered by obedience. I do not speak precisely of what the world calls great and difficult : as these carry with them a degree of importance, and expose us to

human applause, we are naturally carried towards them ; our vanity is piqued to get through with courage. But I speak according to God, who esteems more a victory over self-love, by suffering submissively a mortifying reproof over our pride, by undergoing a humiliation, over self-will by an act of obedience in things repugnant to our own will, than conquering of kingdoms. In the former our courage comes from God, our force from obedience, especially when accompanied with humility, by which we submit not only our will, but our judgment also. Without this, there is no religious obedience. Not that we can always help having an opposite opinion ; but this is the moment of sacrifice by silencing our own judgment.

Listen to Blossius speaking to religious persons. Hold it, says he, for a certainty, and be persuaded, that God, who is your sovereign Lord, has, in his eternal wisdom and goodness, chosen, predestinated, and given you the superioress who governs you ; and that it is by her, rather than by any other, that he will communicate his lights to you. If you estrange yourselves from her, he will withdraw his succours, and abandon you to your own judgment.

Oh ! how happy is that community where all wills are united in that of the superioress, in the supposition that she governs in the spirit of the state ; and this the Rule we are explaining secures, by pointing out by which spirit and in what things she is to command, viz., all things which may seem to her expedient in our Lord for the glory of God, the salvation of our neighbour, and the observance of the Rules. Here is a large field to exercise her authority in, and for us to practise holy obedience, but all things in our Lord.

Where then can be the difficulty ? If Christ himself appeared to you, and commanded you any thing, you would not ask a reason for it, or delay a moment ; yet you are more sure of doing the will of God, manifested by the superioress, the clock, or the bell, which calls to a duty, than if you had a special revelation or a vision of our Lord or his saints.

But to give you an idea in general of what comes under the forementioned heads, first, our salvation, and much more our perfection, is for the glory of God : wherefore we are to submit to admonitions, reproofs, or penances, for our failings and defects. But this is not enough, since we may correct our

faults without practising virtues. The superioress is therefore to give us occasions of practising virtues. What a misfortune for those who are so weak in virtue as not to allow of this ! and what an affliction to a superioress !

Second, All that has reference to the education of youth is classed with the salvation of our neighbour ; since this is the end we have in view in undertaking this laborious employment. Wherefore it belongs to the superioress to regulate the children's dress, their distribution of time, or approve of a change when it is necessary to make any ; it is hers to decide what they are to learn, to take cognizance of their behaviour, to decide the punishment to be inflicted when all other means fail, to know the state of their health, by reason of the communication she must have with the parents, and to decide if it be necessary to call in extraordinary medical assistance, to choose the master and assign the mistress who are to instruct and educate the youth, to know they do their duty therein, and to give her admonitions or advice accordingly.

Third, The observance of the Rules. This is of the greatest importance for our salvation. Why so ? Because the Rules include the commandments, and moreover contain the perfection we are bound to aim at ; as long as they are observed, the life of the religious is regular, they honour God, and their lamp shines before men. A religious house is compared to a fortress where the religious takes shelter from the corruption of the world. There must be a wall and a rampart to secure it. The commandments, which are observed with greater exactness in religion than in the world, are the wall. The Rules are the rampart. But when a religious house has the misfortune to relent in the observance of the Rule, it is exposed to total destruction ; for, when the rampart decays, the wall soon falls to the ground, and there will be even less of Christianity in the monastery than in the world.

These reflections point out the obligations of the superioress to watch over the observance of the Rules, to remove whatever may be an obstacle, and adopt every measure that may be advantageous towards its observance. It is for this she is charged with the government of the community. The greater the deference is that is paid to the superioress, the better. She can oppose abuses, and preserve order. It is the duty of each reli-



gious to second her zeal, by placing every moment of her time and all her actions under the conduct of the superioress, having recourse to her as often as the Rules prescribe. Yet there are some religious, says a pious author, who keep at a distance from the superioress ; who glory in this kind of affected silence and fatal independence. What a forgetfulness of duty is this ! What an illusion to say : " Provided I observe the Rule, I want not the superioress. But does not the Rule oblige you to have recourse to her for leaves, dispensation, and advice and counsel in your doubts ? When each addresses herself with confidence and candour to the superioress, regularity will flourish in that house.

Happy those who can say with a great servant of God : " I never follow my own judgment nor my inclinations." Oh ! how precious is such a life ! Saint Ignatius the martyr said, he would willingly change his soul with such a one. Oh ! how enviable is their state ; they are sure of arriving soon at perfection, if they are not already arrived at it, and of enjoying a sweet repose and contentment of mind. Sanctity is the first fruit of obedience ; continual joy the second, which makes religion a place of spiritual delights, and an image of paradise. Amen.

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#### EXHORTATION ON THE FOURTH RULE.

"THE method of living as to externals, for just reasons, with a view to the greater honour of God, is to be common ; neither is she obliged to any extraordinary penances," &c.

For the first point of this Rule I refer you to the Constitutions, which treat of the community of goods, or having all things in common ; that is, our dress, diet, and lodging, are all

to be alike, provided out of one common purse. The utility of this, both as to the practice of poverty and charity, is so obvious that it is not necessary to dwell thereon: but it may be advisable to dwell a little on the second part, to point out to you the just reasons (mentioned in the Rule) for not adopting any ordinary or set penances, in other words, austerities.

There are many religious who profess, with great edification, exterior practices of penance, as the means to attain the end of their vocation. Some, for example, break their rest to sing or say the divine office: others keep different Lents in the year, and some observe perpetual abstinence: others, in fine, keep perpetual silence, and are totally secluded from all commerce with seculars, either by conversation or writing. The very habit of some religious bespeaks their austerity. This manner of life was commended by our Lord in his precursor, yet he did not choose it for himself: by which we may learn that we are not to judge of the perfection of a state by its exterior practices; it should be rather taken from the end it has in view, and the means it adopts to attain it, than of others that seem more perfect and austere. Saint Bruno, though founder of so rigorous an order, says: "Such as are by their profession employed in the salvation of souls, must make less account of afflictions of the body than of the spiritual works of mercy and piety." Saint Paul insinuates the same to Timothy. Saint Thomas being asked whether an austere or common way of living was more conducive to the salvation of souls, he gave the preference to the latter.

For this and other reasons to be hereafter mentioned, we have nothing in our exterior that bespeaks an austere manner of life. Our habit has nothing forbidding in its appearance; we have not set penances, such as fasting and watching, that our health and spirits not being depressed, we may act with more vigour in our usual duties towards our neighbour. Though we find several other religious, who labour very zealously in the service of others, yet they are not obliged to it by their Institute, as we are by ours; nor are the pains they take so great and continual. Besides, though seculars are edified by an austere method of life, yet they are not induced to imitate it; and they might fear that this spirit of austerity would influence our method of education, and inspire the youth with whom we are

intrusted, with too rigid morals, which would deter many from sending their children to us.

It is certain that true virtue is severe to itself and indulgent to others ; but seculars do not easily believe this. Therefore, to preserve a greater good, we have not adopted the above practices, which, being uncommon to the generality of people, gives the denomination of common to our way of living, in as much as seculars see nothing extraordinary that strikes the eye. For this very reason, it is necessary to maintain a good reputation, that we may be in a greater capacity of doing good to all ; we must bend all our endeavours to ground ourselves well in humility, a great fear and love of God, zeal to promote his glory in ourselves and others, a perfect victory over our passions, especially self-will, self-love, pride, and the desire of our own ease. We should labour to acquire a love of humiliations, contradictions, and the practice of universal mortification ; we should apply ourselves to recollection and prayer, thereby to gain a constant union with God.

When the soul is richly adorned with these solid virtues, it will not fail to shine forth to the edification of our neighbour. These virtues will influence our exterior conduct and conversation, so as to render us composed, sweet, and respectful. A great love of God will make us zealous in bringing others to love and serve him ; it will urge us to acts of charity, and, if joined with self-denial and a desire of suffering, no difficulties will hinder us from complying with our duty. Let us then take particular care to ground ourselves well in the practice of solid virtues ; for all the beauty of the king's daughter is from within, and the works proceeding from the principles of solid virtues, are the beautiful variety with which she is clothed round about or exteriorly. These will bring more souls to God, than any exterior rigour in the way of living can do. "A bad tree," says our Saviour, "cannot bring forth good fruit, nor a good tree bring forth bad fruit." "By their fruits," says he, "you shall know them."

Corporal penances may be considered either as the effect of the virtue of penance, or as a means to obtain that virtue, or any other, or some spiritual or temporal blessing. As they are only means, they are to be increased or moderated accordingly ; for the Rule prescribes no set penances ; it gives a much greater

scope to the particular devotion or circumstance of each, than could be prudently ordained for all. Whatever penances and mortifications are necessary for overcoming our passions, advancing in the way of God's service, and obtaining the end of our vocation, is not only commendable, but expressly ordained by the Rule.

This leaving of the use of penances to the conscience of every particular person, according to her present necessity and to the determination of superiors, makes the Rule as strict for particulars as it is moderate in regard of all. It was thought more convenient not to impose any obligation of set penances or mortifications on all, than to be obliged to make continual use of dispensations. Though the use of dispensations is necessary, yet the too frequent use of them is very prejudicial to religious discipline, and is often attended with bad consequences. One advantage of using a common way of life is, that we are not exposed to temptations of vain glory. A penitential exterior carries along with it an air of sanctity which draws extraordinary respect and veneration from others. This is apt to raise vain thoughts; whereas, when there is nothing in the exterior to attract notice, we are secured from vain glory.

From leaving this matter to the superioress, we draw this advantage, that we have double merit as often as we use any bodily mortification, namely, the merit of the virtue of penance and that of obedience. I may add the merit and exercise of many other virtues, since, in asking leave of our superioress for the mortifications we desire to do, we often exercise humility, patience, charity, and many other virtues.

Another reason for this rule was, that in this, as in all things, we may act by a motive of love, rather than of fear. Therefore the Rule would leave it to every one (with the advice of the superioress) to judge what measure of penance and mortification was necessary for her, not doubting but that the interior law of charity would dictate to every one what she ought to do in this kind. Through the infinite mercy of God we find that it carries most on so zealously to exercises of mortification and penance, that there is more want of a curb than of a spur.

In this manner our holy Rule provides efficaciously against indiscreet zeal in the use of corporal mortification. It no less prudently prevents our falling into the other extreme of too



great indulgence, by leaving<sup>it</sup> in the power of superiors to assign what mortifications and penance every one shall practise for the greater profit of her spirit. Therefore, when superiors find any sister too much addicted to her ease, they are empowered by this Rule not only to exhort her to make use of convenient chastisements of the body, but also to enjoin them; which, by virtue of this Rule, every one must receive willingly and perform religiously, how great soever these penances may be, provided superiors, who know the spiritual necessities of their subjects, think them necessary for overcoming the passions, resisting temptations, or for greater progress in the way of virtue; they are to be performed cheerfully with a true and sincere desire of profiting of them. As the spirit by which the Institute is governed, following herein the example of our Saviour, in the spirit of meekness and love, that interior charity so much recommended to us in the Constitutions, superiors seldom enjoin any very rigorous penances or afflictions of the body by virtue of the power this rule gives them. They are even very cautious and backward in complying with the pious desires of the fervent, and always prefer the interior exercises of mortification to the exterior chastisements of the body; for the true virtue of penance consists in the former; they may be used at all times, for we never want trials of patience, of denying and breaking our self-will, of humbling ourselves and submitting our judgment to that of others. These mortifications are most acceptable to God; they do not impair strength or prejudice health, but, on the contrary, they give great vigour to the soul, strengthen it against all temptations, and enrich it with all sorts of

virtue. Wherefore, let us apply ourselves chiefly to acts of interior mortification, and make use of corporal penances and afflictions of the body as far as, with the approbation of superiors, they may help to your progress in virtue and the greater service of God.

It would be grossly deceiving yourselves, to exclude from a spiritual life compunction for the sins you have committed, and corporal austerities, under pretext that it is excellent to abandon yourselves to the amorous impressions which the contemplation of the amiable perfections of Jesus Christ make upon your heart. The Saints loved God, otherwise they would not be saints; but they grieved for their faults, even their least faults, and exercised great mortifications upon themselves to expiate them. Nourish therefore this salutary compunction in your heart, not only in preparing for the sacrament of penance, but at all times, after the example of the Royal Prophet, who was a man according to God's own heart: his tears were his bread day and night, besides inspiring you more and more with a detestation of sin, compunction will prevent you falling again so easily, which is a singular advantage; it will serve to purify you from past faults, and give you courage and strength to carry the cross of Jesus Christ, and voluntarily to satisfy the divine justice.

Without a special revelation you cannot be assured that your contrition has been such as to merit your reconciliation with an offended Deity; but this constant spirit of compunction is the best moral security you can have of it. It is true, you must hope that God has pardoned your past sins, when you were converted to him.

and made a general confession. Although the guilt of those sins is remitted by a good confession, yet the temporal pain remains to be undergone, either in this life or in Purgatory. Now in proportion as you excite yourself to sentiments of contrition, that you lament and beg God in the sincerity of your heart, the greater humility and love it is accompanied with, the more satisfactory will be your penance. How great a good is it for a soul to satisfy the divine justice, by the humiliation of a heart broken with an amorous contrition. Ah! if you knew with what paternal complacency Jesus Christ sees a soul humbled at his feet, begging pardon of him with sentiments which love produces, not less than the deformity of sin; if you knew the value of these sentiments in his eyes you would incessantly ask him to form this disposition in you.

Be not deceived in imagining that this practice will cast you into sadness; that it is therefore contrary to that holy maxim so frequently inculcated, of serving God with joy. No; virtue is not opposed to itself; this sadness is accompanied with a certain relish which is better felt than expressed. The heart is dilated and opened by confidence to the hope of pardon. If your heart is penetrated with this compunction, which is a gift of God, and if it should move you to shed tears, take care if you are alone not to stop their course; let them flow softly and affectionately; speak to Jesus Christ with an humble confidence; say to him all that your contrition suggests of regret, confusion, humility, confidence in his goodness and love; but let it be a penitent love. To distinguish whether it be only natural sensibility, know that this virtue of compunction

produces these effects, namely, to punish one's self and to embrace the cross; the former, either to purify still more, or to revenge upon one's self the injury done to God by past faults; the second, which is the consequence of the first, animated by the same motives, is to suffer all that Divine Providence permits, however painful and disagreeable; and not only to support trials, but to have a certain satisfaction in submitting to them. Thus you undergo labour, how painful soever it may be; sickness you suffer with resignation, how long and afflicting soever; contradictions you endure with patience; and you submit to humiliations in a spirit of sweetness.

Compunction gives holy industry in the practice of mortification; so that, finding that you have hitherto too eagerly sought the satisfaction of the senses at the expense of what you owed to God, you determine to punish yourself not only by renouncing innocent satisfactions, but by chastising your body, and making it suffer in proportion as you have flattered it. Of the necessity and utility of these practises no one can doubt; since we cannot enter heaven but by using violence; and to form Jesus Christ in us, we must crucify the flesh with its vices and lusts; to deny this, would be to condemn the practice of all the saints. How are these penances to be regulated, to render them pleasing to God, and meritorious to ourselves? They must be accompanied by the submission of our will by obedience: it belongs not to one who would serve God to act according to her own head; it is permitted to ask confessor for what you



desire ; if he be an enlightened and zealous director, you must abide by his decision without insisting on more.

What is it you propose to yourself ? Is it the will of God or not ? Without doubt it is his will ; and how can it be manifested more clearly to you than by him who holds his place ? Why then do you not act with simplicity ? Another point that ought to be observed is discretion . There are some souls who, by a particular attraction, are called by God to an extremely penitent life ; though they are delicate, God supports them in their austerities by a particular grace ; but these examples are rare, and ought to be well tried by humility and obedience, before they are permitted to follow their attraction . Such practices may be called indiscreet, which so ruin health or weaken the constitution as to prevent the observance of the fast and abstinence of the Church ; such also as are a hindrance to your fulfilling the duties of your state .

The end the Devil has in view in them is, that, being abhorred to recruit your health or strength, hurt by these indiscretions, you give in to the other extreme, and lay the practice of mortification quite aside, and even give in to indulgence which self love suggests to be necessary . Obedience will obviate all these faults ; it will allow you such mortifications as are compatible with your duties and strength, and which you may continue without interruption . Thus you will not fall into remissness ; and to supply for what you ask and are refused, you must substitute the interior mortification of your will, vanity, curiosity, precipitation, and vivacity, and a greater vigilance in the mortification of your senses .

To acquit yourself of these penances according to the spirit, three things are necessary. First Purity of intention. They may be offered in expectation of your sins, or those of others, especially those you have occasioned; to render yourself conformable to Jesus Christ, by bearing in our body the marks of the sufferings of Jesus Christ; to obtain grace to overcome some temptation. They must be united with the sufferings of a God-man, from whom alone they can derive their merit. Second, Dispositions to accompany our penances is compunction; look back for a moment on the sins of your life, and say with the Prophet: "I have sinned;" it is just that I should do penance; "I am ready for scourges." Think of hell or purgatory, which you have merited; these reflections will excite contrition. Third Our penances should be accompanied with pious affections. Think of the benefits of God which you have abused, the sufferings which our Lord endured for the love of you. If you perform penances in this manner, you will experience peace of mind, and a sweet confidence that God has accepted the little you have done for his love, and to satisfy his justice.

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## Exhortation on the Fifth Rule.

"A person that has been admitted to be a member of the community in one degree, must not desire to be advanced to another, but must make it her business to perfect herself in the own."

It having been thought convenient to settle divers degrees in the Institute, for the better administration of it, and it being very natural to our vanity to desire and seek to be of the higher degree, to prevent the inconveniences arising hence, an absolute indifference is required of all.

As you are to be content, and accept of whatever degree superiors shall think best to give you, this Rule requires that you remain content in it, and endeavour to perfect yourself in it, without any solicitude or care to pass to a higher.

This Rule is of great importance, not only for the private good of every particular, but for the common good of the Institute. If it be duly kept, right order will be observed, and the body will flourish; if it be neglected, nothing but confusion and disorder will follow. By this distinction of degrees a certain form of discipline is maintained, and thereby good order is kept. Nothing will contribute more to the welfare and prosperity of a moral body, than a right distribution and subordination of all its parts.

When every person serves in her proper place, does

the office she is appointed for, all does well. Nothing so destructive and pernicious as to confound this order. What would become of an army if in time of battle, common soldiers should effect playing the part of a serjeant, lieutenants that of captains, majors that of colonels, and colonels that of generals—should all, neglecting the duty proper to their respective ranks, take upon them to do what does not belong to them? What confusion would it cause? What an advantage would this disorder give to a strong and watchful enemy? How much would it expose a flourishing army to the danger of an entire overthrow or defeat?

We may be compared to an army, since we have chosen our blessed Saviour for our captain, and have solemnly enlisted under his standard. This distinction of degrees shows different ranks that are in the army; the subordination which is so necessary for its preservation and right government, the admirable order or arrangement of it. As long as each performs well the duty of his rank, the enemy will not be able to break in upon us, we shall be able to bear the fiercest assault, and may securely promise to ourselves a victory: whereas, if you once become dissatisfied with the degree Providence has placed you in,—if you begin to think you have not justice done, <sup>to</sup> you,—that you are ill treated, neglected, and despised,—if you begin to covet a higher station, what a wide gap will you open to let in your enemy! what an entrance will you give to unruly passions and vices,—to pride, vanity, ambition, envy, and the like; all which vices, and many more, are ready to rush in



upon us whenever we begin to be uneasy in the rank we in, and aspire to advance to a higher.

Such as are admitted to be lay sisters, must not entertain thoughts of being choir sisters. Novices must be content to remain in the rank of a novice, with wishing for the end of the noviciate, or being taken out of it before the prefixed time. St. Lonabius goes yet farther, and will have every one apply to the study, business, or office obedience shall place her in, without any solicitude or care of passing to another.

This is what he recommends to us in the nineteenth rule, in which he bids us take care to procure a right intention, not only in our state of life, but in all particular actions. As we are to direct all to the great or honour and glory of God, so we are to perform them with all the diligence and exactness we can; for we must offer nothing to God that is defective and faulty.

To perform our actions, employments, and offices thoroughly well, it is very necessary to have our thoughts only intent on them; for, the greater our attention is to what we are doing, the more accurately we shall do it. We read of a custom among some heathens, who, in time of sacrifice, would <sup>always</sup> have one to put the people in mind of their duty, saying, "Do well what you are about to do. Have your mind only fixed upon the sacrifice you are going to offer."

This attention to the action you are about, to the employment or office you are in, helps to perform it with attention. The more your thoughts and desires are united about one thing, the more

easily you will discover the true way of performing it well, and avoid all faults in it. Persons who have their mind dissipated with many thoughts and desires, cannot easily give sufficient attention to the thing they are doing, Hence it is done carelessly and with many faults.

If, from thinking of other places, employments, and offices, we come to be uneasy or dissatisfied with the place or employment we are in, we shall never take it anxiously to heart, or make it our business to perform it well. Persons are seldom in any great concern about doing an affair well that they do not like. They must be very virtuous to apply their mind seriously to it: they will be grievously tempted sometimes to neglect it quite, or at least to perform it slightly or by halves, which would be of great prejudice to the Institute.

Saint Paul gives us a similitude which plainly expresses the necessity of adhering closely to the observance of this Rule, in order to avoid the confusion, I may say destruction, of the Institute. This blessed apostles calls the Church a body, of which Christ himself is the head, - the faithful are the members of it. Every religious order, in like manner, is a moral body composed of divers members, distributed so through the whole as to render it capable of exercising itself with edification and ease in all the employments and functions proper to its state. We compare both to a human body, in which there are many members. Every one has its function proper to

itself; each has its respective place, and does not interfere with another. The feet do not affect to be the hands, nor the hands to be the head; nor does the head despise the feet. The eyes are employed in seeing, the ears in hearing, the tongue in speaking.

Whilst every part remains in its own place, and is employed in its proper acts, all goes well. If, by accident, any part be displaced, the body suffers for it. Put an arm or leg out of joint, and it will cause excessive pain. The least nerve or artery displaced does not only cause pain, but renders the part useless.

In the same manner in religious orders, let every one keep her rank and mind her own business, and all will go on well, discipline will be kept up, and virtue will flourish. If this order and subordination be not observed, there will be nothing but confusion and great disorder. Therefore, we must be content in any degree, with any office the superiours shall place us in. We must remain in it as long as superiors shall think fit, even to our dying day, without ever seeking to pass to another.

Hitherto I have treated of the first thing required of us in this Rule, namely, to be content with the office or station Providence shall allot us. I will now pass to the second, which is, to perfect ourselves in the degree or station we are in.

The observance of the first part of the Rule is very necessary to the keeping of the latter, because it is hardly possible to attain the perfection of even the lowest degree amongst us, unless we apply our thoughts, care, and endeavours entirely to it.

It is a very ordinary illusion of the enemy to put people upon impracticable or even impossible things, in order to divert their thoughts from what is more suitable with their present state, and perfect in respect of them. The enemy will often represent to anchorites, or such as are called to a solitary, contemplative life, the great things they might do for the glory of God in a public life. To those who are called to an active life, he proposes the high perfection of Mary's part; the sanctity they might arrive to by applying to contemplation and solitude. He will put the novice upon schemes and projects of imitating the prayer, &c., of Saint Aloysius or Brother Berkman, in time of study, to divert and hinder her from attending seriously to her duty to God and her own perfection in the circumstances she is actually in. These pious thoughts, good desires, and fervent resolutions, are often mere deceits and illusions of the Devil; they want a solid foundation, therefore are only castles in the air: they are of no use at present, and when the time comes of making use of them, they often vanish into nothing but smoke, and new ones succeed in their place.

How much more advantageous would it be for a novice to propose to herself the example of St. Stanislaus, who was a novice; such examples, duly applied, are of great benefit. When the resolutions and purposes of imitating them regard present circumstances, not a future state, they will infallibly help much to perfection. Do not let the Devil impose upon you and amuse you with impracticable desires and notions of a



very distant perfection in a state to which you will never come ; but, casting off all solicitude or care of passing to another, endeavour to perfect yourself in the degree that you are in. Do not mistake my meaning. I do not blame holy and ardent desires of doing great things for God's glory, even of laying down your lives and suffering martyrdom for our holy faith ; such desires are very commendable and proper to stir up to a more exact and perfect performance of your duty in the state you are in.

When these desires are sincere and come from a motion of divine grace, they enlarge the soul and render it fit for great enterprises afterwards, and very fervent in daily exercises.

The illusion is, when persons feed and amuse their fancy with desires of future perfection and sanctity, and neglect, in their present circumstances, to make use of the means God actually affords them for their improvement in virtue and progress in perfection. This neglect of the present means and opportunities of exercising virtue, plainly shows the insincerity of their desires ; for how can they be said to desire a thing sincerely, if they neglect the means of having it when they may ? How can they flatter themselves that they can do great things for God's service, if they repine now at any disappointment, and are unwilling to undergo any pain or trouble for his sake ?

Another reason to induce us to improve in our own vocation or employment is, the danger of quitting it. The securest place for a bird is its nest, the more private the better ; there it is secure and warm, though made of straw. If it move ever so little, it is exposed to the net and gun of the fowler ; and by how much the more rare, so much the greater their danger. There are birds that, upon the approach of winter in their own country, cross the seas in flocks, in search of summer in other countries, and there discovered, fall a prey into the kitchen of the watchful fowler (*Prov.*, xxvii.).

There are certain religious who will not rest in the nest, the place, degree, or employment God has allotted them ; they apprehend a winter at home ; they fancy not the condition, place, and state they live in ; they like not the superiress, she is too harsh, exact, severe, less kind or generous : their sisters suit not their humour, their employment is not to their liking : the air not good for their health, their employment or office is

not for their honour. They fancy a summer abroad, therefore must change. But alas! they fall into the nets of their enemies—temptations of all sorts assail them. If they kept at home with the humble sparrow, they might be warm and safe, live contented and secure.

This rash inconstancy not only exposes them to temptation, but to the loss of their vocation also, and to that of their eternal salvation. Who would think it? A change from one house brings a change from another; now having quitted her vocation, God knows whether she will hold that of her predestination. A religious is in a degree, place, employment; she is well in it, she pleases God in it, she serves the Institute, she lives contentedly. Our Lord is at hand to reward her; but if she begins to change, let her take heed; her crown depends upon it; this is promised to her labour in this employment, this place, this office; if she quits it, it may be that she quits her crown.

For these reasons, let every one be content with the station she is in; let her endeavour in it to please God, let her labour to take pains, as if there were no other; let her endeavour to perfect herself in it; that is, to perform the duties of it with great exactness, readiness, fervour, and constancy, doing all in due order and time with a right intention—that is, out of a motive of pure love, seeking to serve and please the divine goodness purely for itself. Let every one be persuaded that this is the best way of securing herself from the illusions of the Devil; that it is the true way to lay a solid foundation of virtue; a foundation fit for raising a high tower of perfection in any office or employment to which she may afterwards be advanced. How great will be the comfort to die in the place where obedience placed her.

## FIRST EXHORTATION ON THE SEVENTH RULE.

“CONCUPISCENCE being the root of all evils, they are seriously to endeavour to extirpate and root it entirely out of their hearts.”

Saint Ignatius gives us a perfect idea of evangelical perfection by the order he observes in delivering the Rules, leads us gradually through the three ways of a spiritual life. After having proposed to us the high perfection to which we are to aspire, as the end of our vocation, and set down some means to arrive thereunto, he begins here to declare in particular, what steps beginners are to take at their entrance into a spiritual life, in order to purify their souls from vicious habits, depraved inclinations, and all that is displeasing to God: this is called the purgative way. When the Rule begins to explain the exercises of solid virtues and the means how to acquire them, it is called the illuminative way, and is proper for proficients. From the twenty-third Rule, mention is made of vows, and the exercise of such virtues as unite our souls to God, and these Rules correspond to the unitive way, and are directions to the perfect.

These three degrees of a spiritual life were prefigured in the Temple of Solomon; and it is necessary to pass through each of them in order to attain perfection, as it was necessary, in the Temple, to pass through the outward court and sanctuary to enter into the sancta sanctorum. The outward court of the Temple I compare to the purgative way, and I find in it two things for which it was remarkable, which I will apply to this way. The first was a large brazen kettle, called the brazen sea, and raised upon twelve oxen of brass, and set round with glasses. The second thing was the altar of holocausts, in which the victims were consumed by fire, that were offered up for the expiation of sin. By these two are prefigured the two chief exercises of the purgative way; the first is the washing and cleansing of our conscience from all sin.

The last two Rules recommend to us great purity of conscience, which we must endeavour to procure by making our examens diligently, and frequenting the sacrament of penance; for with these tears of compunction we wash out the deadly characters sin has left imprinted on our souls. In this seventh Rule we are directed how to preserve ourselves from defiling them again, by conquering our disorderly passions and affections, in order to give God the whole possession of our hearts.

The first disorderly inclination in a spiritual life that we are to correct and offer to God, is that natural love and affection which we have for our parents and relations; for whosoever desires to become spiritual, must have no tie to nor regard for flesh and blood; therefore, to obtain that interior beauty of the soul that charms the eyes of our heavenly King, we must, as the Royal Prophet tells us, quit home and all our kindred and friends. We cannot hope to enjoy God whilst our hearts are possessed with the love of creatures; we must only regard *him* as our Father, if we desire to be treated by him as children. He knows very well how powerfully that natural inclination we have to our parents and relations binds our affections towards them; the overcoming of this for his sake is a most agreeable sacrifice, and renders us most dear to him.

It was a victory of this nature that purchased to the tribe of Levi the dignity of the priesthood, and of being God's chosen and beloved tribe: for, as we read in Exodus, this tribe being commanded to kill and destroy all the idolaters of the golden calf, without any regard to their own flesh and blood, they executed God's orders, even upon their children and brothers. For this reason, God, designing to heap great blessings upon Abraham, first made him leave his house and country, and after that, to try his fidelity, and to wean his affections from flesh and blood, ordered him to 'sacrifice his only son Isaac, which Abraham, in obedience to God's command, being ready to do, God did not only spare his son's life, but heaped innumerable blessings upon both father and son, and their posterity afterwards.

If the holy patriarch Joseph had not been taken from his father's house, he would never have been lord of Egypt. God designing Samuel to be his faithful prophet and the judge of his people, obliged his parents to send him to the high priest in



his tender years. Saint John the Baptist being the precursor of Christ, was inspired to leave his parents and to retire into the desert when very young. And the ever pure and spotless Virgin, being chosen for the high dignity of Mother of God, was to be withdrawn from her holy parents and placed in the Temple at three years of age. So necessary it is to quit our relations and kindred to become great in the kingdom of God. Our blessed Saviour observed the same method; therefore, when he called the apostles to follow him, he obliged them to quit all they had in the world, even their parents and relations.

The great doctor of the Gentiles, who came last to the apostleship, thought this so necessary a qualification for a follower of Christ, that his first care, after his conversion and commencement of the preaching of the Gospel, was, entirely to quit all his kindred and relations, according to what he writes in his first Epistle to the Galatians.

We, who, through the great bounty and mercy of God, are called to a state of high perfection, and to do great things for his honour and glory, must be particularly careful to cast off or correct all disorderly affection towards our parents or relatives, settling our hearts only upon God, and embracing all creatures with bowels of perfect charity, loving all for him, and him in all.

This is what all Christians, and particularly religious, are to make great account of. As we have enlisted ourselves to our blessed Saviour, we must follow him. He has in a very particular manner given us an example of renouncing all natural affection to parents and kindred. Though no son could be more dutiful and obedient than he was to his mother and Saint Joseph, yet, when his heavenly Father's glory required it, he withdrew from them without giving them any notice, he went into the Temple, and placed himself amongst the doctors. When, after a search of three days, his holy parents found him, he made no excuse, nor returned any other answer to the complaint of his blessed mother, than this: Were you ignorant that it behoves me to be where my Father's business is acted? Thus would our obedient Saviour give us to understand that no tie of flesh or blood ought to withhold us from the service of

our heavenly Father, whom we are to obey without any regard to our friends or relations.

After our blessed Lord left the private life of Nazareth, and began to preach publicly to the people, he gave greater proofs of the little regard he had to parents and kindred; for we do not read in the Gospel that he ever called our blessed Lady, mother. Thus, when asked by her at the marriage feast of Cana to work a miracle, he said: "Woman, what is it to me and to thee?" Afterwards, upon the cross, when he recommended his blessed mother to Saint John, and mutually to one another, he said: "Woman, behold thy son; son, behold thy mother."

During the course of his preaching, he would no longer live nor converse with her. After the feast of Cana, which was the beginning of his mission, we do not read of our blessed Lady's being at any of the entertainments to which he was invited, even in Bethania; he left her to converse with poor fishermen, whom he had chosen for his apostles. On a certain occasion being advertised that his mother and brethren wanted to speak to him, he seemingly disowned that he had any other relations than those who were united to him in the service of his heavenly Father, in carrying on the great work of the conversion of the world; then pointing at his disciples, he said: "Behold my mother, &c., whosoever shall do the will of my Father, who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother;" which is thus explained, that he not only loved them more than his carnal relations, but that he had as great love and affection for them as brothers and sisters have for one another, or as dutiful children have for their parents. This ought to be a great comfort and encouragement to us to apply with exactness and fervour to the service of God.

There are two remarkable things which may serve for our instruction. 1. No mother ever deserved the love and company of her son as the most pure mother of Christ did. 2. Our Saviour was in no danger of being injured by living and conversing with her. The only reason, then, of his leaving her, and showing so little regard for her, was to give us an example of quitting our relations for the service of God, of casting off all inordinate affection for them, and conquering the too great fondness which many have for parents and relations,

which is an obstacle to perfection and a hinderance to the exercises of our vocation.

Our Saviour's example in this matter is not a mere counsel, but as it were a precept in respect of such as embrace a religious life. It is so necessary to correct all natural tenderness and affection for our parents, that, without it, it is impossible to be a true follower of Christ. No religious can attain the perfection of her state, unless she renounce all.

Our Saviour, in the tenth chapter of Saint Mathew, says: "Who loves father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me; or who loves son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." He declares that he who does not hate both father and mother, and even his own life, cannot be his disciple; for it is required of us, as religious, to leave all that we possess to follow him. Christ absolutely refused to accept of two who offered to be his disciples, because one asked leave to go home to bid adieu to his friends; the other demanded to go and bury his father. What more reasonable in appearance than the petition of these two? yet they were not only rejected, but likewise judged unworthy of the kingdom of God.

You see how rigorously it is required of us to cast off all inordinate affection to relations. Our Saviour's example and doctrine are sufficient motives to make us comply with this Rule.

I will add a word to point out the inconveniences that result from the indulgence of this passion. It is very natural to desire to be with those whom we love; and when religious have a fondness for relatives, they are apt to seek occasions of seeing them, which exposes them to many dangers.

There is nothing so opposite to the spiritual love of God as this natural fondness for our carnal relations; like a moth, it eats the spiritual strength and vigour of our souls, inclines us to the love of earthly things, and renders us unworthy, I may say incapable, of receiving the divine influence of the Holy Ghost. What was the reason the apostles could not receive the Holy Ghost so long as our Saviour remained with them? Saint John Chrysostom answers, because the apostles were too tenderly affected to the sacred humanity of Christ; they had too great a tie to his company; they were naturally too fond of his corporal presence and conversation. If then their love for him,

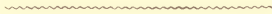
having a mixture of natural affection, could be a bar to the coming of the Holy Ghost upon them, how much more will an immoderate love and affection for our parents and kindred be a hinderance to his showering down his blessings on us ? By conversing too familiarly with our friends, we enter again into the concerns of the world ; we are often distracted and disquieted with idle and unprofitable thoughts about them ; for it is impossible to converse much with them, and not share in their joys as well as in their sorrows ; for we naturally rejoice at the prosperity of those we love, and are as naturally disturbed in their afflictions.

How easy it is to enter into their resentments and quarrels, into their detractions and murmurings, being on one side very weak in virtue, on the other extremely biassed by a natural affection in behalf of our relations. How many and how great are the disorders which flow hence ? and how can a religious be secure, who rashly, and contrary to her Rule, exposes herself to the danger of falling into them ? In conversing with relations, we do not apprehend any danger, therefore we are not much upon our guard. The Devil, at the same time, is always busy ; and often, by renewing old species of certain liberties with one another in youth, exposes us to dangerous temptations ; at least by accustoming ourselves to treat familiarly with our relations, we easily lose that modest and religious reservedness when we converse with others, especially those of the other sex.

Some say, that the only reason why they desire to be with their friends is to do them good, to help them to reform their lives, and to put them in a secure way of saving their souls. The pretence is specious, and seems to have nothing in it but what is virtuous ; but very often it is no more than mere delusion of the enemy, or a cloak to cover that irregular affection they still retain for their friends. Do they find that they have the same zeal for the conversion and salvation of others ? Are they as willing to be with others and to take pains for them ? The motive of charity embraces all without exception ; it excludes none. You will say : Well ordered charity begins at home. I grant it ; but that it is from yourself, not from your family. I must, in the first place, have regard to my own soul, to its salvation and perfection ; therefore I am to employ myself in exercises of charity, where there is less danger for



myself and more hope of my doing good to others. By what I have already said, you see what dangers we are exposed to in conversing with relations; it is no less plain that little good is to be hoped from it. Preachers seldom do any great good among their kindred. Our Saviour himself wrought all his wonders and did most good amongst strangers; when he preached in his own country, few or none were converted: though his life was so holy, his conversation so engaging, his behaviour so edifying, and his person so venerable, they would not hearken to him, but despised him saying: Is not he the son of a carpenter? how much less can any other hope to do any great good amongst her friends and relations, since our Saviour could do none amongst his? Wherefore, take care you never be deluded with these vain hopes of doing good to relations; do not expose yourself to the danger of losing your own soul, to save theirs; rather take care to cast off all inordinate love and affection for them, as our Saviour warns us and as the Rule prescribes.



## SECOND EXHORTATION ON THE SEVENTH RULE.

“AND to this effect they must divest themselves of all carnal affection to parents and relatives.”

We shall examine what is meant by the inordinate affection we are to cast off, or the hatred our blessed Saviour requires so absolutely of such as desire to follow him; then we shall speak of that love for them of which the Rule allows, and which the law of nature as well as of grace obliges us to have for our parents.

The affection then that is inordinate, is a carnal and worldly love for our kindred, which leads us to desire passionately to be with them, to hear often from them or of them; which makes us very desirous of their prosperity and advancement in the

world, and enter into their temporal concerns, which is apt to distract and disturb our peace of mind, when they are in adversity or affliction. When a religious finds that she is so affected to her relatives, that she is very sensibly touched either with joy when her family is in prosperity, or with grief when in adversity; if her thoughts are often with her relatives, and her desires lead her to be with them, she cannot be said to be truly dead to the world, nor to have left all to follow Christ. Unless we truly renounce the world and all that is in it, we cannot become true disciples.

How can they be said to have renounced their father and mother, brothers and sisters, who are always thinking of them, longing to be with them, and concerning themselves more in the affairs of their families than perhaps they would have done if they had remained in the world? It sometimes happens that religious people are fonder of their friends and relatives, and more concerned about them, than people of the world are, or than they themselves would have been, had they remained in the world. For example, when seculars are married and have children, they think very little of their parents and other relations; and upon any clashing of interests, they will as easily fall out with their relatives as with others, so far as even to forbear visiting or speaking to them when they meet; sometimes their resentment goes even to hatred and persecution. In this they do very ill, and are highly to be blamed; at the same time, this proves that the ties of flesh and blood are not so strong but that they may be broken, and that inordinate affection we naturally have for our family, is a passion that may easily be conquered. Certainly it is a subject of great confusion to religious, that worldlings can so easily disengage their hearts upon so vile and unreasonable motives, and that they are not able to moderate them upon so just and holy considerations.

Can any motive of temporal interest be compared with those religious persons are to act by? Can the particular interest of one's own family dispense with the duty to parents, or the love to brothers and sisters? and shall not the spiritual interests of our souls, our progress in virtue, our perfection and salvation, excuse us from settling our hearts upon our relatives? Shall the love a husband bears for his wife, or a wife for her husband, be thought a sufficient reason to break with parents?

and shall not the love of God, the desire we have to please Christ and imitate his example by becoming his disciples, be thought motives sufficiently strong to moderate our affections ? How much must religious be infatuated and unmindful of their vocation, and of the lights God inspired them with, when he called them to a religious state, if they harbour any doubt as to this matter ? how strongly must they be deluded by the enemy, if upon any pretence they resume that natural affection they so generally renounced for God's sake, when they entered the noviceship ? The inordinate affection we are obliged by this Rule to correct, is that which fills our minds with distractions about our friends, our hearts with vain concerns for them ; so long as we occupy ourselves with their gains and losses, their disgrace or advancement in the world, we cannot be said to have quitted them ; because it signifies very little to separate ourselves corporally from them, if we leave with them our mind and heart.

To obtain the spirit of poverty, it is not enough to part with our riches, if we still retain an affection for wealth ; the reward promised to the poor in spirit, or to those who quit all to follow Christ, is only due to such as quit the world in affection as well as in effect ; of the two it is better to possess riches without any attachment, than to leave them effectually, yet retain a love and desire of them. The vice of covetousness is not in the possession, but in the love we bear the things of this world. In the same manner, the evangelical counsel of leaving our relatives is not complied with by retiring corporally from them, but by withdrawing our minds and disengaging our hearts from that natural fondness, care and solicitude, which people are apt to entertain for their secular friends, and the things belonging to them. This is easily understood, if we do but consider for what end our Saviour requires us to quit our parents, when he calls us to a religious state of life ; it is, that we may have our thoughts free, and our hearts at full liberty to be wholly employed in the service of God and in the pursuit of virtue. This requires all the attention we are capable of, and all the strength and force of our own will ; for, we can never think sufficiently of our duty to God, of the concerns of our souls, of the deceits of the devil, of the dangers to which we are exposed, of the means we are to make use of to attain per-

fection, of the reward of the just and the punishment of sinners; neither can we ever love God sufficiently, nor admire his divine attributes; we can never render sufficient thanks for his fatherly care and providence over us.

Our desire of pleasing him, of doing his blessed will, of increasing in perfection, of securing our salvation, can never be too great; so that the service of God and our sanctification and perfection, requiring an intense and constant application of our memory, understanding, and will, we cannot employ them about our friends and relations, without failing in our duty to God, and doing great prejudice to our souls.

Having thus declared what is meant by the carnal love we are to cast off, and showed how necessary it is to withdraw our thoughts and hearts from our relations, let us examine the following words of the Rule: "Only have that love for them which a well ordered charity requires of them." Our blessed Saviour says, he did not come into the world to break the law, but to fulfil or perfect it; wherefore, when he teaches us to hate our father and mother in order to follow him, he did not intend by it to withdraw children from the respect and duty they owe to their parents, both by the law of nature and the fourth commandment; both these are divine laws, therefore they oblige all indispensably to love their parents, of whatever state or calling they are, whether secular or religious. This holy hatred that our Saviour so earnestly recommended and preached, is not contrary to the fourth commandment, but consistent with it; it does not exclude a love for parents, but perfects it. It only purifies our love from the dross it contracts by the corruption of nature; it cleanses it from passion, and changes carnal affection, which is common to brutes, into pure supernatural love and the virtue of charity. This spiritualizing of our affections does not destroy our love for our parents, but perfects it, makes us desire and seek their good with more sincerity, more effectually, and with more zeal. To love is to wish one well, and nobody wishes friends better than those who leave them to follow Christ, and to attend wholly to the service of God; for their wishes all aim at their spiritual good, perfection, and salvation. Being themselves convinced of the vanity of the world, of the baseness of its pleasures, of the danger of prosperity, the uncertainty of this life, and the necessity of securing our salvation, to prevent our being eternally miserable.



Their chief concern for their friends in the world, and their prayers should be, that they may live well and save their souls ; consequently that God may so bless them with temporal blessings, that they may be no hinderance to their future happiness.

This being the greatest good they can wish their parents, no one can wish them better than they do, consequently no one can love them better : because they know that the more they disengage their hearts from the love of creatures, to settle all their affections on God, the more pleasing to him they become, and the nearer to perfection ; their prayers will also become more efficacious, and the more capable of doing good to their friends, both by their counsel and example. By this very act of renouncing their parents, or of hating them, in Scripture phrase, they show far greater love for them than any of their secular relations do, since they do not barely wish them well, but effectually contribute to their greatest good, —their sanctification here, and their glorification hereafter.

This is one of those hidden parables the Saviour of the world would not declare to all ; it is a secret mystery he has been pleased to reveal to you, a wonderful mystery that hatred should be love, and love hatred,—that the most assured way of expressing our love for our parents and relations is to abandon them, to fly from them as from an enemy : this is a mystery concealed from the wise and great of this world, but revealed to the humble and little in their own eyes.

To comprehend it still better, we may reflect that, at the same time our Saviour orders us to hate our parents, he commands us to hate our own souls—that is, as much as possible to conquer and destroy the passion of self-love, in order to love it better, with a well ordered love, or true charity ; a love that opposes its unlawful concupiscences, and denies it such carnal pleasures as are criminal in themselves, or, at least, which expose us to great danger of falling into sin, and of losing our souls. Such hatred is not true hatred, but refined love, because it only denies it an apparent or counterfeit good, to secure its true good—its sanctification here, and its eternal happiness hereafter. Thus we change natural love into spiritual, as this Rule prescribes, and thus draw down greater blessings upon ourselves and kindred, than any good we could do for them if

we remained with them in the world ; for it often happens that God delivers the parents of religious from innumerable dangers, both of body and soul, gives them the grace of true repentance and of a happy death : thus Lot was delivered from the flames of Sodom for the sake of Abraham ; and the Marquis of Castile obtained a happy death by the prayer of his angelical son Aloysius.

After having considered the nature of spiritual love, we come in the following words of the Rule to the practice of it : “ And only having that love for them, which a well ordered charity requires of them.” How does well ordered charity require us to love our friends ? It ordains that we love our friends as we do ourselves, or as our blessed Saviour loves us ; but it forbids us to love them more ; much less are we to love them more than we love God. Hence, we must not lose our own souls to save theirs ; we may, indeed, not only lawfully, but commendably suffer a temporal loss for their spiritual good ; but it is extremely foolish to endanger our souls upon any temporal consideration ; for example, to comply with their fond passions, or to improve their condition in this life ; much less are we to neglect our duty to God to please them.

Our Saviour’s example is an admirable instruction to all religious, when urged by their parents or friends to enter into their temporal affairs, and to be often with them : Do you not know that we have left the world to attend purely to the service of God ? would you have us now quit God to be with you ? Is it suitable that I should leave his service to attend yours ? Ought I to spend my time with you, after having dedicated my whole life to the service of God ? Is not the studying of perfection, the carrying on of the great work of my neighbour’s salvation, the exact observance of all my Constitutions and Rules, a duty I owe to my heavenly Father ? Ought it not to take up all my thoughts and all my time ? Does it not then behove me to employ myself in the performance of my duties ; can I neglect them to take care of your temporal concerns, without displeasing God, and doing great prejudice to myself ? You cannot reasonably desire that your children who are settled in the world, should neglect their own business, to the prejudice of their own families, to attend to yours ; and would

you have me neglect my own perfection and salvation, the only thing I quitted you and all the world for ?

This is a just answer to our friends and relatives, when they solicit to have us often with them, and would engage us in their worldly affairs; they must be too unreasonable, if they do not allow of so just an excuse. When we leave the world and quit our parents to enter religion, we are said to have changed our state of life—that is, we are supposed to die to the world, and to begin to live to God. To die to the world, is to become insensible to the [things of the world and what it loves and esteems as honours, riches, and pleasures, and, on the contrary, not to be disquieted on account of temporal losses, disappointments, humiliations, or persecutions that may happen to ourselves or our friends in the world. From this notion of dying to the world, we may easily gather what is meant by living to God. That is, we are to be affected to spiritual and supernatural things, desirous of increasing more and more in the way of virtue; we must love to entertain ourselves with God, to think and speak of him, and of heavenly things. This the Apostle teaches when he says: “If you are risen with Christ, seek the things which are above, relish the things that are above, and not the things that are upon the earth.” For, as our thoughts and desires are, such is our life said to be; if our thoughts and desires are carnal, our life is worldly; if our thoughts are spiritual and heavenly, our life will be the same.

To correct the worldly life we led, we left our parents and generously renounced all carnal affection for them. We have come to religion to lead a spiritual life, and therefore acknowledge no other father than our heavenly Father; it is him we take in place of all kindred and friends we had in the world; it is his pleasures we study; it is his divine will we endeavour in all things to perform: thus we comply with those last words of the Rule, that being dead to the world and self-love, we live only to Christ our Lord, whom we have instead of parents, brethren, and all things else, which God of his infinite goodness grant that we may always do.

## FIRST EXHORTATION ON THE EIGHTH RULE.

“AT their first entrance they shall make a general confession of their whole lives.”

Saint Ignatius having in the foregoing Rules proposed the sublime end of the Institute, and having spoken in general of the virtue and perfection that is required of us in order to comply duly with our vocation, in this Rule we come to the particular means we are to make use of for this purpose, namely,—to make a general confession of our whole life. This may truly be called the foundation of a spiritual life, — consequently, a duty of the highest importance.

In order to make it, we shall spend some days in a serious examination of conscience and application of our thoughts to such meditations as are most proper to raise us to a great sorrow and detestation of sin.

In this we follow the example of other religious orders. Saint Bonaventure mentions the custom of making a general confession in the order of Saint Francis ; and there is a constitution of the same nature for the Cistercians.

This Rule is most religiously observed in this Institute : and that we may have a due value for it, I will treat of the reasons which induced Saint Ignatius to make it. According to all masters of spirit, there are three ways in a spiritual life leading to perfection. The first is called the purgative ; the second the illuminative ; the third the unitive. The first is proper to beginners ; the second to proficients ; the third to the perfect. The purgative way consists in purifying the soul from all that is vicious ; in rooting out habits contracted in our youth ; in subduing our irregular passions, and curbing concupiscence.

The sacrament of penance is the most proper means we have to compass this, and a general confession much more than a particular one.

I need not go far for arguments to prove this. We have only to consider the parts of the sacrament of penance, to prove this point. The sacrament of penance, according to the holy



Council of Trent, consists of three parts, — contrition, confession, and satisfaction, as the material parts of it, and the absolution of the priest, as the formal. Every one of these parts helps extremely to purge the soul from sin, and root out vicious habits, and to conquer passions.

According to the same holy Council, contrition is a sorrow and detestation of sin, with a firm purpose of never committing it again. When this sorrow and detestation proceeds from the pure motive of the love of God, it immediately blots out sin, and reconciles the sinner to God. When it arises from a holy fear of punishment, either of loss or of pain, it disposes the soul to its justification in the sacrament. Generally speaking, sinners begin their conversion from this holy fear: therefore, it is called by the Royal Prophet, the beginning of true wisdom. It was with this holy fear the Ninevites were struck when the Prophet Jonas warned them of their impending destruction. Upon doing penance for their sins, they appeased the just anger of God.

The same sentiment struck the apostle Saint Paul. When thrown from his horse, he exclaimed: “Lord, what will you have me to do?” The Royal Prophet begs that this holy fear may pierce his flesh.

Whether this sorrow proceeds from pure love, or from fear, it is generally more intense, the greater our sins are. Our blessed Saviour insinuated as much in the case of Saint Mary Magdalene, when he told the Pharisee that many sins were forgiven her because she loved much, and she loved much because many sins were forgiven her.

Consequently, how efficaciously does a general confession help to this contrition, which so effectually blots out sin. By placing at once before our eyes all the crimes of our whole life, —our ingratitude to God, our transgressions of his divine law; all the punishments we have justly deserved for our sins; we are helped more efficaciously to conceive a sincere sorrow and detestation of them, than by a particular confession. Likewise, by exciting us to a holy hatred against our sinful flesh, we are more ready and willing to perform any satisfaction or penance for them. All which clearly proves that the use of a general confession at our entrance into religion is a most holy and efficacious means to purify the soul from sin, from all vicious

and unlawful concupiscence of the flesh. Frequently, it is not only an efficacious, but a necessary means to purify the soul, namely, as often as, through ignorance or malice, our particular confessions have been defective.

That good disposition persons are generally in at their entrance into religion, accompanied with serious examinations of conscience and extraordinary helps of divine grace, gives much more sincere and clear knowledge of the enormity of sin. Many things that in youth seemed small faults, when placed in a true light, appear great disorders; and the heart being pierced with true compunction, the will is strengthened to overcome a childish bashfulness that was the cause of concealing some sins in confession, and thus committing many sacrileges. In these cases a general confession is not only very useful, but necessary in order to purify the soul from the sins of youth; consequently, it is prudently ordained at our entrance into religion, having first prepared ourselves for it by some days of retirement and the exercise of meditations and examens.

The purgative way is the foundation of a spiritual life, inso-much that it is morally impossible to rise to a high degree of perfection without having exercised ourselves therein, and grounded ourselves well in the fear of God.

They are the clean of heart that can be so happy as to see God by contemplation here, and the beatifical vision hereafter. This we may explain by two familiar comparisons. When we lay the foundations of a high building, we must be sure to lay them low, and never cease removing rubbish till we come to virgin earth or a firm rock. Without this care, a building cannot be secure. And it often happens that we must dig very deep, and remove abundance of rubbish, before we come to virgin earth.

In raising a spiritual building of high perfection, such as our vocation requires of us, we must first be well exercised in the purgative way by frequent examinations of our conscience, by the use of such meditations as are proper to raise our hearts to a great horror of sin, and which help to overcome our irregular passions, and root out all vicious and disorderly habits.

After having, by a general confession, probed our conscience, and removed all sinful corruption from our heart, we may safely begin to lay the foundation of a spiritual life. The holy

fear of God and true humility being the fundamental stones of this spiritual building which we are to raise in a religious state.

When one wishes to furnish a house with very fine and precious moveables, before these are to be exhibited, care must be taken to have it very clean and neat, lest the dust should prejudice these ornaments and rich furniture. In the same manner, before we undertake the adorning of our soul with the precious ornaments of rare and heroic virtues, it must be well purified and cleansed from all filth of sin and false principles, which, if they do not quite destroy virtue, they at least tarnish it and rob it of its lustre.

You will be more sensible of this, when you consider the prejudice religion suffers by the passions and weaknesses of some religious, who, not having at first given sufficient time and attention to the conquering of their passions, though they do many edifying things, and on some occasions give proof of heroic virtue, yet do little good, have no credit, by reason of certain weaknesses and impatience, for want of having at first corrected some false notions, mortified their humours, and subdued their inordinate passions. For example, some are very recollected and devout, yet they are morose and humoursome in their ways; others are very laborious and willing to take pains, but very stiff and obstinate in their judgments; some will chastise their bodies with rigorous fasting, disciplines, and chains, but fly into a passion and are impatient upon any contradiction; some, in fine, are very religious and usually upon their guard, yet, for want of having sufficiently broken an ill habit of lashing others with their sharp tongues, will often give great disedification by their uncharitable reflections, which are not only a great discredit to virtue, but a main obstacle to perfection.

How often do we hear people say: What a saint would that person be if she could bridle her tongue! What a service would such a one render to God and the Church if she had as much discretion as zeal! How would she charm and edify every one if she could moderate her passion. All this plainly shows how necessary it is in the beginning of a spiritual life, to be well grounded in the purgative way, consequently justifies the ordaining of a general confession of our whole life at

our entrance into religion, likewise the use of general confessions from time to time, as is prescribed in our Rules.

The first advantage arising from this practice is, what I have already shown, a greater sorrow and detestation of sin. The second is a clearer knowledge of its malice, by which we are very much helped to avoid it for the future and acquire more merit. Before you were permitted to make your general confession, care was taken to give you a great horror of sin, by setting before your eyes the enormity and malice of it, the great prejudice we suffer by it, both in this world and in the world to come. After considering seriously the infinite greatness of the person offended by it, the vileness of the offender, the innumerable favours we have received and hope to receive in future, from an infinite goodness, and the monstrous ingratitude we have been guilty of in corresponding so ill with God, our souls are then best disposed to produce acts of true sorrow and detestation of sin, therefore better disposed to make a good confession. By this exact review of all our past disorders and transgressions we have a perfect knowledge of ourselves; we easily discover our predominant passion, and to what sins our corrupt nature inclines us most. For want of this knowledge, we easily ran into the occasion of sin, and unnecessarily exposed ourselves to many dangers, of which being rightly apprised by means of these meditations, we become more cautious and more prudent for the future.

It is for want of consideration that seculars fall into so many disorders, according to that saying of Jeremiah: "With desolation the world is become desolate, because no one thinks in his heart." Even people of the best dispositions are so much taken up with worldly concerns, with the care of their family, business and the like, that they have little or no time to attend to their spiritual affairs, to examine their inclinations and passions. Self-love and the desire of pleasure puts others to so many contrivances to amuse themselves, that their thoughts and time being taken up and diverted from the more necessary concerns of their souls, they pass from one diversion to another, run into many dangers and inconveniences without being sensible of the harm; consequently, this preparation is a most holy and necessary practice, not only in order to make our confession well, but to lay a solid foundation of the spiritual



life to which we are called ; because this knowledge of ourselves is a very proper means to become humble, diffident of ourselves, cautious and prudent for the remainder of our lives. It gives a holy hatred of ourselves, which helps to the practice of self-denial, and that continual exercise of our greater mortification which is so much recommended to us in our Rule, and thereby prepares us to undergo with pleasure the hardest and most painful duties of a religious life, and, by removing difficulties, makes every thing agreeable.

Another reason for this practice is, the increase of merit ; because the very action of a general confession is pleasing to God, being an exercise of great humility, and is accompanied with many other acts of solid virtues ; for example, of obedience to the Rule, charity, and the like. The soul being thus well purified, is better disposed to receive holy communion, which is the third reason for this practice, which will help to avoid sin, and conduce so much to persevere in the state of grace, likewise to increase it.

Nothing contributes more to the sanctification of our souls than the holy Eucharist ; but it requires great purity of conscience, which is by no means sooner or more effectually obtained than by a general confession rightly made. This may suffice for explaining this practice mentioned in the Rule ; also the pious custom we have of making these general confessions at our renovation of vows, or yearly as the novices do, for the calling of ourselves to a serious account, and setting at once before our view all our infidelities to God, all our ingratitude and abuse of grace, we are very much helped to conceive an intense sorrow for our sins, and are as much excited to renew our first fervour, which we insensibly fell from by tepidity and negligence in God's service. These sins and imperfections which seemed so small in our particular confessions, considered together with all their ill consequences, appear great and much more dangerous than we apprehended them to be ; therefore we shall be helped to be careful and solicitous to avoid them for the future.

## SECOND EXHORTATION ON THE EIGHTH RULE.

“THOUGH superiors are to propose two confessors if it can conveniently be done, every one yet should endeavour to confess constantly to him whom she has made choice of, that her conscience may be entirely laid open to her director.”

Concerning this matter, there are three things prescribed by the Rule: first, there must, in every house, be appointed by the ecclesiastical superior one confessor of all. Second, When this cannot conveniently be, at least every one must have a fixed confessor. Third, We are to lay open, or make known our whole conscience to our confessor, that so he may be better able to help us in our Lord. Before I treat of this, I will speak of the obligation all have by this Rule, of confessing and communicating at least twice a-week.

The Rule ordains that they receive the holy eucharist as the confessor shall judge expedient. This is of main importance; for the sacraments are the usual channels by which divine grace is conveyed to our souls. Nor is it possible for us to arrive at the perfection of our vocation, without the frequent use of these two sacraments: the former is necessary for procuring and maintaining a great purity of conscience; the second for maintaining strength and vigour to go on cheerfully in the way begun of God's service. The holy sacrament of the altar is as necessary for the preservation of spiritual life, as meat and drink are for maintaining strength of body and our temporal life; for, as we faint and grow weak if we do not supply the defect of nature with corporal food, so we shall infallibly grow tepid and languish in the way of virtue, without this spiritual nourishment of our souls.

The Prophet Elias was so fatigued and spent with his journey and for want of nourishment, that he lost courage and laid himself down at the foot of a tree; but when he had eaten the loaf that the angel brought him, he soon recovered so much vigour and courage, that he performed the rest of his journey with ease, even to reach the top of Herob, the mountain of

God. This loaf was a type of the holy eucharist ; without frequent participation of this spiritual nourishment, we shall infallibly fail in the way ; with the help of it we may overcome all difficulties, and have sufficient strength to ascend to the top of perfection.

Lest some should happen to make light account of this Rule, the assistant of the superioress is enjoined in her Rules, to inform the superioress if any neglect going to the sacraments at the times appointed. It is left to the confessor to permit receiving oftener than twice a-week ; and the great devotion that reigns in the Institute towards the adorable sacrament of the altar, has brought in a pious custom of communicating oftener ; for example, on all great feasts and other days of particular devotion.

Let us now consider the reasons which moved Saint Ignatius to appoint one confessor for all. In all religious families there are two sorts of government, — one temporal, or exterior ; the other spiritual, or interior. The way nearest to perfection in exterior government is monarchical, or that which depends or centres in one. We may say the same of external or spiritual government. When one person has the direction and ruling of all the community, he is in far greater capacity of doing good and promoting virtue in the house, than when there are many confessors ; for, first, he has greater authority, being the common father of all ; second, having a perfect knowledge of every one's difficulties and temptations, he can the better provide against them.

It happens sometimes in communities that there are particular persons who are great hinderances to one another in the way of virtue ; they are so engaged by affection or interest, that it is morally impossible to break their chains, unless both are equally resolved on it, and use their endeavours for the purpose. A common confessor of both has many opportunities of bringing them to this resolution ; for, knowing them, he can mutually assist them with good advice, he can remove their objections, and put them in a way of disengaging themselves.

In the same manner, a common confessor of all may easily prevent any division between the members and the head, or between the subject and the superioress ; likewise misunderstandings and disagreements amongst particulars ; for as all look

upon their confessor as their father, they have a particular respect for him, and are ready to submit their judgment with deference to him. At least, knowing the interior dispositions of each party at variance, he may easily prevent suspicious jealousies and prejudices from making any deep impressions on their minds, and by his fatherly advice and prudent precautions, facilitate a perfect reconciliation between the parties. In confirmation of what I here advance, let me desire you to reflect how great a deference children have for their parents, scholars for their instructors, and subjects for their prince. When there are little differences among children, and they cannot come to an agreement, they are all ready to submit to their father: his judgment decides all their quarrels, and unites them together. Scholars will appeal to their masters, and in their hottest disputes they will acquiesce to his judgment. In fine, subjects at variance amongst themselves, are all ready to unite when the authority of their prince intervenes and decides their debates. The reason is, because nature always bends towards itself. Where it finds a relation to itself, there it is partial: hence, people at variance easily join and submit to one common to all.

The same may be said of one superiress of a community, or of one spiritual father or confessor. Consequently, this Rule contributes much to the maintaining of peace and union in a house.

When there are divers confessors, there are also different ways of governing consciences; for every one has his particular lights and sentiments. Though these different confessors may be very learned and holy, yet, in difficult cases amongst their penitents, they are not so fit to maintain union, being often biassed in their judgment in favour of such as are directed by them. We find by experience this may happen; and no wonder, since, as we read in Daniel, the angels themselves are subject to this inconvenience.

The angel-guardians of Israel and Persia had a debate for twenty-one days before the throne of God, concerning the deliverance of the Jews from their bondage. The guardian-angel of the Jews sued for their return to Jerusalem, in order to prevent their perversion, and the harm they would suffer by their conversation with the Gentiles. The angel of Persia opposed



their going by reason of the conversions that were wrought by the Jews among the Persians. If angels could so differ in their sentiments, it would be much harder for men to agree in theirs ; consequently, it is much more advisable to have one than many confessors in a house. Nevertheless, the Council of Trent has ordained that every religious community should have an extraordinary confessor, that they may serve God with greater liberty of spirit, and for the comfort of timid and scrupulous souls ; but this permission is not to be so abused as to make him the ordinary confessor, but only to have the liberty of applying to him at the appointed times.

When one confessor cannot suffice for a numerous community, each religious must make use of one appointed by the superior, that she may be sure to have a spiritual father who is sure to direct her securely in the way of virtue. Superiors are more capable of choosing for their subjects than they are for themselves ; besides, they are much safer under the direction of one appointed over them by obedience, than they could be under one of their own choice.

If a religious in her ordinary actions and affairs ought always to follow the direction of holy obedience, how much more necessary is it to follow it in the government of her conscience, on which her perfection, progress in virtue, nay, her salvation itself, so much depends. When Saint Paul was converted, he did not apply to the apostles for instruction and direction, but to Ananias, whom God was pleased to appoint to be his director ; accordingly, it was by him, and not by the apostles, that his eyes were opened, and he replenished with the Holy Ghost ; so in a spiritual life we are much safer under the direction of an Ananias, a disciple only, than of an apostle, when God by means of our superior appoints him to have care over us. When one confessor is not sufficient for all, our holy Rule says, that every one must at least have a fixed and constant confessor, to whom her conscience must be wholly open ; for we are not to be inconstant and changeable in a thing of so great importance.

A confessor is our spiritual physician. As nothing is more dangerous in diseases of the body than frequently changing our doctor, so in the spiritual disorders of our conscience, it is injurious to change our confessor. To concur effectually to the

cure of hard inveterate distempers, the corporal physician must be well acquainted with the patient ; he must consider his complexion and constitution ; he must know how he lived, what diet he used, what things agreed or disagreed with him in health ; he must from time to time visit him, feel his pulse, and observe what alteration happens, how the medicines prescribed by him have succeeded. Hence, it is plain the patient must not change his physician, lest the latter, ignorant of these things, should apply improper remedies. The distempers of the soul are more dangerous than those of the body, and harder to be cured, unless by long experience the confessor is perfectly acquainted with his penitent. He must know to what evil habits she is addicted, what passions domineer, what sins she most frequently falls into, in what occasions she is the most frail, and the like ; without this knowledge, he works in the dark, and often by this means the absolution given is rather closing up a wound than curing it.

Saint Ambrose compares a strange confessor to an unskilful surgeon, who, to have the credit of a speedy cure, shuts up a wound too soon ; and nothing can be more dangerous than too hasty a cure. The second thing required by the Rule is to have our conscience wholly open to our confessor, that he may the better direct us in our Lord ; that is, work a complete and perfect cure in our souls, and fortify us with preservatives against relapses. Superiors will take care to appoint such confessors as are capable of doing this, provided we do not fail on our part to be free and candid with him ; keeping nothing concealed that regards our conscience, and which might expose us to the danger of relapsing.

## FIRST EXHORTATION ON THE NINTH RULE.

“ALL must daily make the accustomed examination of conscience.”

Among the numerous means we have to make progress in virtue, and arrive at last to the high perfection our state of life requires of us, the daily examination of our conscience deservedly challenges the first place, since nothing contributes more to give us a perfect knowledge of ourselves. Without this light, our souls must remain in great darkness as to spiritual matters: we can make no progress in the way of virtue, because we cannot travel in the dark in a way full of precipices, windings, and turnings, without evident danger of missing the road. I will speak, first, of the necessity and utility of this daily examination of conscience; second, of the manner to make it well.

As humility is the foundation of all virtue, so a perfect knowledge of ourselves is necessarily required for all such as enter upon a spiritual life, and it is certain that a frequent examination of conscience helps to acquire this knowledge of ourselves; without it we cannot have a true contempt of ourselves; therefore Saint Austin makes it his constant prayer, that God would enlighten his eyes to know himself. “Let me know myself, to the end I may love you and despise myself.” The better we know God, the more we shall discover his divine perfections, therefore we shall love and admire him the more: the better we know ourselves, the more sensible we shall be of our miseries and wants, consequently we shall find nothing to be proud of.

By a strict examination of our conscience we have sufficient matter of humiliation and confusion continually before our eyes, and by discovering the many imperfections, faults, and sins we daily commit, we may plainly see the evil disposition of our heart, what vicious habits have taken the deepest root, and what irregular passion is most predominant in us. This examination, when well made, will represent to us, as in a glass, all our

spiritual disorders, our ignorance, folly, and malice ; it will give us light to penetrate to the most secret corners of our heart, and plainly discover how far we are off from the high perfection our state of life requires of us.

Ecclesiasticus compares this discussion to the winnowing of corn ; as the moving and shuffling of the fan separates the chaff from the wheat, so by sifting our thoughts we discover our poverty and wants. It was for want of a serious discussion of conscience that the bishop of Laodicea was so much deceived in himself ; for by reason of the outward appearance of some exterior good actions he used to do, he thought himself very rich in virtues, and that he wanted no degree of perfection proper to his state ; whereas God revealed to Saint John, that he was wretchedly miserable and miserably poor, even to nakedness—that is, to an entire want of supernatural habits of virtue.

The same happens to many tepid religious, because they make their examens superficially, and more out of custom than from a true desire of discovering the interior state of their souls. They content themselves with an exterior compliance with religious duties, and by reason of some passing fits of devotion which they occasionally feel, they conclude they are in a good state, have few or no defects to mend, and are great proficient in the way of virtue ; whereas, if they would enter into a serious examination of conscience, they would discover great disorders in their souls, they would find nothing but poverty, great misery and want ; their best actions would appear accompanied with many imperfections and defects, so that the reproach God made to the bishop of Sardis may be justly applied to them. I know what your actions are ; you have indeed the name of being alive, but in effect you are dead, because your works are not complete ; they are not enlivened with a spiritual motive ; they want the vigour and fervour of a spiritual life.

Tepid religious, who do not make their examens well, are quite in the dark as to what passes interiorly in their souls. Pride and self-love make them think themselves in a good state, very humble, patient, and religious ; whereas, they are vain, irregular, choleric, full of ungovernable passions and vicious habits. Seneca recounts of a servant of his who became blind,



that she could not be persuaded she had lost her sight. She fancied that the place she was in was darkened ; therefore she was continually desirous to be removed. It often happens in spiritual blindness, that people cannot be persuaded they are blind ; for, as Seneca observes upon this passage relative to his servant, few or none know the passion to which they are subject. You will not easily make a miser believe that he is covetous.

Tepid religious are often subject to the same folly ; they have many irregular passions which they will not see. When they commit any disorder, they blame the place or employment they are in, they cast the fault upon their companions, and sometimes upon their superiors ; therefore, never being contented with their employment, they are continually asking to be removed from it. But, alas ! they are never easy in any occupation, because they have with them the cause of their disquiet, unless, by a particular light from heaven, they seriously examine their conscience, and discover the predominant passion that is the real cause of their irregularity and uneasiness. A sick man will often complain that his bed is hard, or that his food is ill dressed, if he does not reflect that his distemper has made him lose his taste, as well as find himself uneasy in any posture.

Self-knowledge is not only necessary for beginners, but also for proficients, and even the perfect ; so the examination of conscience prescribed in this Rule, is convenient for all ; without it, the most advanced in virtue are liable to many illusions and deceits of the enemy. Therefore, this Rule obliges all, in whatever employment or rank they are, superiors as well as subjects ; because as long as we live in this world, we are pilgrims making our way to our heavenly country. Would to God we were as zealous to go forward as travellers are to arrive at the end of their journey. Now, as it is a great and dangerous disappointment to a traveller to be overtaken by night in an unknown way ; so it is a terrible and dangerous thing in the way of virtue, to be ignorant of ourselves : the moment we are deprived of this light, we may be truly said to have lost our way ; the devil will not fail to cast before us an *ignis fatuus* that will infallibly lead us wrong and perhaps to a precipice.

The most dangerous passions of pride and self-love, which are seldom wholly extinguished, even in those nearest to perfec-

tion, will soon set up to be our guides ; the first will not fail to turn us off from the true way, by magnifying the difficulties of a virtuous life, by representing mole hills as high mountains, every little rivulet as a sea, every descent as a deep vale or as a steep precipice. Being turned from the true way, pride will fill our minds with a vain conceit of our own virtue, knowledge, and experience in spiritual things ; it will fill our hearts with flaming desires of glory, and with such confidence in ourselves as will make us run on without fear, till we fall into the snare of the enemy. This shows the necessity of making as great progress in the knowledge of ourselves, as we advance in the way of perfection ; consequently, how necessary it is to make our examens well, as the most efficacious means to procure this knowledge.

The most compendious way of discovering the advantages we may receive from our examens, is, to consider the several parts whereby we shall learn to make them well. According to the method taught by Saint Ignatius, the examen consists of five parts : first, to call to mind the benefits we have received from God, as well in general with the rest of mankind, as in particular ; there is not one of us who is not infinitely obliged to God for his goodness and mercy to her in particular, besides the general blessings of creation, redemption, and sanctification, which are common with other Christians. Religious persons are particularly obliged to God for their vocation, in the many ways and means he has used to bring them to a religious state. These are common with all religious. How many other graces has every one in particular received, whereby she has been preserved from innumerable dangers of soul and body, and is now placed in an easy and secure way, not only of saving her soul, but of attaining a high degree of perfection in this life, and of heavenly glory in the next.

Saint Ignatius will have the examination begin with a lively commemoration of the benefits we have received from God, to dispose us the better to conceive a great sorrow and detestation of our sins : nothing will help us more to understand the malice and enormity of them, than to compare the infinite goodness and liberality of God to us, with our wretchedness and ingratitude to him.

After having considered our great obligations to the divine

goodness, and returned hearty thanks for benefits received, we conceive a desire to know how we have corresponded with them ; therefore, we immediately enter upon a strict discussion of our thoughts, words, actions, and omissions. Being sensible that ignorance, malice, self-love, pride, and other passions, are apt to cast a veil before the eyes of our understanding, and make us judge too favourably of ourselves, the second part of our examen is to prevent this inconvenience by addressing a short and humble prayer to God, begging light of the Holy Ghost to dissipate this cloud which irregular passions have cast before our eyes, that all prejudices being removed, we may discover all the faults we have committed, not make vain excuses for our sins, but pass as sincere a judgment of them as will be made when we appear before the tribunal of God, that, by passing a just sentence against ourselves, we may prevent our condemnation at that hour ; for, as the Apostle says, if we are not now partial to ourselves, God will not then condemn us.

Having thus duly prepared ourselves, we enter upon the third point, which gives the denomination to the whole, and is the examination of our conscience. This must be made with great humility and exactness, with sincerity and a true desire of amending our lives and of satisfying God for what is past. We must perform it with great attention and application of mind, to the end our smallest transgressions may not escape our censure, to prevent our being called to an account for them when we come to die ; for what is not judged now, will be judged then. We are to call our external senses and interior faculties to a strict account : we may put this question to them, — Which of you will accuse me of sin ? We may say the same to all our thoughts, words, and actions. We must reflect upon all omissions of our duty, as well as upon all commissions against it. We must weigh all our good desires and actions, to see what they want of the perfection they ought to have. We must consider the circumstances of our faults, as well as the substance of them ; the different degrees of bad, worse, and worst. In fine, we must search to the very bottom and into the most secret corners of our hearts, that nothing may remain hidden in our conscience when the Son of God will come to search Jerusalem with a lantern.

This examination of our conscience must not take up too much



time, which is not requisite for those who make it twice a-day. The account they are to take of their passions, ill habits, and evil inclinations, being only for the space of some hours, a short reflection will represent to the mind the sins and defects committed. With the cast of an eye an account is made up that is short; and in a room that is daily or oftener set in order, any thing out of its place is easily discovered. It is the very same in respect of our conscience, if we are careful to keep it in good order by making our examens well. Hence we may gather of what importance and advantage this exercise is.

We are not to spend more time in examining than what is precisely necessary to discover our failings, that we may have more time to exercise ourselves in the last two points, namely, in exciting ourselves to a great sorrow and detestation of our sins, and forming good purposes to amend. These are the two principal parts of our examen; therefore require the greatest share of our time and attention. The first three parts are subservient to these; for they are directed to help to compunction and a sincere conversion.

It is only by acts of sorrow and detestation of sin that we can deface those deadly characters imprinted by it on our souls, and thus appease the divine justice and reconcile ourselves to God. It is only by strong and resolute purposes, by cutting off the occasions of our transgressions, or applying some efficacious means to our corruption and frailty, that we can withstand violent temptations and remain firm in our duty to God.

As it signifies little to discover our ailments to an able physician, if we neglect to apply a proper remedy; so it will avail little to discover our failings, if we take not due care to repent. A surgeon does not cure a wound by probing it, but by applying a balsam or salves: so we shall never heal our wounded conscience without the sovereign balsam of true sorrow. All this shows how necessary it is to apply ourselves to produce intense acts of sorrow and detestation of sin, of all neglects of our duty to God, whom we are on so many titles obliged to serve with great fervour and perfection.

As our examen is not only intended for the cure of our wounds, but for the perfect recovery and preservation of our health; so we must exercise ourselves in firm and strong purposes of reforming our lives. Great care must be taken that



these purposes be not conceived in too general terms, which are commonly broken : one seldom grows perfect for them. It is an easy thing to break several threads when single, but almost impossible to break them when twisted into a cord. Take your faults singly — you may correct them with ease ; take them together — you will find it very difficult to do it. We may say the same of inordinate passions or vicious habits. They may in time be all corrected and overcome, if taken separately : fight with them all together, and they will overcome you.

We must descend to particulars, and resolve to use extraordinary diligence in the correction of such faults as we are most subject to, or such as occasion other faults, or are most displeasing to God and prejudicial to salvation or our progress in virtue. We may fortify our good purposes with such considerations and prudent precautions as will render them effectual, with the assistance of God's grace. We may fly the occasions, or cut off the cause of our failings by the root ; that is, correcting the vicious habit from which they proceed, or by conquering an irregular passion.

There are very few but have some predominant passion, which causes all their faults. If this were mastered, all would go well. It is this we are chiefly to regard in our examens. We must resolve in general never to offend God, but we must resolve in particular to correct our predominant fault.

The better to know how vehement and sincere our sorrow is for the faults we have fallen into, likewise how firm our resolutions to amend are, we must conclude our examens by inflicting some penance on ourselves, partly to satisfy for our past sins, and partly to preserve ourselves from again falling. This is a very holy practice, much recommended by all spiritual writers that treat of this matter.

I have represented to you the many advantages we may reap from the daily examination of conscience prescribed by the Rule ; I have shown what you are to do to make it well ; I will conclude by recommending earnestly to you the exact performance of this holy and beneficial duty, not doubting but that the care and zeal you have for your own perfection will make you very diligent in the observance of so important a Rule.

## SECOND EXHORTATION ON THE NINTH RULE.

“ALL must daily make the accustomed examination of conscience.”

To comply well with this Rule, it is not enough to perform well our general examen ; we must also apply with great diligence to perform well the particular ; first, because it is as much in use in the Institute as the general, and equally prescribed by our Rule ; second, because it is of great benefit to us, in order to overcome disorderly passions, to root out vicious habits, and acquire the perfection of all virtues. It is therefore earnestly recommended to all of the Institute, not only to beginners, but also to the ancient and perfect.

This particular examen requires a serious application of our thoughts and endeavours to overcome some irregular passion, or to root out some vicious habit, or to plant some virtue in the soul, according to the directions given by Saint Ignatius in the book of his holy exercises ; wherein we are admonished in the morning when we rise, to purpose to have particular care that day to attend to the subject of our particular examen ; to excite ourselves to sorrow as often as we fail in it, to examine about it at noon and at night ; to note down diligently how often we have failed, and from time to time to compare our notes ; that is, the notes of one day with another, week with week, and so on, to find out what progress we make in our intended reformation. This is the most rational way we can take to reform our lives ; the most conformable to nature, considering how frail and inconstant we are in the pursuit of virtue, how faint-hearted and discouraged in conflicts with our ghostly enemy, and the world, and the flesh, with our passions and concupiscence.

It is also a safer method to engage singly with our ghostly enemies, than to encounter them all together. When it can be avoided, it is rashness and presumption to encounter a superior and overpowering force. If our war be with an enemy with whom we can make peace, our blessed Saviour advises us rather to make it than to contend rashly with an enemy whose

force is superior to ours. A king, says our blessed Lord, who has no more than 10,000 men, will not venture to engage with a prince who comes against him with 20,000 men ; in such a case he thinks no more of war, but of peace ; he immediately proposes a treaty, and wisely prefers suffering some small loss by a disadvantageous peace, than hazarding the ruin of his kingdom by a rash war. In our case there is no making any peace or truce with our enemy ; we are obliged to fight even to the effusion of our blood ; we must endeavour to supply the defect of force by art and prudent management.

We must keep all our forces united, and divide those of the enemy ; by this stratagem, the last brother of the Horatii gained the victory over the Curatii, and subjected the people of Albano to Rome. To gain a complete victory over our passions and vicious habits, we must separate them ; then fight singly with every one ; with the assistance of divine grace we may easily defeat them all : at least, this is the most prudent way of fighting. This advice is much the same as that of an ancient father of the desert to a young hermit, who, having fallen from his first fervour and ran into many disorders, had recourse to him for counsel : through the great mercy of God, the young man being on one side very much troubled to find himself in so miserable a state, and so different from that which he had fallen from, cried out : “ When shall I find myself in that state in which I once was ? ” On the other hand, despairing of being ever able to correct so many violent passions, and to root out the vicious habits he had contracted during the state of tepidity, he was grievously tempted to give over the enterprise, and to think no more of the amendment of his life ; but God was graciously pleased to inspire him to have recourse in his perplexity to an ancient hermit, who, by means of a parable, plainly showed the method he was to adopt.

A certain man, said he, had a piece of land quite run over with thorns and weeds ; resolving to make good ground of it, he put his son to stub up the thorns. The son despairing of ever being able to compass it, in lieu of labouring, laid himself down to sleep. After some days his father went to see what he had done, and found he had not begun ; perceiving the true reason, he very calmly and prudently advised his son to propose to do no more in a day than would make a sufficient place to lie

down in ; thus the son took courage, and shortly cleared the field. Your soul, said the good man, is overrun with weeds and brambles ; do not think you can clear it in a day ; take time every day to do a little ; endeavour at least to mend one fault, to root out one vicious habit, to overcome one passion ; and with the assistance of God's grace, it will not be long before you are restored to your former peace of mind, and to the state of fervour from which you have fallen. We are taught to do the same by means of our particular examen ; we take our faults and vicious habits separately ; we endeavour every day or every week or month, to correct one defect, or to acquire one virtue ; and we daily find the great reformation made by this means ; many correct all their faults, and become perfect. This is the most efficacious way of compassing what we aim at. In natural things, it is almost impossible to succeed without observing this method, and they who observe it may promise themselves success.

A man who embraces all business, will do none well. One that will at once learn all sciences, will never be learned. Time, method, and patience, may bring great matters to perfection ; without these means it is morally impossible to do it. A man who will build a great house, must begin with laying the foundation ; after that he raises the walls, makes the windows, puts on the roof, and then covers it.

A general who designs to make great conquests, advances by degrees ; he takes one place after another, till the whole country is his own. We must by degrees climb up the mount of perfection ; we must gain a complete victory over the passions, by fighting singly with them ; and we become perfect in Christ's school by the study and practice of each virtue in particular : this is the end of the particular examen established amongst us.

Do not think this is rendering the study of perfection too long and tedious : no ; it is not only the most rational, secure, and efficacious way of attaining our end, but the most compendious and easy. A whole army is often defeated by the death of a general ; a whole province by taking the capital ; so, by gaining a victory over our predominant passions, we easily correct innumerable others.

The king of Syria being to fight against Achab, king of Israel, gave express orders for his soldiers to aim at him ; for



he was certain the victory would be his own when Ahab should be killed. Holofernes came before Bethulia with so numerous an army, that all the country around was covered with his men ; so that holy Scripture compares them to a swarm of locusts falling upon a field. This great army laid close siege to the town, cut the aqueducts that supplied it with water, and placed strong guards at some fountains near the walls, to hinder the inhabitants from receiving any water ; and thus proposed in a short time to become masters of the place without fighting.

The Jews had not any forces in the town capable to make head against so formidable an army. If they had attempted it, they would probably have been defeated at the very first onset. By divine inspiration, Judith undertook to free Bethulia by a safer and more compendious way : she, by an unexpected stratagem, obtained access to Holofernes, general to this insulting army, and found an occasion to cut off his head and carry it back with her into the town. It is not to be imagined what a consternation the army was in upon the news of the death of Holofernes. The holy text says, they lost their senses, they were seized with panic, fear, and held down their heads : they would not speak to one another, but immediately fled in confusion. Thus did the valiant Judith, by cutting off the head of Holofernes, entirely defeat a vast army, and save her town and people.

In our spiritual warfare with our rebellious appetites, the easiest way to gain a complete victory is, to conquer that which leads on a train of faults and imperfections. By acquiring the principal virtue of which we stand in need, we find no difficulty in the practice of any other. It is of great importance to use all diligence to discover the passion that domineers most, and causes our daily failings. For example : some give full liberty to their tongue, which makes them often fall foul upon their neighbour with injurious language, either provoking or mortifying them with sharp cutting jests, or ruining their reputation by detraction. There are innumerable other faults which people commit by a too free use of the tongue.

To prevent inquietude of mind, repining, envy, dejection, &c., when we meet with humiliation, and see others preferred before us, the shortest method we can take, is to over-

come an inordinate degree of esteem ; for if we overcome pride, no humiliations will trouble us ; we shall rather rejoice at the preferment of others. An inordinate desire of ease makes people neglect their duty, avoid many occasions of doing good, put hard things upon others to spare themselves ; they are slothful in rising, and very negligent in their studies. If they overcome but this passion, all these faults will be much sooner corrected than by making purposes against each of them.

To perform religious duties well, if we gain the virtue of humility, abnegation of our own will, and an inflamed charity, we shall immediately become exact in the observance of our Rules, mild, recollected ; and, generally speaking, God works the perfection of his servants by degrees. Thus, the works of grace imitate the operations of nature ; for as nature works by little and little, first expelling contrary qualities, then introducing good dispositions, and at last the intended form ; so grace works in our souls by removing evil inclinations, then introducing the form of perfection. Divine providence observes this method for our good, perhaps to keep us in humility and upon our guard by the continual alarms of our passions, or perhaps to increase our merit and redouble our crown by daily victories over ourselves.

Saint Ignatius would have us follow the ordinary method providence uses to bring his creatures to perfection ; for we must not presume to become perfect on a sudden ; this is a favour granted upon some occasions to the saints, but being very extraordinary, we have no pretensions to this way, we cannot expect to be led by it to perfection. When God led the children of Egypt into the land of promise, he did not lead them the shortest way, which would have been a journey of four or five days, but through the desert, and kept them on the road for forty years. Being come to the land of promise, he told them he would not destroy all their enemies, that is, seven powerful nations, at once, but by degrees.

Divine goodness is always ready to assist us to overcome our passions, but not all at one time ; perhaps it is not in your noviceship, nor some years after, you will be able to obtain a complete victory. You may be fighting as long as you live, at the same time you may be in possession of the promised land

flowing with milk and honey—that is, in a state of perfection, flowing with all virtues and heavenly consolations; in this state you may not enjoy an entire peace, but have every now and then alarms from your ghostly enemies.

Our blessed Saviour was pleased to recommend the practice of fighting against temptations singly by his own example: when he suffered himself to be tempted in the desert, he would not encounter the three temptations at once, but first overcame gluttony, then vain glory, and lastly ambition. Many saints, in their spiritual conflicts, have observed the same method, and applied with all their forces to encounter one vice; this Cassian sets down as a principle in his spiritual advice.

No one ever practised and taught this method of the particular examen so exactly as Saint Ignatius; no one ever gave so many admirable rules and directions for the right performance of it as he; nothing can be more earnestly recommended than the practice of it in the Institute. Immediately after the fundamental meditation, in the spiritual exercises, Saint Ignatius sets down the points, rules, and form of the particular examen, as the safest and most efficacious means to reap fruit from the exercise, and to regulate our life so as to secure our salvation and perfection.

At manifestation we are generally examined about it, not only in the noviceship, but afterwards. Saint Ignatius was so very exact in it himself, that, after his death, they found the book of his particular examen noted to the very day of his death. No doubt this was one of the particular means whereby he arrived at so great a purity of conscience, and so eminent a degree of sanctity. Let us follow his example, and resolve to be very exact and diligent in making our particular examen, which cannot be performed well without great benefit to our souls, and cannot be neglected without great prejudice.

## FIRST EXHORTATION ON THE TENTH RULE.

“For their greater progress in spirit, every one ought to be content that the superioress be acquainted with any one whatever, with her failing and defects, &c. : and let her take it in good part to be corrected by others.”

Before we plant virtue in our soul, we must weed it well of vices and bad habits ; for, as it happens in all ordinary qualities, the decrease of one is the increase of the other, so the diminishing of our defects is the improvement of our virtue. To correct and root out our vicious habits, it is necessary to know them ; for unless we are sensible of our faults, we shall not reflect on mending them. We obtain a knowledge of interior defects by our prayer, examen of conscience, spiritual reading, and similar exercises practised in the Institute ; also by conversing freely with our spiritual director. These alone are the helps we can have to come to the knowledge of interior defects. For the correction of exterior failings we are provided by this Rule with another very efficacious means, I may say *necessary*, considering how much ignorance, self-love, pride, and other passions, are apt to blind us in our own cause, to make us overlook our defects, and maintain a good opinion of ourselves.

This means, which Saint Ignatius established by this Rule, is an obligation of manifesting to the superioress the defects of others, provided the knowledge of them was not acquired by the party proposing the thing to them in secret to have their advice : this is a most efficacious means to know our faults, it is also a most prudent and proper means. We are naturally partial, and are apt to have too good an opinion of ourselves ; we make a thousand excuses rather than part with our liberty, or thwart our inclinations ; hence, a third person can judge much better of our comportment than we can ourselves. Many eyes see better than one, especially when this one is faulty. All the eyes of our sisters are open to see and observe



our behaviour: but, to prevent many inconveniences, and more efficaciously and sweetly to concur to the amendment of what is amiss, they are not to take upon themselves to admonish or correct, but to acquaint the superioress, that she, through the motherly care she has of the flock committed to her charge, may apply a proper remedy to the growing evil.

This Rule is so much for the common good, likewise for the private benefit of <sup>every</sup> particular member of the Institute, helping extremely to an exact observance of religious discipline, the conquering of irregular passions, the rooting out of vicious habits, the increasing of virtue, in fine, to the maintaining of the primitive spirit of the Institute. Notwithstanding all these advantages, perhaps there is no Rule in all our Constitutions, that has been more opposed and exclaimed against, even by pious and learned men. The Institute has always looked upon it as a main and principle Rule on which the right government and welfare of it depends; for this reason it is of great consequence to understand it well; accordingly, we will first examine the reasons for making it, then I will answer the principal objections against it.

The first reason is set down in the beginning of the Rule "For their greater progress in spirit." Every one of the Institute is, by her vocation and Rule, obliged to attend with great diligence to her own perfection and salvation, likewise to the perfection and salvation of her neighbour. Superiors are, in a particular manner, obliged to this in regard of such as providence has placed under their care. A superioress then, to dis-

charge herself faithfully of this duty, must not content herself with supporting in exterior regular government in the house, and preventing her subjects from falling into great defects or scandalous faults, which may endanger their salvation; she is also obliged to apply seriously to see the Rules observed in the primitive spirit, and to labour that every individual in the house may advance in the way of virtue.

Experience as well as reason teaches that one of the most proper and effectual means we have to advance in virtue, is manifestation of conscience; for the better we make known the interior state of our soul, the more capable we shall be of obtaining advice and direction. The particular account every one gives of herself, helps very much to this knowledge; but it sometimes happens that people, either out of ignorance or malice, do not give a true account of themselves; therefore, to supply this defect, others are obliged to concur to a further manifestation of them, by informing the superiress of the defects they observe. These exterior defects speak an interior indisposition in the soul, as the wrong striking of a clock denotes some disorder of the springs or wheels within. One who understands the nature of a clock will easily guess at what is amiss in it, and set it right much sooner than another can.

The superiress is presumed to know the state of her subjects better than others do, therefore can give a much better guess from what their defects spring: consequently, she can more easily apply a remedy and set all right: her station of superiress gives a greater authority to her words; and a subject looking upon her

superioress as a loving, tender, and compassionate mother, takes in better part any advice and correction from her, than she can from an equal.

A prudent superioress has it often in her power, without speaking to the offender, to prevent her from falling a gain, by secretly removing her from the place, employment, or other occasions of her failings; and thus with discretion, without any one's perceiving it, or the least reflection being made on the party. No method of correcting faults can be easier, none more effectual, therefore none more prudent, none more to be liked, especially with such as are governed more by sweetness and the interior law of charity, than by severity and constraint. As for such as are tepid and indolent in the service of God, of hard and stubborn tempers, and not easily wrought upon by mildness, this way is still more necessary.

Such as these can seldom bear an admonition from an equal; they are incapable of receiving advice from them, at least they are seldom better of it. Whereas, when a superioress speaks, who, by her authority, has a right to take notice of their faults, and power to punish them with humiliations and penances, then they are on their guard, and often seriously take to heart the correction of their faults, not to be exposed to the confusion of a public penance, or some troublesome humiliation; so that the fear of having their irregularities made known to the superioress is often a restraint upon indolent religious, and withholds them from falling into many disorders to which their passions incline them.

It is for this reason that ecclesiastical superiors, to prevent loose Christians from falling into some enormous and scandalous crimes, reserve to themselves the power of absolving the faithful from them, and by experience it is found a very proper means to prevent many disorders in the Church.

The superioress having it in her power to press the correction of faults both in public and private, by severity and mildness, by sweet and by sharp means, likewise to apply the prayers of the community, and all other convenient means for the particular good of any of her subjects, it is plain she ought to be informed of their faults, which justifies the practice prescribed in this rule. The common good of the whole institute is also concerned; for the reputation and credit of the whole body depends on the religious comportment of its members. As in natural bodies one crooked or deformed member renders the whole man deformed, so in a moral body or community, the defects of one particular often brings<sup>a</sup> scandalous reflection upon the whole; for people in the world generally impute to the whole, the misbehaviour of particulars; they judge of the rest by those with whom they are acquainted, which is not to be wondered at, as they have no other rule to judge by.

Hence it is plain that the superioress ought to be informed of the behaviour of all; first, for the spiritual good of particulars; second, for the common good and reputation of the institute, which superiors are obliged to maintain, and are in greater capacity of doing than individuals, provided they are rightly informed and have a true knowledge of all who are under their



charge. A third reason for this practice is the good of those for whom we labour in the different exercises and functions of the Institute. To perform these with safety to ourselves and benefit to our neighbour, it is very necessary the superioress should have a perfect knowledge of those she employs; for it is certain that some persons are much better qualified for one employment than another, and may do a great deal of good when rightly disposed of, but will rather do harm than any good, nay, perhaps give scandal, if disposed of otherwise. Wherefore it is necessary for superiors to know what faults each sister falls into, what duties she neglects, and what employments she performs with greater edification. From the knowledge of her defects in exterior occurrences, the superioress comes to know her inclinations, temper, and passions, therefore may dispose of her with greater security for the glory of God and the benefit of those for whom she labours.

This Rule is most necessary amongst youth; for example, here in the noviciate, young plants may be brought, with care, to any shape; so if due care is taken to break the passions in youth, before they are grown strong, it will be no hard task to bring them to great perfection; whereas, if no notice is taken of their small defects, they will in time fall into great faults. Light wounds neglected, become mortal; and small defects by long continuance become incorrigible, all which shows the usefulness of this Rule. Notwithstanding many plausible objections have been made against it, I will mention some of the chief, after which, I will endeavor to solve them.

The first objection is, that this Rule seems contrary to fraternal charity, it apt to raise discord amongst the sisters, and to ruin the reputation, at least with the superioress, consequently, hinder her from having any confidence in them. I answer, that this Rule is so far from diminishing charity, that it is grounded in true love and charity; for our defects are manifested on no other account than the spiritual good of our sisters, that by this means they may be hindered from falling into greater inconveniences, may be better helped to mend their faults, and thus advanced to a higher degree of virtue and perfection.

This information is not given by an enemy, but by a friend, who loves you as a sister; nor is it given to a tyrant, but to a superioress who loves you as her child. The Rule requires that this information be made with due love and charity. Whoever mentions any fault of her sister to the superioress, out of a pique or ill will, is so far from complying with her duty, that she breaks the Rule, commits a very great fault, and deserves a more severe correction than the party informed of; for, by so doing, she prevents the good order established by the Rule, and strikes at the very root of our government. When one manifests to the superioress the defects of her sister, it is not that she may be mortified or penanced, but only helped by the maternal care of her superioress to correct her faults. Nor in these cases does the superioress make use of severe means, unless the circumstances of the party absolutely requires it, and in this case severity is

used with compassion and mildness, as God is pleased to chastise those he loves most. It is not love, but cruelty to spare a child when correction is necessary to mend her faults, and there is no danger of being severely penanced when the delinquent may be better helped by fair means.

This prudent and charitable manner of proceeding shows that there is nothing in the Rule against charity. Gregory XIII. was so much convinced of it, that he blamed a divine who wrote upon this Rule as contrary to good manners, and ordered him to correct his book. Others may object that this practice is contrary to justice, or the right every one has to reputation, as long as her failings are private. For example, it is a sin of injustice to reveal to any one the secret sins of another, because being defamed by it, she loses her good name, at least with the person to whom the fault is revealed.

To this I answer, according to the received maxim in the law, "*Volenti non fit injuria*," one does no injury to the party who gives her consent, and is willing her fault should be told the superioress. This we all consented to in express terms when we were admitted into the Institute, for all are particularly examined upon this point, both before their admission and during the noviceship. We were all asked if we were content to have our faults told to the superioress, by any one who should know them out of confession. We answered, we were content; consequently we cannot now complain of any injury when our defects are mentioned. We may consider how little pre-

judice we suffer by this Rule ; the fault is told in private to the superioress ; she keeps it so, and if she correct it without taking any notice of it even to the person concerned, she says nothing of it. It being corrected, the superioress has the same love and esteem for her as she has for the rest. If the fault be such as requires speaking to the party, and even enjoining a penance, it entirely depends on the delinquent to recover her good name even with advantage ; for, if she receives the correction with humility and amends, she is so far from losing her good name, that the superioress is much edified, and conceives a better opinion of her, and she, by this means, is preserved from falling into greater inconveniencies and danger ; which advantages being duly considered, no one has just reason to complain of so holy and wise a practice. But you will say, this opens a passage to slanders, false stories, malicious suspicions and reports. This cannot easily happen in a religious community, especially if the Rule is observed in doing it with due love and charity ; and if they act not according to the Rule, the fault must not be attributed to the Rule, but to their malice.

We may be sure that such persons would do the same, though there were no such Rule. And abuse is particularly provided against, first, by ordaining that all false, rash, and malicious informers be severely punished : second, by admonishing superiors to be upon their guard on these occasions, and not to be too easy in believing what is brought against others.



Lastly, some may object that this practice is contrary to the method our blessed Saviour prescribes in the Gospel. "Your brother," says he, "offends you; go and admonish him in private; if he does not hear you, call a witness or two; if then he will not hear you, declare it to the Church." Wherefore it seems we ought first to admonish our sister in private, before we tell the superioress of her. My answer is, that this is a sweet, prudent, and charitable way of proceeding, and necessary to be observed by most Christians—namely, all such as retain a right to their reputation with the superioress; but does not oblige us who have voluntarily, for the glory of God, and the spiritual good of our own souls, renounced this right. God does not forbid us to do this; on the contrary, by calling us to the Institute, where this is practised by the prescription of our Rule, approved of, and confirmed by the holy Church, it is clear that God will have us do it. And what greater sacrifice can we make than to renounce all right to honor and good name for his sake, in order to make greater progress in virtue, to help more effectually to the correction of faults, to the preservation of the Institute in its primitive fervour; consequently, the better to promote his honor by the perfection and salvation of souls. What I have said may suffice for the justification of this Rule; the next time I will treat of the method we are to observe in the practice of it.

## SECOND EXHORTATION ON THE TENTH RULE.

"Let all likewise take it in good part to be corrected by others, and to help to correct others.

These two things recommended to us are of great importance, which are to be done according to our Constitutions and the method prescribed in them.

I will speak of the practice of this Rule, first, as it regards the person who is to be corrected, and, secondly, her who helps to the correction of others. As to the first, I will treat of the disposition of mind wherewith we are to receive a correction or reproof from our superiress; second, of the things which are to be manifested; then of the manner to be observed in doing it, that we may effectually help to the correction of our sister without danger of falling into the sin of detraction, or giving way to any irregular passion.

As to what regards the party of whom information is given, the Rule sufficiently points out the good dispositions she ought to have. It absolutely requires that the correction be taken in good part. To repine and grumble at defects being mentioned to the superiress, is to go directly contrary to the Rule: to be angry with the party who informed the superiress, much more to bear her ill will and persecute her, would be to strike at one of the chief Rules of the Institute, and to fail in the promise we made at our entrance.

On consideration of the great repugnance we naturally feel to have our faults discovered to a superioress, we are all examined before we enter, whether we are content to have all our defects told by any one who comes to the knowledge of them any other way than that of confession. By consenting to this, we renounce all right we might otherwise have of maintaining our reputation with the superioress: and this is so rigorously required of all, that, should any one refuse to consent in her first examen, she would not be admitted; and should any novice refuse to submit to this practice, she would not be permitted to make her vows.

When we are examined, we promise to be content to have our defects mentioned to the superioress; therefore, we must not be disturbed, nor complain, when they are actually told. Nor will it be hard to comply with our duty in this particular, if we seriously consider how necessary this practice is to prevent many great inconveniencies, both with respect to ourselves and the whole Institute, and how efficacious a means it is to advance in the way of perfection and to preserve amongst us the primitive fervour and spirit of the Institute. If we do but sincerely reflect upon the many great advantages of it, we shall not only be content, but glad, to have our faults told to the superioress.

Every religious makes a solemn promise of perfection. To remove all obstacles, we left the world and came hither to attain it with less danger and more ease. Every one is glad when she obtains the thing she most desires: therefore, if we are good religious, we shall be

glad to have all our faults mentioned, since this is an efficacious means to correct vicious habits and to acquire the practice of solid virtue.

A religious institute is often compared to the Temple of Solomon. It may justly be called a temple peculiarly dedicated to God. Religious persons are like the stones; for, being united and cemented together by the bonds of charity and other holy and strong ties of a religious state, as customs, rules, vows, &c., &c. do all effectually concur, as parts, to the raising and making of this sacred temple, which as far surpasses that of Solomon, as the nature of man surpasses that of even the most precious stones, or as living members surpass, dead materials.

The Temple of Solomon was the wonder of the world for its greatness, architecture, materials, and design. A religious order, and, to say nothing of others, our Institute, though dispersed in different countries, makes but one moral body: therefore, infinitely exceeds in greatness the Temple of Solomon. Nor is it so great a wonder to make a material temple of stone, as it is to unite men of different humours and countries into one moral body. To build the Temple of Jerusalem, required the power and wisdom of Solomon: to frame the Institute, required a power and wisdom greater than that of Solomon, namely, the power of God, the wisdom of Jesus Christ.

The architecture of Solomon's Temple cannot compare with —



the spiritual architecture of the Institute ; for nothing can be more complete and perfect than it. The materials of which it is composed are not stones, but persons redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and are all together united in him by the sacred bonds of charity and other virtues. The design of it is the most holy, sublime, and divine, that can be imagined ; because its end is, to attend seriously not only to promote the honour and glory of God by perfecting its own members, but by helping others to perfection and to praise and glorify our Lord and Creator : which design infinitely excels that of the Temple of Solomon, no material temple being capable of so noble a design.

The Temple of Jerusalem being designed for the service of God, what care there was taken in cutting and fitting the stones that were used for it. The Prophet Zachary tells us that the eyes of seven people were employed about every stone : because no human art and diligence was sufficient, God promised to direct and help them in their work. How much more necessary and fitting it is that, in the spiritual temple of the Institute, many eyes should be open upon every member, and care employed in fitting her for God's service, by contributing to the correction of all her faults, and improving her in all virtues.

We ought all to be solicitous for the common good of the Institute, for its increase in virtue and learning, that, maintaining an unspotted reputation in the world, it may shine forth to the edification of all, and we labour with greater edification in the sanctification of souls. We ought also to have a great zeal for our perfection to the greater glory of God ; therefore, we must not only take it in good part to be corrected for our failings, but be particularly thankful to those who contribute efficaciously to it by manifesting our faults. We must look upon them as our truest friends, to whom we have very great obligations. This Saint Ignatius insinuates when he says : " This manifesting of one another's defects is for our greater progress in spirit, and for the greater glory of God."

We have many examples in the Old and New Testaments, of holy men who were glad to be admonished of their faults, and did not regard who it was that did them this charity, nor how many, nor whether it appertained to them to do it as being their superiors, nor whether they did it out of kindness or

otherwise : what rejoiced them was, to know their defects. It was this alone they minded, because they had true zeal to overcome their passions, to root out vicious habits, and to correct all their defects.

Saint Bernard, comparing himself to a sheep exposed to many dangers of being devoured by wolves, says : “ Who will depute a hundred shepherds to take care of me ? for, the more they are, the more securely may I feed.” We enjoy the happiness Saint Bernard wished for ; for, by virtue of this Rule, we are all engaged to take care of one another : therefore, we have as many trusty shepherds to secure us from the wolves, as we have sisters in religion.

As to the second part of the Rule, in as much as it regards the person who is to manifest the fault of another, I observe two extremes equally to be avoided : too great silence in dissembling the defects of the sisters, and too great forwardness in speaking and taking notice of every little fault. The first makes the rule of no use ; the second renders it odious and insupportable. In order carefully to avoid both these extremes, we will consider how people fall into them ; then we will settle how to practise this Rule.

Too great silence in speaking of the defects of the sisters, proceeds generally from one or more of these causes,—from human respect, or the fear of being thought a tell-tale ; sometimes from an apparently better motive—a too great attention to oneself ; from a mistaken charity, a love of peace or union.

Not to look for many arguments to show the insufficiency of the first reason, you are all too sensible of the vileness and weakness of it, I may add wickedness. To neglect our duty to God and the Institute upon a vain fear of *what men will say*, must argue great weakness and a vain mind, especially in a thing of so great consequence, and what we so solemnly promised at our entrance. In many cases, where the honour of God, the credit of the Institute, the spiritual good of a sister, is concerned, it is not only base, but wicked, to omit our duty for fear of being thought an informer. Nor will the pretended care of our perfection and attention to ourselves, excuse us from keeping this Rule : it ought rather make us more exact in observing it, as our progress in perfection depends extremely on the punctual

observance of our Rules. People who only make profession of a contemplative life, may have a just excuse for not concerning themselves with the correction of others ; but we cannot, because our state of life, our Rules and Constitutions, oblige us to attend diligently and to help as much as we can to the perfection and salvation of our neighbour, much more to that of our sisters, by reason of this express Rule for it. To say to the superioress, as Cain did to God, “Am I my brother’s guardian?” is a more frivolous excuse than his; for it may be truly said of all of us, that Providence has in a peculiar manner charged us with the care of our sisters. The third excuse is not moresolid than the former ; it is a mere illusion and mistaken charity ; love only in appearance, but hatred in effect.

True charity makes us wish our sisters well, and will effectually stir us up to do them all the good we can ; it will make us ready to help them on in the way of virtue, and careful to remove all obstacles to their perfection. If they happen to lose their way, we shall endeavour to put them in it ; if they lose courage, we shall endeavour to animate them ; if they fall, we shall give them our hand to raise them up again ; in fine, if we find they have fallen into the hands of ghostly enemies, and received any dangerous wound, we shall not pass by and let them lie destitute of help in so dangerous a condition, but, like the good Samaritan, take all the care of them we can, and, if necessary, call others more skilful to assist them. In this case, it would be no charity to conceal their wounds from an able surgeon, for fear of giving new pain and uneasiness to the parts wounded. We have not any true love for our sisters if, for fear of displeasing them, we dissemble their defects and temptations, and keep them hid from the superioress.

Saint John Chrysostom calls this mistaken charity, inhuman and brutal cruelty ; for what more barbarous than to have less care for a sister than you would for a beast ? If your horse or ox falls into a ditch, you cannot suffer it to remain there ; and shall we be so hard-hearted as to let our sister remain in a dangerous state without extricating her ? It is greater charity, says Saint Austin, to correct than to flatter one in his sins ; because correction cures and dissimulation kills.

All are not friends who spare, nor are all enemies who chastise. It is a painful thing to a sick man in a frenzy to be tied,

and to a man in a lethargy to be awake ; both are angry whilst they are sick, but both will be very thankful to you when cured. Your sister, while she is in an irregular tepid way, will perhaps be displeased and troubled that her defects are told, but as soon as she is reclaimed, she will with joy acknowledge your charity, and be thankful for it. There is not so much danger of falling into the other extreme as into this ; when people fall into it they are more easily reclaimed.

To carry the faults to the superioress is generally looked on as an ungrateful and odious office, which every one is willing to decline ; it is not without great difficulty that people can be brought to charge themselves with it ; any little pretence is sufficient in this matter to divert them from their duty, and nothing but absolute necessity, or the danger of some great harm, can prevail on them to comply with it. Nor will this suffice without a great stock of solid virtues, namely, contempt of the world, true charity for every neighbour, a great love of God, and a zeal for his glory.

However, it cannot be denied, that in a community, when large, there are sometimes found such as are too forward in mentioning the faults of others, are apt to aggravate them very much, or to concern themselves about so small matters as do not deserve to be taken notice of. This sometimes proceeds from an indiscreet zeal for the perfection of their sisters, but for the most part from some inward feeling of envy or ill-will which they have against the party. As these are gross vices which are easily perceived, so they are more easily corrected ; for it is not hard to make such people sensible of the harm they do to the Institute, and ashamed of so great a fault. Saint Ignatius in the Rule itself has sufficiently provided against our falling into this extreme, first, by assigning the motive of manifesting the faults of our sisters ; second, by prescribing the manner we are to do it. As to the motive, we are to have no other than her spiritual good, or the greater glory of God ; as to the manner, in things of less moment or of little or no consequence, to wait till the order of the superioress is given.

In things of greater moment, such for example as may prove prejudicial to the party, or bring scandal on the Institute, we are to inform the superioress without staying for her orders ; then we are to do it with due love and charity, that is, in the



same manner as we would wish others to inform of us in the like circumstance ; that is, to mention simply the true matter of fact, without any addition or false interpretation and suspicion ; for it often happens that a single word alters the case extremely, and ruins the reputation of the party very unjustly.

It is also very dangerous to give way to suspicions, unless they are very well grounded ; therefore it is much safer not to mention them unless required to do it by the superioress. It may be proper to mention certain circumstances on which your suspicions are grounded, then leave it to the superioress to draw the consequence. Let what you say be certain, that is, from your own knowledge or what you have had from eye witnesses. Do not concern yourself with hearsays ; we are not to give credit to them, especially from the third or fourth hand, in prejudice to our sisters. More effectually to prevent all faults on these occasions, never mention the defects of your sister when you are disturbed ; always suspect yourself immediately after you have received some affront or injury from her ; for in such a case you would not act by virtue of the Rule, which only empowers us to discover the secret faults of our sisters with due love and charity ; therefore, though you tell nothing but what is true, you will fall into the sin of detraction. Wherefore be sure always to take time after your sister has offended, before you inform your superioress of her ; for greater security do not fail first to recommend the thing most earnestly to God, in your prayers ; as we are admonished to do on other accounts when we have any thing to propose to our superioress.

## EXHORTATION ON THE ELEVENTH RULE.

“EVERY one ought with a willing mind, with due humility, a sincere desire of amendment and spiritual profit, to receive and do the penances enjoined her, although they should chance to be given for an inculpable defect.”

Though Saint Ignatius for just reasons mentioned in the preface to the Rules, judges it necessary to make rules to serve as directions to us in the way of virtue, yet he was persuaded that the interior law of charity which the Holy Ghost is wont to imprint in the hearts of all good religious, is a more efficacious means to keep us in our duty, and to make us fervent in the service of God, than any written constitutions.

In the same manner, though he was very sensible that the motive of the love of God is the true and best principle to govern by, yet because the example of the saints, the sweet disposition of Divine Providence, and reason itself, all teach us that it is not only necessary but very profitable to help frail nature sometimes with motives of fear, he wisely ordained the use of public penances for public failings; and in this Rule he commands us to receive them willingly, with a true desire of amendment and of our spiritual advancement in the way of virtue and service of God, even though enjoined for small defects or an inculpable failing.

To exhort you then to an exact observance of this Rule, I will first speak of the reasonableness, necessity, and usefulness of these penances; then I will suggest some motive to encourage you to receive them willingly, as our Rule prescribes, or rather, I will endeavour to remove all obstacles that often intervene in the execution or practice of it. Nothing shows more how reasonable this practice is than the general agreement of all mankind; for what all agree in must certainly be true. We find by experience, that all agree that virtue is always to be encouraged and vice decried, that rewarded and this punished; hence in all well established commonwealths or governments we

find rewards proposed for the good, and severe laws and penalties enacted for the punishment of the wicked.

As we see this practised in secular governments, so we see it also most rigorously observed in all religious orders, who by their constitutions and statutes have many penalties and penances appointed for such as break their holy rules and are irregular. The reasonableness of this practice will appear more, if we do but reflect on the great inconstancy, frailty and corruption of our nature. Nothing is so changeable and frail as man, says holy Job ; to-day he is cheerful, to-morrow sad : one moment he is in the fervour of devotion, another slothful and tepid ; sometimes he runs on in the way of virtue with great alacrity, excited by motives of love ; at other times nothing but fear and punishment can withhold his impetuous nature from giving way to his passions and falling into sin. It is then very reasonable that holy religion should provide against this weakness, inconstancy, and corruption of nature, and afford proper means for the support of good discipline and regularity on all occasions.

The founders of religious orders followed the same method in this that God observes for the support of virtue and extirpation of vice ; for divine providence has prepared rewards for the good, and punishment for the wicked ; it allures some by promises to embrace a holy and religious life, and deters others with threats from falling into sin. This method is necessary, for without fear there is no government : if offenders are not punished, the most virtuous are in danger of being drawn into disorders.

Religious discipline can never flourish in any order where breach of Rules is never punished ; for in a little time custom will prescribe against the Rules ; people will think that there is not any harm in breaking them, or that they are any longer in use, consequently will not believe that superiors require they should be observed. When religious are once persuaded that certain Rules oblige no more, or that superiors, for reasons known to themselves, do not require the observance of them, who will have zeal and courage to stand up for them ? who will have sufficient virtue to observe them ? I need not go far to prove that religious observance and discipline cannot subsist long in any community where this persuasion prevails ; for it

is evident that corrupt nature will never put so great a constraint upon itself as is required for a punctual observance of the Rules, when it is persuaded there is no obligation to observe them. Yet we are apt to think that a Rule does not oblige when no notice is taken of those who break it, when no penance, no satisfaction is given to the community for the bad example or scandal. Hence I draw another argument to show the necessity of this holy practice of penances in all religious houses.

Superiors are obliged to prevent relaxation of discipline from creeping into religious orders. Their consciences are charged to maintain regularity or the observance of the Rules. As motives of love are not always sufficient, motives of fear are sometimes to be used; when sweetness and mildness will not do, they are obliged to try whether severity will prevail; otherwise a great and wide gap is set open for many irregularities and disorders to rush in. When superiors find their subjects cannot be brought to their duty by fair means, that they cannot prevail on them to observe their Rules without rigour, reprehensions, and penances, they are obliged to make use of these means; for unless they do it, they will be accountable not only to the order, or the superior that put them in government, but likewise to God, from whom all power is derived.

Superiors are to be accountable to God for all the irregularities and disorders of their subjects, if after having in vain made use of mildness and sweetness to bring them to their duty, they neglect to use severity and rigour. We have a terrible example of this in holy Scripture, in the person of Heli the high priest, who, for neglecting to correct his children that lived wickedly, was punished with a sudden death. His two sons were killed in the field; the Israelites were utterly defeated by the enemy, and the ark of the covenant taken.

Saint Basil says, that Heli did not dissemble the sins of his children: on the contrary, he rebuked and threatened them, but no farther; he did not proceed to punishment, as he ought to have done. Saint Gregory says, he ought to have struck them. Saint Jerome says, he ought to have forbidden them his presence, to have disinherited them, or to have made them be severely corrected.

Superiors, then, are under a necessity of making use of pe-



nalties when their subjects cannot be kept in their duty by fair means ; for their consciences are charged to make use of them in such cases. When they have done this, though they should not meet with the success they proposed, through the obstinacy of the tepid, yet they have discharged their consciences, and the sins of their subjects will not be imputed to them ; for it is not the actual observance of the Rule that is required of them by God, but to apply convenient means and helps to have them observed : the exact observance depends on the docility, exactness, and fervour of others ; therefore, it is not always in the power of superiors to procure it, whatever means they use, as it is not in the power of any temporal magistrate or prince to prevent all murders, thefts, and other disorders which daily happen in the state, notwithstanding the severe laws and penalties enacted against such disturbers of the peace. But it is in the power of superiors to show their zeal for regularity and discipline by punishing those who are irregular ; therefore, God requires it of them.

We are to observe, that religious discipline is said to flourish in a house as long as this holy practice of penance is kept up ; as the laws of a country are said to be in force and vigour whilst care is taken to punish all who break the laws. Though these penances presuppose a breach of the Rule for which they are given, yet they are undeniable proofs of the Rule being in force, of its being supported and maintained by those who are entrusted to see it observed.

This holy practice of penance is not only reasonable and necessary, but likewise very useful and beneficial to a community. 1. It prevents relaxation and decay of discipline ; for, where transgressions are always or generally punished, people will not be so apt to break the Rules. 2. Private faults will not so easily become public ; so disedification and scandal will be prevented ; nor will others, who are well inclined, be so easily induced to become irregular ; for, as Saint Gregory observes, by the correction of one, many become better. The faults of particulars will not become the faults of the community ; therefore it is to be hoped that God will not punish the community for them, especially since, by those penances, the community stands up for God's interest, and does as much as in it lies to satisfy divine justice for the fault committed ; and no doubt a

much less penance voluntarily taken will suffice to appease his divine majesty, than what his justice would require if he were to inflict it himself. Saint Louis Bertrand being asked why he inflicted so severe penances for small faults, made answer, that so his subjects might avoid the severer pains of purgatory. Hence we may gather that these penances are of great use and very beneficial to particulars, as well as to the community in general ; for it is a great advantage to be able at so easy a rate to satisfy for the faults we commit.

We may be sure that when these penances are received willingly and religiously, they are of greater merit and more efficacy to satisfy for our faults, than if they were taken of our own accord, by reason of the obedience and acts of other virtues we exercise at the same time. When a good religious performs a penance enjoined her for her faults, she practises many virtues at the same time, for example, 1. obedience and perfect submission to her superioress ; 2. humility ; for she acknowledges herself worthy of chastisement, and is glad to suffer confusion before men, to appear more pure and acceptable to God. She cries out with the Royal Prophet : “ It is good for me, O Lord, that thou hast humbled me.” 3. She exercises patience, rejoices to suffer any pain or ignominy for God’s sake ; with ardent desires of imitating her suffering Redeemer, she disposes and encourages herself to suffer far greater things for him. 4. By these penances virtue is tried, and she may easily discover whether she goes back or makes progress in perfection. For this reason the Royal Prophet wished for such trial when he said : Probe me, &c., try me, &c.

In fine, by receiving these penances like dutiful children from the hand of God, we exercise ourselves in acts of resignation to his most blessed will, whereby we express a filial respect and love for God.

You see how many and how great are the advantages we may draw from the use of penances ; consequently, how willingly and cheerfully they are to be accepted—with what dispositions they are to be performed—with what acts of virtue they are to be accompanied, especially with sincere sentiments of true humility, inflamed desires of our spiritual advancement, and firm purposes of amendment. Do not then think that these penances are enjoined to oblige people to comply with their duty

out of a base motive of servile fear. No ; this was not the intention of Saint Ignatius in ordaining the use of them ; this is not the intention of superiors in enjoining them. It cannot indeed be denied but that fear of punishment is a very efficacious and sometimes a necessary means to keep people in their duty ; and it is much better that religious discipline should be maintained by it, than that it should fall to decay, and God be dishonoured for want of it. It is far better that we should observe our Rules with less merit, than give public disedification or scandal by neglecting to keep them.

The motive of servile fear is only for the tepid ; it is not at all necessary for the virtuous, whom it does not concern. They do not look upon these penances as punishments inflicted on them by a tyrant ; they receive them as coming from the fatherly hand of God, who, in punishing the greatest sins, regards more the good, conversion, and salvation of the penitent, than the punishment and destruction of the sinner. They receive them from the superioress, whom they behold in the place of God, and regard her as their spiritual mother, full of tenderness and compassion for them, zealous for God's honour, for the edification of the community, and for their own particular good. Hence, they look upon these penances not as effects of prejudice, passion, or ill will ; but as prudent and necessary means to preserve regularity and discipline. They do not think their superioress acts by inclination when she enjoins them ; but with reluctance, violence, against her inclination, only for their good and the edification of others. Hence, their fear is not servile, but filial ; not base, but perfect ; for they do not fear the penance, but the offence of God and the displeasure of their superioress. The penance only serves to make them more sensible of the greatness of their fault, because they may justly conclude from the greatness of the punishment that the offence itself is very great.

Before I conclude, I cannot but take notice of the absurd way of speaking of some tepid religious, who complain heavily, are disturbed, and murmur when penanced by superiors. They will inveigh extremely against the use of penances, and often say that they are not to be corrected and gained by foul means. What is the true English of this ? It is, that they are incorrigible, — that there is no way to bring them to their duty ; for,

generally, in all religious orders, especially in this Institute, the first and chief principle of government is this interior law of charity. Superiors, in the government of their subjects, place greater force upon this principle than any exterior means they can make use of; therefore they encourage it extremely, persuade and exhort their subjects to guide themselves by it. Hence arises that great easiness and sweetness in our government, that unwillingness and backwardness in making use of severity.

All our Rules and Constitutions direct us to act upon this principle of the love of God. Our superiors daily exhort us to the same. When all these exhortations and directions are not sufficient to keep religious in their duty, if they are still irregular, the only means then left to correct them is penances. Wherefore, if these will not do, they are incorrigible. Never let us be of the number of these. Let us endeavour to live up to the perfection of our Rule, carried on by motives of charity. At the same time, let us always approve and respect a custom so holy and so beneficial. Let us always be prepared to receive them willingly, with true humility, a desire of profiting by them in the way of virtue, as Saint Ignatius requires of us in this Rule.



## FIRST EXHORTATION ON THE TWELFTH RULE.

“THEY are not to conceal any temptation, but to speak it to their confessor or superioress.”

As this holy custom and practice of manifestation, which is so much recommended to us by Saint Ignatius in the Rules, and is so diligently observed in the Institute, was not intended by way of humiliation and penance to correct and punish us for our faults, but to encourage and direct us in the way of virtue



and perfection by the easy and sweet methods of counsel or advice ; so, to perform it well, as the Rule prescribes, we are to open our souls to our superiors with great charity, purity, and humility. The explaining of these words shall serve for the subject of this entertainment.

We may consider charity either with regard to God or with relation to our neighbour. As it regards God, it consists in an habitual or actual love of his divine majesty above all things ; consequently in a true and sincere desire of serving God, of honouring, praising, and glorifying him by all our actions, and of rendering ourselves as acceptable and pleasing to him as, with the assistance of his grace, we can. Hence, there arises in our soul a great desire of our own perfection, of overcoming passions and rooting out vicious habits. This desire of attaining all virtues will not only encourage us, but make us effectually break through all difficulties and overcome the repugnances we naturally feel in having our faults and failings made known to our superiors. We shall even rejoice that they know them all—that the confessor is fully acquainted with our temptations—that our consciences are unfolded and laid open before him.

A person who loves God, and desires extremely to render herself perfect and pleasing to his divine majesty, will be glad to discover her whole soul, all her inclinations, defects, likewise her mortifications and penances ; because she is very sensible, on one side, that it is very dangerous in the way of perfection to proceed without a guide ; on the other, that her superioress is the guide whom God has appointed for her, and whom he would have her follow. For this reason Saint Ignatius requires in this Rule that we open our hearts with great charity.

If we consider this virtue with regard to our neighbour, the Rule would have us apply to our confessor or superioress in all our difficulties and temptations as to a loving parent, without fear. We are to go freely, with a filial confidence, persuading ourselves that a sincere and tender love is entertained for us ; therefore, that nothing is more desired than to help us in all our difficulties, to defend us from all delusions of our ghostly enemies, to assist us in all our temptations, to comfort us in all our afflictions—in fine, to put us in the most easy and secure way to acquire all virtues and perfection suitable to the state of life we are in. The reason is, because charity, considered with

relation to our neighbour, implies a love and friendship for him for God's sake. We are to express this love according to the circumstances of the person for whom we have this love. For example, we exercise our charity towards people in prosperity by rejoicing with them for their good fortune ; by compassionating and comforting those who are in affliction ; by relieving those who are in want ; consoling the doubtful ; and so forth. This is what the Apostle exhorts us to practise when he bids us rejoice with the joyful, and weep with those who weep.

We practise this virtue with our equals by an affable, civil, and sweet behaviour ; towards inferiors by a tender care of them ; and towards our superiors by a filial love and sincere respect for them, which is best made known by the entire confidence with which we open our hearts and minds to them, as dutiful children do to their parents.

Religious, especially those of our Institute, have just reason to look upon their superioress as a mother ; for, though they are called her subjects, yet they are regarded by her as her children ; she tenders them as such, has a true love and more concern for them than any earthly parent can have for a child. The love of worldly parents for their children arises from passion or natural inclination ; that of superiors is grounded on reason and supernatural motives. As these surpass the former in merit, so they do in solidity and firmness, and render this love more sincere and lasting, though not so fond and sensible.

We shall easily comprehend this by the true notion or definition of love — I mean of perfect love, or the love of friendship. To love is to wish one well ; therefore, the more we desire another's good, the more we are said to love such an one.

Superiors may be truly said to desire more the good of their subjects, than parents do that of their children ; because they more seriously and efficaciously promote their greatest good, namely, the good of their souls, their progress and perfection here in all virtues, and their greater glory and happiness hereafter ; whereas, the love of worldly and carnal parents for their children is chiefly, if not wholly, employed in humouring them in their passions and providing for their settlement in this world.

To return to my subject. Let all religious have recourse to

their confessor or superioress with great charity, as our holy Rule prescribes, with a filial confidence, persuading themselves that they have a most sincere and parental love and concern for them,—that they desire nothing more than their spiritual good, their peace of mind, their progress and perfection, their comfort now, and happiness hereafter.

We must, then, declare our exterior defects to the superioress, and manifest our conscience with great humility to the confessor. We must do this without fear; that is, we must not fancy that, by manifesting our imperfections and failings, we shall give them a bad opinion of us, — that it will make them less kind or severe upon us afterwards.

These are rash thoughts, very injurious to them, contrary to charity and prejudicial to ourselves. We must have a very mean opinion of our superioress, if we think she will have a bad opinion of us, much more if we apprehend ill usage and hard treatment from her — on account of this manifestation of our exterior faults; for, first, she cannot make use of this knowledge to do us any prejudice, without offending grievously against the Rule.

A confessor must have very little experience in the direction of souls, little charity, and less wisdom, if, upon any thing he hears in confession, he frames a disadvantageous thought of the person. On the contrary, how great soever the faults are he hears in it, he is more edified with the humility of the person, than he is scandalized at the faults; for, the great desire and zeal the party shows to satisfy God for her sins, to correct evil habits, to overcome her passions, to advance in the service of God and study of perfection, speaks that her soul is in an excellent disposition, and proves a firmness and resolution of will that can never be sufficiently admired and esteemed. The faults she declares only show what she was by the corruption of nature: this manifestation of them declares what she is actually by the help and mediation of divine grace.

When the confessor considers the corruption of sinful flesh, he wonders at nothing we can tell him, being very sensible that there is no sin so enormous which we may not easily fall into when left to ourselves. Wherefore, the knowledge of our imperfections, failings, and sins, makes no impression; but the manifesting of them with great sincerity and humility strikes

him very much, and makes him have a very great and advantageous opinion of us ; because, as it is easy to fall into disorders when left to ourselves, so it is very hard—consequently, highly meritorious and pleasing to God—humbly to acknowledge our faults.

If the declaring of our exterior faults gives the superioress no disadvantageous opinion of us, how much less are we to fear it from a manifestation of our temptations, which the Rule prescribes.

Having thus declared the dispositions we are to bring with us to manifestation,—that is, sincerity, humility, and charity : likewise what thoughts and sentiments we are to have of our confessor : looking upon him not as a severe judge designing to chastise and punish, but as a loving father, the guide and master Providence has appointed for our direction, comfort and encouragement ; let us now consider what we are chiefly to inform of at these times.

This Rule says, that in manifestation of conscience, we must be very careful to mention all our temptations : here observe that the Rule speaks of all the Institute without distinction,—the old as well as the young, proficients as well as beginners, the perfect as well as novices. If Saint Ignatius requires this of those who have lived long in religion and are become experienced themselves in a spiritual life, how much more does he require it of beginners and novices ? and how much more necessary is it for them to be very sincere and free in declaring all their temptations ? Many have a wrong and too mean an opinion of a religious state ; others have too advantageous an opinion of it ; they seem to think that the moment a person puts on a religious habit, they put off and are perfectly divested of all their former passions, evil inclinations, and vicious habits, that their very nature is or ought to be changed, so that when, after their admission to the noviceship, they begin to feel again their former temptations, they are often extremely affrighted, disturbed, and dejected : and if, being ashamed of themselves, they are close and reserved with their superioress, it is incredible what disturbances they will feel, what temptations they will suffer ; to what dangers they are exposed of being deluded by the enemy, even of losing their vocation and returning to the world.



We do not, then, become angels by leaving the world and putting on a religious weed ; we do not leave nature behind us, nor its passions nor inclinations. We can no more quit our bodies than we can part with ourselves ; therefore, we still remain liable to temptation and to the assaults of our ghostly enemy. For this reason Ecclesiasticus prudently admonishes all those who give themselves to the service of God, to prepare against temptation, and to arm themselves well with justice and the fear of God.

It often happens that in the beginning especially of a holy and religious life, many are more grievously tempted than they were before they came to religion, and this upon two accounts ; first, for their greater humiliation, and to make them have an entire diffidence in themselves. Second, for their greater merit, and to oblige them to put all their trust and confidence in God. The devil is never so busy to tempt us to evil as when we are most inclined to do well ; he is never more angry with us than when we abandon him the better to serve and please God. I cannot sufficiently admire the sweet and wise care and providence of God over those he calls to a religious state ; when they were in the world he would not suffer them to be so strongly tempted, because they would have been overcome and so lost.

In religion he permits the devil to make his fiercest attacks, because they are then obliged to apply with greater fervour to the observance of all religious duties, and the study of perfection. In the world he would not permit the devil to assault them fiercely, to prevent a defeat ; he permits him often in religion to attack them with all his force to render the victory more glorious. Be not frightened and dejected, if, having enlisted in the service of God, the devil fills your thoughts with ideas very unbecoming the sanctity of the state of life you are in ; be not disturbed when he causes a rebellion in your flesh, and solicits your will to consent to his deceitful promises and allurements ; be not disquieted when he suggests horrible blasphemies against God and his saints ; in fine, be not alarmed and surprised that he makes use of all his diabolical artifices to disturb you in the service of God and the study of virtue ; for you may be sure he is angry, and will leave no stone unturned to effect your ruin, and hinder your perfection ; but, as Saint Bernard observes, it is not in his power to do us any harm with-

out our consenting to him. This holy father compares him to a dog tied up with a strong chain, and not able to hurt any but those who are so heedless and rash as to go within its reach.

A religious must not be discouraged though temptations are ever so great ; because she has reason to expect them : there are very few who do not sooner or later experience them. Holy Job says, man's life is a warfare, and he cannot suppose his ghostly enemy will ever give over, so long as there remains any hope or prospect of gaining a victory. What pretensions can we have to a crown without fair fighting ? therefore Ecclesiasticus exhorts us to keep our ground and stand firm in justice and fear. We must not leave the way of righteousness for fear of our enemy, but be firm and constant in it for fear of God. To fear an enemy is cowardice and folly ; to fear God is virtue and wisdom : the fear of the devil will work our destruction ; the fear of God will make us happy.

As it is always dangerous to fight singly with so subtle, so deceitful, so strong an enemy as the devil is, be careful not to go to the combat alone ; have always the counsel of your director or superioress : therefore, as the Rule prescribes, keep no temptations concealed. By the experience of another you will learn how to defend yourself and how to baffle your adversary. Besides, by your humility and strict observance of your Rule, you will obtain great succours of divine grace and an extraordinary protection of God, who never fails to help and protect those, particularly in time of temptation, who do not fail to use their best endeavours, and are exact and faithful in making use of the means appointed by the Rule.

As the deceits and illusions of the devil are innumerable, we are not sufficiently secured from his malice by manifesting only our temptations and defects, it is not enough to be well armed when he assaults us with temptations to commit sin ; we must also be upon our guard even in the best designs, in the most holy practices of devotion and penance. The devil will often transform himself into an angel of light, will put us upon good works, practices of mortification and of other virtues, thereby to gain his ends, which he could not accomplish by tempting us to sins. For this reason our Rule obliges us to make known not only our temptations, but also our devotions, penances, and virtues, that, by the prudent care of those whom God has given

us for our guides, we may be preserved from all illusions of our ghostly enemy, and more effectually helped to advance securely in the way of virtue, from which many err, and are lost, by relying too much on their own knowledge and experience, and neglecting the counsel of their superiors.

This sufficiently shows of what importance this Rule of manifestation of conscience is, and what it requires of us. Let us endeavour to observe it punctually ; and, as the Rule says, let us rejoice and glory in this — that our superiors have a perfect knowledge of our interior, of all that passes in our mind, as we ourselves have, that so they may be better able to defend us from all the deceits of our ghostly enemy, and more capable of directing and advancing us in the way of virtue and perfection.

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## SECOND EXHORTATION ON THE TWELFTH RULE.

“THEY are not to conceal any temptation, but to speak it to their confessor or superioress, and even be glad to have their whole soul laid open.”

We may easily perceive by the very terms in which the Rule is delivered to us, of what consequence it is, since Saint Ignatius plainly insinuates that perseverance in our vocation depends thereon ; we are then to make great account of it, and resolve to be punctual, exact, and faithful in the observance of it. I will endeavour to make you sensible of the consequence of the Rule and what it requires of you.

The end of the Rule is to render the confessor more capable of directing his penitents in the way of virtue and perfection : it is obvious that without a perfect knowledge of their interior, it is impossible to direct and guide them in this way with security. The study of perfection is the most sublime of all studies--it is the most necessary and profitable ; at the same

time nothing more easy than to err in it, and nothing more dangerous. It is the most noble of all, both by reason of its end and of its object. The end of this study is to honour God, to love God, and to render ourselves perfect and pure in his eyes so far as frail and corrupt nature is capable of ; its object is the acquiring of those virtues which sanctify our souls and render us most conformable and pleasing to God ; it is of all studies the most necessary, because we were created for no other end than to serve and please God : it is the most profitable because the reward we shall receive for it is no less than heavenly glory and endless felicity.

We may easily mistake and err in the study of perfection, especially if we rely upon our own judgment, and will be our own guides ; for how few are there who have sufficient knowledge in the science of the saints, to teach and direct themselves. Nothing more dangerous than to mistake or err in this study, because our perfection here and our happiness hereafter depend thereon. If, in all other sciences, we think it necessary to have a master, we must not presume that in this of saints we are capable and sufficient to teach ourselves ; for it is the hardest of all to profit in without a director or master, and a mistake or error in it is of the greatest consequence.

The difficulty of making progress in virtue without a guide, arises from many causes ; first, the maxims of the Gospel are very sublime, quite opposite to those of the world, to the principles of self-love, and the dictates of corrupt nature and sinful flesh. What seems folly to man, is esteemed high wisdom by God ; what we are apt to call right, he calls wrong ; what we call light, he calls darkness ; what we are apt to value and esteem as good, he abominates and hates as wicked. The maxims of the world are those we are first taught, they have prepossessed our understandings, and engaged our wills ; being more conformable to self-love, sensuality, vanity, and other passions, we are not easily persuaded to disapprove of them or condemn them ; we suffer ourselves to be led away, and they are apt to influence most of the actions of our life. At least these passions cast a great mist before our eyes and leave the soul in great darkness, which is often much increased by the suggestions of the enemy, who, the better to divert us from



good, will even transform himself into an angel of light, and delude us with false appearances of virtue.

In this case how hard it is to guide oneself with security; how rash and dangerous to attempt it. How many examples we have of unfortunate people who, relying on their own knowledge and prudence, have fallen into scandalous sins, and been eternally lost. In the lives of the holy fathers of the desert, we have examples of some who fell even from a state of great virtue and perfection into apostacy itself, by not following the directions of their superiors. Saint Dorotheus, an experienced spiritual man, was so much persuaded of the necessity of a director, that when he heard of a great fall, he attributed it to the following of one's own fancy, or not sufficiently manifesting the conscience to the superior. Speaking on this subject to his religious, he said, that the devil is never better pleased than when he has persuaded a religious to leave his director and follow his own ways. In the life of Saint Macarius we read that the devil appearing to him one day, told him that he did what he pleased with one of his religious, turned him what way he would, because he could not overcome himself to open his conscience entirely to his superior.

It is necessary even for such as are advanced in the way of perfection to have a guide, and not rely upon their own prudence; how much more necessary is it for beginners and novices. As it signifies little to have a director, unless you are very free and open with him, of how great importance is this Rule, which obliges us, with great humility and charity, to manifest our conscience to our confessor. There are many reasons to prove that this practice is of great use and benefit.

It is a subject of great comfort to be assured that we are not deluded in our devotions and other methods of serving God; that we take the infallible way of pleasing him by overcoming our passions, and acquiring virtues proper for our state of life. When we keep nothing secret from our superioress, and follow her directions, we are assured of this; because we most certainly follow the very rule God has given for our direction, and which he commands us to follow, when he says: Obey those whom I have placed over you. We should not doubt but that we were going on in a sure and perfect way, should our Saviour himself appear to us and bid us go on in this way;

and did not our Saviour tell us this in express terms when he said in the Gospel, he who hears you, hears me ?

When you open yourself to your superioress in manifestation, and she directs you how to behave in such circumstances, do not receive her directions as coming from a person subject to mistakes, but as from our Saviour himself by her mouth, because Christ assures us, that we hear him when we hear our superiors. When seculars have made choice of a director, we advise and exhort them to be free and sincere in opening their consciences, and faithful in following his directions. How much more ought religious to do the same, whose directors are not of their own choosing, but appointed to take care of them by God, on whose faithful charity they may safely depend, that, notwithstanding their ignorance and other failing, divine providence will be ever watchful to prevent their being seduced and misled. Yes ; God is faithful, by whom you are called to the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He is faithful, therefore he will himself guide and direct superiors, that they may with greater security direct you. He who can open the mouths of little children to utter his praises, in failure of those who ought, but neglect to do it, will not fail to put words into the mouths of superiors when necessary for your direction ; for, as you have shown your fidelity to him by answering his call and coming to the Institute, so God will show his fidelity to you by preventing your being misled by following the very Rule he called you to.

Let your superioress be what she may, let her be ignorant, imperfect, and even wicked, divine goodness will still take care of you, will suggest thoughts to her, and put words into her mouth that may be beneficial to you, may help you to overcome temptations, and to acquire the virtue and perfection to which you aspire ; for God is faithful by whom you are called.

Those who are free in opening themselves and discovering the most secret thoughts of their hearts, free themselves from many fears and troubles of mind, which those who are close and reserved are often molested with and extremely tormented ; for the moment they have given a faithful account of all that passes in their souls, they are either quite free from these tormenting fears by the prudent advice of their superioress, or at least have their fears and scruples much abated. When they

find their superioress is of opinion that they are not to be minded, one who trusts entirely to her own judgment, has reason to fear ; because no one is a competent judge in his own cause, being often prevented by passions and ill habits, and thereby too much inclined to favour even sinful inclinations of corrupt nature. When a confessor or superioress tells her that there is no reason to fear, she may acquiesce, relying on the faithful charity of our Lord, who will never suffer us to perish by following the very Rule he has been pleased to give us to be our guide. I doubt not but you are fully resolved to be very exact in the observance of so necessary and beneficial a Rule, therefore you will be glad to know the best means of complying with it.

It is very plain that Saint Ignatius in this Rule requires that we disclose our conscience to our confessor with great sincerity, humility, and charity. As to the first, the Rule says we must leave nothing out wherein we have offended the divine majesty, giving a full account to him of our whole life. The Prophet Jeremy expresses this very well when he bids us pour out our soul as we would pour water out of a vessel, because no liquor comes so clear and clean out of a vessel as water : pour out wine, there will remain a scent at least, if not a colour ; oil leaves a greasiness, and honey a clamminess and a taste. Water does not only not give to a vessel a greasiness, a scent, or taste, but will often take them away when given by other liquors, and so leave the vessel as clean and sweet as it was when first made, or before any of those liquors were put in it. It is then like water we are to pour out our souls before our confessor, manifesting with great sincerity and candour all our defects, passions, evil inclinations, and vicious habits, leaving nothing concealed in our souls, wherein we have offended God ; nothing undiscovered that has either colour or scent of vice ; no inordinate affection to any created object which makes the heart cleave, as one may say, to creatures : this, Saint Ambrose says, is to pour forth our souls like water.

When superiors have thus a perfect knowledge of those under their charge, they will be able to direct them with more ease and greater security ; they will take care not to expose them to any dangerous temptation, to remove all obstacles to their advancement in virtue, and to provide them with all con-

venient means and helps, that they may, with edification to others and their own spiritual profit, perform the employments holy obedience shall place them in. Wherefore those who are not so sincere and open, are often, by their own fault, put into employments for which they are not fit; hence, they do not succeed, are exposed to confusion, and often give dissatisfaction, if not disedification.

As this reservedness often comes from pride, or a vain fear of losing the good opinion superiors seem to have of us, Saint Ignatius, in this Rule, opposes to this pride the virtue of humility, for he warns us to make this manifestation with great humility. It is very necessary to have a good stock of this virtue to open freely our defects and weaknesses; at the same time, it is certain that the principle such go on is false, their fears are groundless; for subjects are so far from losing the esteem and love of their superiors by opening their consciences with great sincerity and humility to their confessor, and their failings and defects to their superioress, that, on the contrary, they love and esteem them the more; for, notwithstanding all their spiritual infirmities and defects, they show themselves to be truly humble and good religious. The faults they mention show only what they are by the corruption of nature: their sincere and humble confession shows what they are by virtue, and what they desire to be by the assistance of grace. This good disposition and zeal for their amendment gives their superiors a much greater opinion of them than they had before, and makes them have as great confidence in their subjects, as *they* have in their superiors.

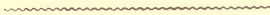
Let us grant that it is a great humiliation, or even a confusion, to discover our sins to the confessor, and our imperfections and faults to the superioress. Still, ought we not to overcome this bashfulness? Shall we discover our secret distempers and ailments of the body to a corporal physician for the preservation of a temporal life, and shall we think much and be ashamed to discover to our spiritual physicians our interior infirmities for the cure and salvation of our souls? Endeavour, then, to procure this humility, which does not only make you willing to have your defects made known to your superioress, but likewise emboldens and encourages you to manifest them yourselves.

This is great humility. "It is true humility," says Cassian.



“It is a humility,” says the great Saint Gregory, “which deserves the highest commendation, and to be admired more than perfect acts of other virtues — as of chastity, justice, and the like.”

Do not fear confusion from manifestation of your defects, but assure yourself of exaltation by it ; for our blessed Saviour declares, that he who humbles himself shall be exalted.



## EXHORTATION ON THE THIRTEENTH RULE.

“TEMPTATIONS must be prevented by their contraries.”

Saint Ignatius in this Rule admonishes us to prevent temptations ; then he speaks of the most proper means for this purpose. He says it behoves us to prevent them, because it is much safer than to depend on our resisting them when they come. Those who love danger shall perish in it ; and he has just reason to fear being overcome, who does not avoid them when he may.

We should think a man very inconsiderate and rash, who would set fire to his house to see how he could put it out. It is no less folly for us to run rashly into temptation to see what resistance we would make. We are more indebted to the physician who prevents our falling into a dangerous sickness, than to him who cures us after we have fallen into it. So it is the wisest part we can take to prevent, as much as we can, our falling into the snares of the enemy.

The devil will never fail to make frequent assaults. Whole legions of evil spirits will sometimes set upon God’s holy servants, and, what is much worse and more dangerous for them, they will often muster up a strong band of unruly passions and vicious habits to assist them. It is for this reason Saint Ignatius so prudently cautions us to arm ourselves against temptations, and prescribes the most proper means to do so.

I will first speak of the necessity we lie under of preparing ourselves for temptations ; then I will show the most proper method we can take.

The Angel Raphael told Tobias, that, because he was acceptable to God, it was necessary he should be tried by temptation. Though man's life in general is a continual warfare upon earth, according to holy Job, yet it is more particularly true of devout and religious people. Wherefore Ecclesiasticus gives this prudent advice to all such as give themselves to the service of God and the study of perfection, to remain firm in the service of God and the desire of justice ; then to prepare their souls for temptation.

Our ghostly enemy is represented to us by Saint Peter, as a furious lion going about in quest of prey. He never sleeps ; so he is always on the chase. He is never weary ; therefore he never rests. When he gets a prey, he loses no time in devouring it, and immediately pursues another ; for his malice is so great and ravenous, that nothing can satisfy him.

Our blessed Saviour calls the devil, Prince of this World, to give us thereby to understand the greatness of his power in the world. In how great and miserable slavery does he keep the far greatest part of it ? Depriving worldlings of the sweet delights of a good conscience, and feeding them with the filthy wash of sensual pleasures, he keeps them fast bound to the earth with inordinate desires of riches, which, though in appearance badges of honour and liberty, are in effect no better than fetters and shackles. He not only makes use of his power to ruin their souls, but of his deceits and craft. He engages our passions and senses to assist him, and lays as many snares to entrap them, as there are different creatures in the world to entice them.

This was represented in a vision to Saint Anthony ; which made him cry out : How is it possible, O Lord, to escape so many snares as are laid for us ?

He shows his spite and malice most against those who, to avoid the many dangers of falling into sin, quit the world, and enter into a religious state of life. He bears a particular hatred to them, as to deserters from his colours, and will not fail to persecute them with all sorts of temptations. The first reason why he is fierce upon such is, the hatred he bears God himself.

He once presumptuously affected sovereignty, when he chose the quarter of the north for his kingdom, and the Mount of Testament for his throne. He cannot yet digest his fatal overthrow, his being cast out of heaven into hell, and from the most beautiful of angels changed into the most frightful and ugly of all devils. The remembrance of this unexpected humiliation swells his pride with envy and rage, and puts him on the blackest designs to revenge; and as he can attempt nothing immediately against the majesty of God, he whets his malice against such as serve him faithfully, endeavouring, by tempting them and inducing them to sin, to deprive God of the accidental glory which he receives from the holy lives and virtues of his saints.

A second reason for his tempting us so strongly, is the envy and malice he bears us. He cannot suffer that mortals, so much inferior to him in the gifts of nature, should so much surpass him in those of grace and favour of God. He cannot bear that we should be chosen to fill his place and those of his companions in heaven, — to inherit that crown of glory which he and they have lost. Though he is abased, he is not humbled: he is still the same proud spirit he was before his fall. His malice is as incorrigible as his nature is unchangeable; therefore, his hatred and envy in regard of us must always continue. What inflames his hatred to the highest degree of rage and fury, is the unspeakable mercy that was shown to fallen man, preferably to him and his rebellious followers. Immediately after their sin, they were precipitated into hell, without hope of redemption; whereas mankind had a most merciful Saviour to redeem him. *Man*, after sin, was spared: he was not. *Man*, after innumerable sins, is often saved, having time for repentance granted him: Lucifer and the other fallen angels are eternally lost, because they had neither time nor means to satisfy for one sin, and this only in thought.

This extraordinary favour showed to man preferably to him, swells this haughty monster with indignation against man, as well as against God; makes him break out into never-ceasing blasphemies against his divine majesty; and puts him upon all malicious and deceitful practices to ruin man, especially such as apply with great fervour to the service of God. He waylays them on the road as a thief, and pursues them as a pirate at sea.

As a merchant's ship is in most danger of being attacked when it returns home richly laden, so the devil is most diligent, watchful, and fierce in tempting those who have greater treasures of merit to lose.

The third reason why he tempts such as enter on a spiritual life, is because he apprehends his own loss. This he fears especially from such as come to the Institute with excellent dispositions to virtue and good capacities for learning. When we enter, we not only make profession of sanctifying our own souls by a perfect imitation of our Lord and Saviour, in the observance of the evangelical counsels, and the practice of all those virtues of which he has given us example: we likewise undertake to promote his glory by contributing to the salvation of souls. For this reason the devil is greatly alarmed when he sees young persons endowed with great talents both of nature and grace, dedicate themselves with great fervour to the service of God in the Institute. He does not fear the loss of one soul, but of many. He knows by experience what a zealous person may do, by what he has seen done by so many labourers in the Institute. He cannot reflect on the many victories they have gained over him, the many conquests they have made, without conceiving a mortal hatred against the Institute, and being extremely jealous of all such as come to it. Hence, we may be sure he will leave no stone unturned, no endeavours on his side will be wanting, to prevent for the future the like inconveniences.

You must not wonder if he gather together all his forces against you—if he attack you on all sides, and throw as many snares before you as there are creatures and objects in the world to tempt you with, and as there are different ways of deluding souls. Be not surprised if he make use of your senses, passions, inclinations, and flesh, to raise a rebellion and to make a severe war against you. He will use a thousand deceitful artifices to discourage you. He will fill your mind with melancholy and desponding thoughts, representing to you on one hand, your great weakness and frailty, on the other, the sublimity of your vocation, the difficulty of the enterprise you have undertaken. He will fill your imagination with impure fancies, and perhaps attack you with blasphemous suggestions against God and his Church. If he cannot prevail upon you to consent to evil, he



will endeavour to hinder good ; that is, your progress in virtue, your advancement in perfection. Perhaps he will torment you with fears and scruples, that, wearied with strict religious observance, he may persuade you to a careless, irregular, and tepid life ; by which means, if he does not succeed so far as to make you quit your vocation, he will at least render you incapable of doing him any great harm, or yourself and neighbour any great good. Hence, you see how necessary it is always to be watchful, that our enemy may never surprise us, — how much it behoves us always to be well prepared and armed, that he may never gain a victory over us.

The method recommended in the Rule to effect this, is, to prevent, as much as we can with the assistance of God's grace, the temptations of the devil by making use of means quite opposite to the vice he is accustomed to tempt us to.

Saint Ignatius explains his meaning by an instance of pride. They who are given to pride and vain glory must endeavour to prevent their being tempted to this vice by means of humble and mean employments, which, as all spiritual men observe, help very much to the conquering of pride and the gaining of humility.

This is an efficacious means to prevent temptations of any kind ; for what is said of pride may, as the Rule observes, be said of any other perverse pretension of the mind.

The enemy is not able to do us any harm alone. All the powers of hell cannot annoy us, without the auxiliary forces of our senses, vicious habits, and passions. If we can gain an entire victory over them, and have them securely guarded, we may laugh at all the efforts and stratagems of the world and the devil : he will not be able to make any impression on our souls ; his attacks cannot be strong nor dangerous.

Saint Jerome says, that the power of Satan does not consist in his temptations and boasting, but in the corruption of our own will. If the will be not seduced by passions, temptations lose their force, and cannot affect the soul.

Saint Austin being asked, how it came to pass that Satan, being chained up, as we read in the Apocalypse, did so much harm to men. He told them that it was through their fault—that is, through the carelessness of tepid Christians in mortifying their passions and breaking their perverse will.

It plainly appears how necessary it is to keep our passions under with a strong hand, especially that of self-will, and that we are to endeavour to mortify, conquer, and destroy them ; for this is the only and secure way for preventing and rendering void all the efforts of the devil ; at least, they will become so weak, that we may resist and even vanquish them with ease, The most immediate way is, to exercise ourselves in such things as are contrary to them, frequently to make acts of the virtues opposite to the vices to which we are inclined.

Those who are given to pride are generally very ambitious of honours, titles, and dignities. They desire to be employed in such offices as are looked upon by men as very honourable, wherein they may show their talents, and thereby gain the esteem and applause of men. As long as they are thus employed, it is morally impossible to become truly humble, because these employments not only expose them to continual occasion of falling into sin, but feed and increase their vanity. To extinguish this flaming desire of praise, you must not add more fuel to the flame ; rather subtract fuel from it by exercising yourself in such actions and employments as are mean and despicable in the eyes of men. Thus you will be unregarded and despised ; consequently, you will prevent many grievous temptations to which you might otherwise be exposed.

Persons who are inclined to anger must make use of the same method, exercising frequent acts of the opposite virtue, and seeking occasions to try their patience. Many seem mild when nothing provokes them, when every one complies with their humour, and endeavours to please them. But to gain a victory over anger, we must fight with it. This is done in contradictions, crosses, and disappointments. By suppressing anger at these times with acts of meekness, a habit of this virtue is acquired—that is, a facility of producing acts of it on all occasions, even when provoked with sharp language or injurious expressions.

Those who are great lovers of ease and pleasure are obliged by this Rule to make use of mortifications and chastisements of the body, of laborious and painful employments.

By indulging ourselves and seeking our ease, we become slothful and heavy in the service of God. So, by inuring ourselves to pain and labour, the soul is quickened, and becomes

more active and fervent in undertaking and pursuing good designs.

What makes us love and seek our ease so much, is the apprehension we have of pain and labour. We fear we shall destroy our health by it, and that we shall not be able to bear it. It happens in this, as in many other things, that the apprehension of a difficulty is much greater in the imagination than it is in itself. Mortification and labour by use become easy; and we see by experience that those who are brought up hardy, enjoy better health, are stronger and more vigorous, than others. They are willing to labour and take pains; they hate nothing more than an idle, soft, and easy life.

All other perverse propensities of the mind are best cured by acting contrary to them. By frequent repetition of contrary acts we contract contrary habits, which render the practice of the opposite virtues easy.

Saint Gregory observes that this was the method our blessed Saviour took to reform depraved nature. Like a wise physician, he prescribes such remedies for curing our vices as are wholly contrary to them. For example, to cure lust, he prescribes continence; to cure avarice, he orders liberality; he places meekness against anger, and humility against pride.

The same method is observed to cure the spiritual distempers of our souls, that corporal physicians follow to cure the distempers of the body. Among them it is a received aphorism, that diseases are cured by contraries. When they observe that the indisposition proceeds from heat, they apply cooling remedies; and hot ones, if it come from cold. Such distempers as come from repletion or intemperate feeding, are to be taken away by abstinence: such as are occasioned by a want of sufficient nourishment must be cured by cordials and good diet.

Wherefore, let every one examine to what passions or vicious habits she is given, and then take care to exercise herself fervently in the opposite acts, as Saint Ignatius orders in this Rule.

## FIRST EXHORTATION ON THE FIFTEENTH RULE.

“ALL are constantly to apply themselves to the acquiring of all perfection possible, with the help of divine grace, by an exact observance of all the Rules, and by a special regard to the design of our Institute.”

In explaining the preceding Rules I have discoursed of the purgative way, exhorting and teaching you how to purge and purify your souls from all disorderly passions and vicious habits by means of mortification. To-day I will lead you into the illuminative way, wherein we are exhorted to aspire to as high perfection as, with the assistance of God's grace, we can arrive to by an exact observance of our Rules and Constitutions, and are particularly taught the practice of true and solid virtue.

Hitherto we have been digging the foundation for the tower of perfection we are come to raise in a religious state. We have been removing rubbish to find virgin earth to build upon; we have been preparing materials to build with. To-day we begin to lay the foundation-stones. Of these, according to the holy Council of Trent, faith seems to challenge the first place. It is the chief corner-stone of this spiritual building; therefore it is called by the Council, the beginning of salvation—the foundation and root of our justification, without which it is impossible to please God.

It is necessary to understand well what this faith is, and how it is to be practised by us.

I will first speak of the nature of faith and its excellent acts; then I will deliver some rules whereby we may easily gather how far we have advanced in this virtue.

In the illuminative way, it is proper to speak first of faith. By it we are enlightened to go on in the way of virtue; it informs us of those great truths of eternity which discover the fallacy of worldly prudence, and inflames our heart with ardent desires of virtue here, and of glory hereafter.

The light of faith is indeed obscure by reason of its object



being so far elevated above the reach of our understanding ; but it is a true and sure light, that cannot deceive. Faith does not represent its objects to us with the same clearness as we see natural things. Hence, we can have no evidence of them ; yet we have greater certainty, and this obscurity gives place for merit.

Truths evidently known force the understanding to assent to them. For example, when we see the Sun shine, we cannot judge that it does not shine. Faith represents its objects to us with infallible certainty ; yet an obstinate will may so blind the understanding, that it cannot see ; therefore, a pious, submissive will is required for an act of faith.

We may divide faith into habitual and actual. The virtue of faith is properly called habitual. It is a gift infused into the soul immediately by God, and is the source of all other gifts. By actual faith is understood the acts we produce by the help of this habit. This faith is called divine, because it depends on divine authority, as human faith depends on the authority of men ; for, when we believe an article of faith, it is because God has revealed it. Human motives may induce us to believe a revelation, but they do not suffice for an act of faith, because faith is a supernatural act ; therefore it requires a supernatural motive.

This is what Saint Paul commended in the Thessalonians ; for, when he preached to them, and explained the mysteries of our faith, they received his doctrine not as the word of man, but as the word of God, as truly it was.

The principle also of faith is supernatural, — namely, the understanding enlightened with supernatural lights, and the will strengthened with divine grace ; both which proceed immediately from the Father of light, and are infused into our soul by an infinite goodness. Hence, no acts of natural knowledge can be so certain as an act of divine faith, none can deserve so firm an assent as it does. To remain firm in our faith, in opposition to the rules and lights of human reason, or the greatest authority of men and angels, cannot be called obstinacy, but virtue. Therefore Saint Paul told the Galatians that, though an angel should come down from heaven, and tell them other things contrary to what he had taught, that they were not to believe him ; because what he taught them was not

the word of man, but the word of God, — therefore more to be believed than the word either of man or angel.

It follows, that an article revealed does not only deserve credit, but that we are obliged to believe it under pain of sin ; for it is as great a dishonour done to God, not to believe what he is pleased to tell us, as not to do what he thinks fit to command us. We are obliged to obey God when he commands, because he is our sovereign Lord and Creator : we are obliged to believe him when he speaks, because he is truth itself, and cannot deceive us. His divine will is the sovereign rule of our will and actions : his authority is the supreme and infallible rule of our understanding and belief. For this reason, says Saint Paul, it is impossible to please God without faith ; and I may truly say that, without a lively faith, it is hardly possible to please him.

The faithful believer has so many strong motives continually before his eyes, both to avoid sin and to do good, that the greatest obstinacy is not able to withstand. At least, they so fortify frail nature and strengthen our will, that it is proof against all temptations,—the allurements of the world, the suggestions of the flesh, and deceits of the devil.

Saint Peter, exhorting us to be very watchful and upon our guard against our ghostly enemies, bids us be strong in faith. It was by firmness in faith, as Saint Paul tells us in his letter to the Hebrews, that the primitive Christians gained so many glorious victories over their ghostly enemies, that they subdued so many nations to the empire of Christ, performed so many good actions and works of justice, and gained to themselves eternal crowns of justice.

All our hopes of future glory and felicity are built upon our faith ; therefore this same Apostle thus defines faith : It is the very soul of a spiritual life. For, as Saint Paul says, the just man lives by faith, because faith enlivens his hope, and this animates him to bear the momentary tribulations of this life not only patiently, but joyfully.

The miseries of life are too great to be borne : without a prospect of a future state, they would quite dishearten, deject, and kill us. It is the hope of endless felicity that makes all our sufferings and tribulations seem light and momentary. It is by faith we are assured of the eternal reward of the just and the

punishments of the wicked. It is, in fine, by faith that we become members of the Church militant, and that we are to fight our way through all the dangerous temptations of this life to the Church triumphant.

I do not speak of a dead faith, as all faith is, according to Saint James, that is void of good works. As faith is the foundation of a spiritual life, so it is the source of all good works. Wherefore, it is by these we know what our faith is. As a tree is best known by its fruit, so the most certain rule we have of knowing the purity, strength, and liveliness of our faith, are our deeds. For this reason, says Saint James, I will show my faith by my works.

In natural things we guess at a man's thoughts by his actions. When we see a merchant quit his country, home, and friends; that he undertakes long and dangerous journeys and voyages, even to the remotest parts of the world, to heathenish and barbarous countries, we conclude that his desire of riches is very great, and that he is fully persuaded he shall become rich by this means. What is it that makes a soldier despise danger, and voluntarily run on without fear against a file of musketeers or a battery of cannon, but the persuasion that honour is thus to be purchased,—that this is the only way to advance his fortune in the world?

We may conclude that our faith is holy and strong, when it makes us live up to the maxims of the Gospel, despise the vain honours and riches of the earth, and willing to suffer every temporal loss, pain, or torment, for the kingdom of heaven.

You may observe that the articles of our faith are of two sorts. Some are only speculative, others are also practical. Some require no more than an interior assent of our understanding to the mystery proposed, or an external profession of it, when God's honour, our own or our neighbour's greater good, do so require. The sublime mystery of the Trinity, the Incarnation, Transubstantiation, and the like, are articles of this nature; for we comply fully with our duty in regard of these when we truly believe them, and assert the truth when thereunto obliged.

Others are called practical, because they either recommend or counsel the practice of some virtue, or serve as a rule or direction for the ordering of our life and actions. "Thou shalt

love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." This is an example of the first. "Who does not renounce all he possesses, cannot be my disciple," may serve for an example of the latter.

As these and similar articles of our faith either command, direct, or move us to practise, we do not satisfy our duty unless we proceed to action, and regulate our lives by them; for, if our lives are contrary to our profession, we have just reason to fear that our profession is not sincere, at least, that our faith is very weak, if not dead.

Saint Paul, speaking of some whose vicious lives were contrary to the holy profession they made of believing in God, says, that they denied by their deeds whom they acknowledged with their lips. This is what preachers and spiritual writers often reproach loose Christians with. If you believe, say they, that there is a God, who is present in all places, sees every thing you do, knows your most secret thoughts and desires, how dare you commit, in the presence of this great God, such abominations as you would be ashamed to do before men? If you believe that death is certain, that nothing is more uncertain than the time and manner of your death, how comes it that you take so much pains and commit so many injustices, to provide for this life, and do so little for securing a happy eternity? You say, you believe that by every mortal sin you become guilty of hell fire; yet you commit it without fear, and drink iniquity as beasts do water. You believe that heaven is to be gained only by good works, and you neglect all occasions of performing them, to indulge yourself in ease, diversions, and pleasures. Have we not reason to say that your lives belie your profession, — that your belief of those great truths is not sincere, — that your profession is counterfeit?

They are not only seculars who are liable to this reproach. Many tepid religious are equally obnoxious to it.

Those great principles of perfection delivered to us in the Gospel are revealed truths, and do as strictly belong to the integrity of Christian faith, as the adorable mysteries of the Trinity or Incarnation.

Though all are not obliged under sin to follow the evangelical counsels, they are obliged to believe they are divine truths and means to become perfect.



It is one property of true faith to be catholic or universal ; it must extend to all revealed truths ; it must embrace all without exception — the most common rules and directions of our actions, as well as the sublime mysteries of the Creed ; to refuse to believe any one of them — to doubt or question God's veracity and authority, strikes at the very foundation of faith, nay, wholly destroys it.

If God could be deceived, he would not be truth itself ; if he could deceive us, his authority would not be infallible ; therefore not sufficient to ground an act of faith. If he could deceive us in easier matters, we should have reason to doubt of those mysteries that so far surpass human understanding ; consequently our faith could not have that infallible certainty that is essential to divine faith. A true believer must then receive our blessed Saviour's doctrine, whatever it is, with the same respect, submission, and certainty as he does all other articles of faith. Religious persons not only receive them, but make profession of regulating their lives and actions by them. We profess not only to keep his commandments, but to follow his counsels, and to govern ourselves by those great maxims he has delivered to us in the Gospel. The reason why we receive them as a Rule is, because we believe them to be true ; and the most convincing proof we can give of believing them is to take them for a rule to square our lives by. If, contrary to what we profess, we do not live up to the maxims of the Gospel, but rather follow the dictates of nature, the bent of our passions, and suggestions of self-love, let us pretend what we will, our actions will prove that our faith is dead. To know how far we are liable to the reproach made to loose Christians in the world, to know how pure and strong our faith is, how far we are advanced in this virtue, let us examine what influence human respects, self-love, the desire of ease, fear of suffering, pride, and similar passions, have upon our lives.

It is an article of faith that our Saviour's example is the true way to life. We make profession of following Christ, and all allow this principle of the Gospel, that to follow him we must take up our cross daily, deny our own will, and learn of him to be meek and humble of heart ; this is what our Saviour taught by word and example, and what we make profession of ; do we seek our cross or fly from it ? do we take it up when we

find it ? do we not rather throw it off when providence lays it upon our shoulders ? do we take it up willingly and with joy, or rather by compulsion and with murmuring ? if our practice corresponded with our belief, how glad we should be to suffer many crosses and tribulations in this life, since the Apostle tells us they are light and momentary ; how glad we should be of persecution, since by it we purchase the kingdom of heaven. Thea postles, carried on by a lively faith, were glad and rejoiced when they suffered ignominy for Christ's sake ; and the confessors of the primitive Church were so animated with the hopes of the reward promised to them in heaven, that they were not sensible of the torments they were put to.

If we believed with a lively faith what we are taught concerning the love and esteem of men, we should not rely on it, but make it our earnest endeavour to purchase the favour and friendship of God. Sights and injuries would not disturb but rejoice us. We should abhor worldly honours, and with great diligence seek to clothe ourselves with the same garment of contempt and ignominy wherewith our Redeemer most graciously clad himself for our sakes.

Examine your faith by your behaviour, observe whether you live up to the maxims of the Gospel, whether they have made a deep impression on your mind, if they made you sensible and ashamed of your weakness when you fail. Beg earnestly of God to enlighten your understanding in regard of these practical truths ; to give you a high esteem for them, and grace to practise what they teach. With the apostles, beg of our Saviour to increase your faith like the mustard seed ; for nothing will help you more to remove mountains and overcome all difficulties in the way of virtue, than to have a lively faith.

## SECOND EXHORTATION ON THE FIFTEENTH RULE.

“ALL are constantly to apply themselves to the acquiring of all perfection possible, through the help of divine grace, by an exact observance of all the Rules, and by a special regard to the design of our Institute.”

Having laid the foundation of a spiritual life, by a lively faith, we will come to a more immediate examination of the Fifteenth Rule, which, in strong terms, enjoins us to apply with all diligence and fervour to acquire the perfection proper to our Institute. Saint Ignatius expressly requires of us to lose no point of perfection which, through God's grace, we may attain by keeping our Rules and Constitutions. We need not be in any pain or concern about raising ourselves to a higher degree of perfection than what they lead us to. Whoever considers them well, must allow that there is no degree of perfection to which they do not excite us, and help us to acquire; because they push us on to a perfect imitation of our blessed Saviour in the practice of all virtues; for example, of humility, contempt of the world, abnegation of our own will, patience, purity of body and mind, obedience, and perfect charity. Before I explain the Rule, I will first exhort you to procure a great desire of perfection; thus you will easily overcome all difficulties that arise from the hardness of the Rule, and will not fail to use your endeavours to become perfect.

The desire of perfection is not only the first step, but a necessary means to obtain it. Unless we ourselves desire it, there is nothing that can make us perfect; neither the holiness of the state we profess, nor the place we live in, nor the company of the virtuous, nor the watchful care of superiors, will signify any thing, if our will or desire be wanting. No exterior means, though ever so congruous and efficacious, can force from us an action truly virtuous. Virtues are supernatural gifts bestowed by God only upon those who pray for them.

We never pray earnestly for things we have no desire of,

much less shall we take pains to procure them when they are disagreeable, hard, and repugnant to our senses. Exterior means, as reprehensions and penances, may oblige us to an exterior observance of our Rule and decent performance of our actions, but it cannot make us do them with a holy and good intention. The motive we act by must come from ourselves; this will be only natural, or perhaps vicious, if we have not a sincere desire and a zeal for our progress in virtue. Corrupt nature, if not corrected by virtue, inclines us to evil; pride, covetousness, or self-love, will influence most of our actions, if the desire of pleasing God does not prevail over these passions.

The desire of honour, praise, and commendation is so natural to us, that without a great stock of virtue there is no resisting it; ease, pleasure and the like, have so many strong charms, that it is impossible for the will to withstand them, unless well fortified with fervent desires of a far greater good; love is the bias of the soul; we are moved by it; it directs and orders whatever we do, so that if we love and desire more the esteem and commendation of men than we do the approbation of God, vanity will have the ordering of our best and most holy actions—the management of our whole life.

Saint Ignatius delivers this to us in many places of our Rules, particularly in the preface, in which he tells us that the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Ghost is wont to imprint in our souls, is the most necessary and effectual means we have to make progress in virtue. Without a fervent desire and zeal for our perfection, neither written Constitutions nor Rules, nor the example of our sisters, will avail any thing; on the contrary, if we have the holy flame of charity within our hearts, and ardent desire of pleasing God, we shall want no spur to push us on, we shall have no need of the eye of a superior to encourage us to fight manfully with our disorderly passions, to take up our crosses cheerfully, and to advance daily in the painful way of a religious life.

Our Saviour, in the fifth of Saint Mathew, tells us that such as hunger and thirst after justice shall have their fill. Our Lord places the hunger and thirst after justice among the beatitudes, for they are truly happy who have it, because all such as have



a flagrant desire of perfection, are not so much in the way to it, as in actual possession of it.

Solomon, speaking of true wisdom, which makes us distinguish truth from falsehood, good from evil, the holy and sound maxims of the Gospel from the false and pernicious maxims of the world, and of that which effectually moves our will to captivate our understanding in obedience to faith, and regulates and directs all our actions to the great end of our creation, the glory of God, and the salvation of our souls,—Solomon, speaking of this wisdom or science of saints, tells us that the beginning of it is a sincere desire of instruction. This vehement desire of having wisdom, is not only an excellent disposition to it, but the beginning of it; consequently a part; for the moment we sincerely desire this wisdom, God imparts it to us.

God is infinitely bountiful and gracious to such as are generous and liberal to him; he will not see himself outdone by his creatures in point of goodness: he is extremely pleased with our desires of pleasing him; he fills the hungry with good things; upon any advance we make to God, he makes innumerable steps towards us. We may truly say he rather prevents, than that he is ever behind hand with us.

This divine and sanctifying wisdom is easily found by those who love and seek it; you can never rise so early in the morning to look for it, but you will find it waiting at your door. To teach us that it is always beforehand with us, the holy text represents it sitting. This posture not only shows a desire of entering into our souls, but a longing for it; for he does not retire upon our neglecting to give him entrance at his first knocking; he waits on, and, as it were weary with standing, sits down to rest himself, till, with fervent desires, we open our heart to him.

Oh! the unspeakable goodness and mercy of God! How great and vehement a desire must he have to be with us, that can bear so patiently our ingratitude and indifference to be with him! Let us no longer abuse that infinite patience; let us open our hearts to him with fervent desires of perfection, that he may come to us, remain and lodge perpetually with us; let us place a right value on the favour as it deserves, esteeming

it more than all the treasures and satisfactions of crowns and sceptres. If we have this ardent desire, we shall not long remain idle ; but, putting our hand to work, we shall pass from the exercise of one virtue to another with the same agility as a spark of fire moves in a bed of dry reeds.

Saint Ignatius informs us how this is to be done in this Rule. Every word of it is of great weight and deserves our consideration. We are enjoined to lose no point of perfection to which, through the grace of God, we may attain by a faithful and exact observance of our Rules and Constitutions. This is the perfection we must have an ardent desire of ; therefore we must make it the principal object of our thoughts, our chief study and endeavour.

It is not enough to undertake our perfection lightly or by starts, when we feel some passing fits of devotion. This word *incumbamus* expresses hard study and great endeavours ; and these others, *constanti animo*, with a constant mind, show that it is not the work of a day, a week, or some years, but of our whole life ; for, as long as we live, we must endeavour to go on in the way of God's service, to make new acquisitions in virtue, to advance daily in perfection, which is a science of so great extent—a sphere of so vast compass, that we can never so learn it, but there will still remain more to learn, and a space for further progress.

The greatest proficient is, therefore, to apply themselves with fervour and zeal to the study of perfection, as well as beginners and novices ; for, in the school of virtue it is a received maxim, that, not to advance, is to go back. If the perfect ever say they have done enough, they will infallibly the same moment lose ground, and fall from that degree they were in. In the way of virtue we row against the stream ; for corrupt nature always carries us down to evil. Set a boat in a rapid stream, and see if you can so fix it that it shall not be carried down : the only way is to put hand to the oars, and to row up against the current.

We may, with the assistance of God's grace, gain so complete a victory over our passions, and so subdue concupiscence, that we shall with ease exercise ourselves in all sorts of good works ; but it is evident this easiness proceeds from the superior force

and efficacy of divine grace : and this requires our coöperation ; for, as Saint Austin says, he who created you without your concurrence, will not save you unless you concur with him.

Our creation was entirely the work of an infinite bounty : our salvation must in part be ours. A crown of glory is the reward of merit ; therefore, our good works must be our own.

When a boat has many oars at work, it easily mounts the stream, but will certainly be carried down by it if no use be made of them. So we, notwithstanding the sinful propensity of corrupt nature, may bear up against it and easily attain to perfection, provided we are careful and use our endeavours to coöperate with divine grace.

According to the general opinion, perfection consists in the true love of God, or, in a perfect conformity of our will to his divine will in all our actions, which is common to all ; yet the means to acquire perfection are very different, according to the diversity of callings and professions in the world. God's most holy will is, that every one should serve him and perfect himself in the state of life to which he was pleased to call him ; that is, to prosecute the end of the state with great fervour and purity of intention by the means his divine goodness has appointed for this purpose.

In religious orders, the proper means appointed for obtaining their respective ends are the Rules and Constitutions : therefore, these are very different ; so are the means to perfection very different, according to the diversity of their profession. I will explain myself by a familiar comparison.

The perfection of a painter consists in the exact observance of the rules of his art ; that of an orator in the right use of the rules of rhetoric. The same may be said of any other art or science. We should not esteem a man a good carver for making good verse, nor a poet perfect in his art, because skilful in mathematics.

It is the same in religious orders. One is not a perfect religious, unless her behaviour and life be conformable to her proper Institute. The perfection of a solitary life consists in great retirement, silence, and a continual application of the mind to the contemplation of heavenly things. The active requires a willingness to labour and take pains in the perfor-

mance of such employments or exterior exercises as the Rules or superiors require. The perfection of a mixed life, as ours is, consists in being well affected to the exercises both of the contemplative and active, to employ ourselves willingly in both; therefore, not to be so wedded to either as to have a difficulty in leaving one to apply ourselves to the other, when obedience, God's honour, our own or our neighbour's good, requires it.

One who is called to a solitary, contemplative life, is highly to be commended in keeping close to his cell and avoiding all exterior employments, company, and the like; because this is the state of life to which God has called him; consequently, it is the will of God he should seek his salvation and sanctification in it.

One that is called to an active life would commit a fault in neglecting exterior employments for the love of retirement and prayer; for, as the other was called to work out his salvation by the exercises of the interior life, so is this called to sanctify his soul by a faithful and exact performance of exterior employments.

Hence you see that what is perfection in one, would not be virtue in another, but, on the contrary, a defect; because it would not be a compliance with, but an action contrary to, the will of God.

When Divine Goodness is pleased to institute a religious order for any particular design, he inspires the holy founders of it to make such Rules and Constitutions as are necessary to acquire the proposed end. These are the means; therefore God will have them observed.

As our perfection consists in conforming our own will to the most holy will of God, there is no acquitting ourselves of our vocation without a faithful and exact observance of our Rules. I do not mean of some Rules only—for example, such as are looked upon as the most essential to our Institute, or oblige under sin, by reason of the near relation they have to the vows,—but of all even of the least importance, as the not covering our bed in the morning, and the like.

Though we suppose such Rules as these were made without any revelation, we cannot doubt but that Saint Ignatius was inspired to write them, or at least, they being his express



orders, we must receive them as coming from God. There is no Rule in our Institute that did not cost Saint Ignatius many hours of prayer and many tears. He made great account of every one ; and shall we make less account of them ? What rashness, what arrogance this would be ! I will say more, that it is particularly in the observance of these more minute Rules that our perfection consists. I will explain my meaning by an example.

The perfection of the art of painting does not consist in drawing all the essential parts of a picture. An imperfect painter may draw the grosser features, yet the piece will be imperfect, and of no value. To make a perfect piece, to acquire the name of an excellent painter, nice strokes and a temperament of colours are required, hardly perceptible to any but the skilful in the art. It is these that cause the picture to be admired, and do honour to the master of it.

One is not esteemed a perfect musician because he can play his part well ; nor a rhetorician a good orator because he knows all the parts and the disposition of an oration.

In the same manner, the perfection of a religious does not consist in an exact performance of all essential duties, but in great purity and niceness of conscience in regard of the most minute observances. A religious who neglects wilfully any of her Rules, is not only imperfect, but is either actually in the state of sin, or in imminent danger of falling into it.

Though our Rules do not directly oblige under sin, we are by our profession obliged under sin to aim at perfection.

Since, as I have showed, our perfection consists in the observance of our Rules, we are obliged under sin to desire and to endeavour to keep them ; at least, none can deny that such as make little account of any of their Rules, are in great danger of falling into sin, according to this axiom : "*Qui parva spernit paulatim decidet.*"

How dangerous a thing it is, in making up medicine, to miss in the least the mixture of the ingredients ! How many have lost their lives by small mistakes of this kind ! Our Rules are the antidote our heavenly physician has prepared to preserve us from the infection of sin. Every little Rule is an ingredient of great importance. Leave any out, and you will render the antidote too weak for the poison.

It was for this reason Saint Ignatius insisted so much upon a most exact and perfect observance of every one of them: which God of his infinite goodness grant we may all take zealously to heart.

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### FIRST EXHORTATION ON THE SIXTEENTH RULE.

“ALL must seriously attend to the study of solid virtue, and to things perfect and spiritual.”

Saint Ignatius in this Rule recommends two things especially to us,—1. to apply to the study of solid and perfect virtues and spiritual things; 2. to account these to be of greater moment than either science or other natural or human gifts. The reason why he recommends the study of solid virtue so earnestly is, because many are deluded, and content themselves with virtue that is only superficial and imperfect. He tells us to make greater account of these than of natural and human gifts, because the success of our studies and labours depends on, and is chiefly owing to them.

To understand this important Rule, we are, first, to examine what is meant by solid and perfect virtue; second, how much they excel all natural and human gifts, and how necessary they are for the right use of these.

An ordinary, superficial virtue is not sufficient to support us in many difficult cases and exercises of our way of life.

We may explain the nature of solid virtue by the properties of a solid body. This consists in having three dimensions,—length, breadth, and depth or thickness. A tree or a stone is a solid body, because it has these three dimensions. On the contrary, a reed or an empty vessel is not solid, because, being empty or hollow, it must want the third dimension of thickness or depth.

Hollow bodies are very weak and easily broken. A reed is shaken with every blast of wind, and a glass will break with any little knock or fall ; whereas a pillar of stone will resist the strongest winds, and one may safely rely on a sound stick.

The virtue of some people is shaken by every change of fortune or alteration of circumstance ; like the reed, it bends to the times. It is only in the exterior, and being very superficial, any little rub or shock breaks it to pieces. You will find some who will talk very humbly of themselves ; but, if a humiliation happens to them, they will swell with pride. Others think themselves patient ; but, no sooner is a contradiction given, but they fly into a passion. Some are transported in prosperity. Others are quite dejected and cast down in adversity.

The virtue of such cannot be called solid ; for solid virtue is not liable to those alterations : it is not shaken like the reed by every blast of wind. Our Saviour made use of this metaphor speaking to the Jews of Saint John the Baptist. “ What did you go out to see in the desert ? A reed shaken with the wind ? ” — that is, a weak, changeable, inconstant man. No ; this was not the character of the Baptist. He was as immovable as a wall of brass, or a pillar of iron. The high esteem the people had of him could not shake his humility, nor could the rage of an incestuous queen daunt his courage or abate his zeal.

The solid virtues we are admonished in this Rule to procure with great industry and diligence, are a multitude of generous resolutions and heroic acts, condensed together into a good habit, firm and well fixed in the soul, not soft and yielding to the allurements of the world or the incitements of the flesh ; not easily thrown down or broken with temptations, but hardened against all such sort of weather and seasons, remains fixed and unalterable.

Saint Ignatius requires of us, 1. an ardent charity ; 2. a humility that rejoices in humiliations and contempt ; 3. a patience that can easily endure a rough storm of persecution, of injuries and of want ; 4. a mortification that keeps sense and self-love in continual subjection ; 5. a gift of prayer that can continue with aridities and distractions, a poverty that strips itself of all conveniences, a perfect resignation to the will of God

in all occurrences, an absolute contempt of worldly honours and preferments, a sincere abnegation of our will, and the like.

These, dear sisters, are the solid virtues we must endeavour to procure with all industry and fervour; and that too not in an ordinary, but in a high degree of perfection.

There are some who, when they feel more than usual fervour, conceive good desires of labouring and suffering for God's sake, are apt to think that they are virtuous and perfect after they have made some acts of the love of God, and good purposes of humbling themselves and bearing patiently some contradictions and crosses. They fancy they have acquired the virtues of humility and patience, and have no more to do. They do not take care to fix these virtues in their soul by a frequent repetition of good acts, by considering the particular circumstances they may be in of practising those virtues, by arming themselves against all temptations, and removing all difficulties in the practice of them. Hence, when the fit of fervour is past, and temptations arise, they are presently dejected and overcome.

Our virtue must be more solid and pure, such as can bear the trial of the furnace and the crucible, will stand firm and prove good in the time of trial and temptation. We must not content ourselves with conceiving now and then some inefficacious desires of serving God and suffering humiliations and injuries for his sake. The most tepid and slothful have sometimes such desires. "The sluggard willeth and willeth not." They have passing fits of devotion, which end in smoke.

Our devotion must be steady, and effectually move us to practise as occasions serve, in adversity as well as in fervour, in humiliations as well as in honour, in want as well as in plenty, in time of persecution and tribulation as well as in time of tranquillity and peace; so that nothing may be able to disturb our peace of mind, or hinder us from complying faithfully with our duty to God.

Saint Ignatius particularly exhorts us to procure with great diligence such virtues as unite our souls more strictly to God; for example, a great love of him, a pure intention of serving him and pleasing his divine majesty by every thing we do, an ardent zeal of promoting his glory and saving souls, a great gift of prayer, a familiarity with God and confidence in his infinite



goodness, whereby we may more easily have recourse to him in all our difficulties, temptations, and other necessities.

This perfect union with God is particularly necessary for us, by reason of the greatness of the enterprise we undertake for the good of souls and the glory of God.

The sanctification and perfection of souls is a work of a supernatural order, far surpassing the natural faculty of any creature. We can pretend to no more than to be instrumental. It is the work of God, and not of man. An instrument receives all its virtue and efficacy from the hand that uses it ; therefore, we can do nothing in the salvation of souls unless we are strictly united to God. These virtues far excel all natural and human gifts. For this reason we are ordered in this Rule to use far greater endeavours to procure them than to excel in these. Saint Ignatius is not against our endeavouring to improve in learning and other natural gifts and talents : on the contrary, he would have us apply with eagerness and diligence to our studies : at the same time, we are always to give the preference to virtue ; we are to make greater account of it than of learning or any other natural talent. We are always to apply to virtue ; to learning only at the times allotted by our superiors. I will explain my meaning by an example drawn from holy Scripture.

When God created the world, he placed our first parents in a terrestrial paradise, a most delightful garden, planted by God's own hand. There were two trees there more remarkable than any of the rest, — the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam was permitted to eat of the tree of life because God designed that he should be immortal. "He was forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge because, being created to be always happy, it was not necessary to know what evil was."

The Institute may be fitly called a terrestrial paradise, for the many spiritual advantages and heavenly delights we enjoy in it ; it is particularly remarkable for two things—virtue and learning : virtue may be compared to the tree of life ; learning to the tree of knowledge. We are not only permitted, but expressly commanded, to feed and nourish our souls continually with the first, because virtue is absolutely necessary for maintaining our spiritual life, also for the preservation of the

Institute. Of the second we are also ordered to eat, but not at all times ; and to eat of it—that is, to apply our minds to study—in times forbidden, is always dangerous, generally of very bad and pernicious consequences. We must not leave virtue for the study of science and the improvement of learning—that is, the tree of life for the tree of knowledge : if we do, we shall learn nothing by it, but to know our nakedness and misery, and this not in speculation only, but in effect.

Our first parents, by eating the forbidden fruit, did not become like God, as the serpent told them they would, but became sinners : first lost their innocence, then paradise. If we permit ourselves to be so much transported with the love of study, as to neglect our improvement in virtue, we shall offend God, and at length, perhaps, lose our vocation ; for, as Saint Bonaventure says, an inordinate or a boundless thirst after learning often deprives people of the tree of life, and robs them of their virtue.

Knowledge or great learning of itself is apt to puff us up with pride, according to these words of Saint Paul : “ *Scientia inflat.*” When learning is not rooted in solid virtue, it is apt to swell people with a great conceit of themselves, and a contempt of others, as we may see it did many of the heathen philosophers ; whereas, being joined and influenced by virtue, it has rendered many fathers of the Church and learned men as famous for sanctity as they were for their great knowledge both in divine and human sciences : so far from doing any prejudice to them, they became by it great servants of God, great instruments of his glory, and glorious ornaments of the Church.

Such were termed by our Saviour the salt of the earth and the light of the world. They were compared to salt, because, as salt is used to preserve meat from corruption, so, says Saint Austin, it belongs to the holy doctors and pastors of the Church to preserve the faithful from error and the corruption of sin. They are called the light of the world, because it is by their instructions, preaching, and learning, that the darkness of infidelity and ignorance is dispersed, and people are brought to the knowledge of the true faith. They discover to us the vanity of worldly riches, honours, and pleasures, and make us sensible of the solidity and inestimable value of heavenly delights ; thus we conceive a high esteem and desire of the latter,

and as great a contempt and abhorrence of the former, and we are greatly moved to apply with fervour to the service of God.

Virtue and learning may very justly be compared to the great lights God created and placed in the heavens for ruling the day and night. Each has its proper time for shining, but with this difference, that as the Sun shines with its own light, the Moon with a borrowed light of the Sun, so we must take care that our learning may always be illustrated by virtue, and be subordinate to it.

To give to our studies the time allotted for spiritual things, would be to invert the order of providence, and to commit as great a disorder as they do who turn day into night. The reason Saint Ignatius gives why we should make much greater account of solid virtue than of natural and human gifts, is, because it is from the interior that force must flow to the exterior, to bring us to the end proposed to us. The end we are to propose to ourselves in the exercise of natural gifts and talents, is, in the first place, God's honour and glory; second, our own and our neighbour's spiritual good: this is the end we propose to ourselves in studying, teaching, catechising, labouring, and the like.

To work any spiritual or supernatural change in our own or in our neighbour's soul, is above the reach of any natural power. Let a man have ever so great wit, eloquence, and learning, he cannot, by the help of it only, produce in himself or others one supernatural act of virtue; for the effect is always subordinate to the cause; it may be of an inferior, but not of superior degree or order: because we cannot give what we have not, the cause cannot impart to its effect a perfection itself has not. To produce a supernatural act in ourselves or others, is required a principle that is supernatural; even then it requires the concurrence of God with us. This our blessed Saviour taught us in express terms when he said: *Sine me nihil potestis facere*. All we do without the assistance of divine grace signifies nothing to life everlasting. *Nisi Dominus, &c.*

Whosoever pretends to edify his neighbour, or raise in himself a tower of perfection, without the help and assistance of God's grace, loses his time and labours in vain, says the Royal Prophet. God is the sole author of divine grace; it is he that must work the change in our souls, and in the souls of those

for whom we labour. We are only the instruments ; God is the chief cause, to whom the glory of our good works and labours is due.

What the Rule says is most certainly true,—that it is from the interior that forces must flow to the exterior, to bring us to the end proposed. In confirmation of this, you may reflect on what daily experience teaches. When a missionary, for example, is of a scandalous life, or is known to be vain, to seek the esteem and applause of men, he will never do any great good, will work no conversions ; on the contrary, he will rather be laughed at and despised by all. He may, perhaps, charm the ears of his auditory with fine language, he may delight them with his eloquence, astonish them with his erudition ; but he will never move them to true sorrow for their sins, a contempt of the world, a love for God, and an efficacious desire of their own perfection and salvation.

It is the virtuous life of the instructress that makes the deepest impression ; her virtue gives weight and efficacy to her words : hence, a person of less eloquence and meaner talents, when truly religious, will do more good than another of extraordinary parts and talents. Thus Saint Francis Regis moved his auditory more to contrition and penance with his familiar and plain discourses, than great preachers with their eloquent sermons. As you are zealous for your own good, the good of your neighbour, the honour of the Institute, and the glory of God, apply with great diligence to procure solid virtues, make greater account of them than of any natural or human gifts.



## SECOND EXHORTATION ON THE SIXTEENTH RULE.

“LOOKING upon them to be of greater moment than science or other human and natural qualifications.”

Though we are admonished to make greater account of solid virtue than of learning, yet we are to make great account of this, and to apply to our studies with great assiduity and diligence, looking on our improvement in learning as a very necessary qualification to obtain the end proposed to us. Saint Ignatius says that all natural gifts which render us fit instruments of God in the service of our neighbour, will contribute very much to the universal good, and to the preservation and increase of the entire Institute ; therefore he says, that these natural gifts, especially learning, are to be procured with great diligence.

I will speak first of the necessity of learning, then of the manner of acquiring the learning recommended to us. Though this matter only appertains to such persons as are admitted into the Institute to be employed in teaching, others may receive edification from it ; for the zeal the Institute shows in promoting God's honour and the good of souls, is a subject of edification to any one that shall consider it ; and it may be of great use to understand how keeping schools and exercising youth in learning can contribute so much to the honour of God and the good of souls.

I compared virtue and learning to the two great lights God created at the beginning of the world for distinguishing day from night, and regulating time ; for both virtue and learning must shine in our Institute : they are to divide our time, and direct us to the great end proposed to us in our Rule. Virtue compared to the greater light, learning to the lesser ; not that in reality it is a small light or a light of little consequence ; for both lights are called great with respect to the light we receive from other stars or planets, but it is called little with regard to the Sun, which surpasses both so much, for the greatness of its light, its perfection, and usefulness.

Virtue alone may suffice to attain in some manner our end, that is, our own perfection and the sanctification of others. God has often wrought great conversions by the ignorant and simple. In the Council of Nice, a holy but ignorant bishop confounded a heathen philosopher, whom the great divines of the Council could not convince of his errors. Saint Ancilla, a servant maid, converted the country of the Georgians. Learning, on the contrary, without virtue is good for nothing ; it must be influenced by it, or it will avail us little, —as the Moon must be enlightened by the Sun to shine in the night.

Though God is pleased sometimes to work wonders and extraordinary conversions by ignorant and simple people, thereby to show his own power and to recommend to us the study of perfection, yet this is not according to the ordinary disposition of his providence ; he requires of his creatures a faithful coöperation with him in making use of all means both supernatural and human, in order to comply the better with our duty, and to obtain the end of our vocation.

It is certain that study helps very much to the good of souls. The most dangerous part of our life is youth : that is the time we are most exposed to the danger of temptation : our passions are the strongest, the sensual appetite is most vigorous, and reason the weakest. Nothing more dangerous at this age than idleness ; nothing better for youth than to be always employed innocently. A poet said : “ If you banish idleness, you will destroy the force of concupiscence ; ” on the contrary, we may as truly say, that when youth is well employed there is no time for bad thoughts. To employ youth innocently in these tender years, to keep them out of idle conversation and bad company, when they so easily receive any bad impression, is a great service rendered to God, and a very beneficial employment to our neighbour.

The benefit youth receives from learning goes much farther : for by it they are furnished with matter to entertain themselves with pleasure, yet innocently, all their life, without being obliged to seek company and diversions that are at least dangerous, if not sinful. By these studies they fit themselves for any calling, either in the cloister or in the world. Let us add the opportunity the Institute has at this time to inspire devotion and instil virtuous principles into youth. There is

hardly any religious order that is not sensible of the good we do in this kind—that is not obliged to the Institute for a good many of their subjects. There are few or none here that do not owe their present happiness to their virtuous education amongst us.

In all houses of this Institute great care is taken to inspire devotion into scholars by catechisms, exhortations, sodalities, and the frequent use of the sacraments.

All this shows that the employment of teaching is of great importance, and greatly helping to the service of God and good of souls.

Though school exercises seem often more profane than pious, to have more of ostentation and vanity than of virtue, yet they are not only allowable, but commendable, because they encourage learning, and help very much to make youth apply with great diligence to their studies,—a thing so necessary for their spiritual and temporal good.

To attain to an end, we must make use of the means. When the end we propose to ourselves is good and holy, it is both commendable and virtuous to make use of effectual means to obtain it. A perfect knowledge of what we teach is a necessary means to do it well. To acquire this knowledge, it is necessary to spend some time in study ; therefore it is not against perfection, but great virtue, to apply with attention, and to spend much time in improving ourselves in natural and human sciences, especially when applied to them by superiors. Our vocation, as it appears by our Rules and the Popes' Bulls, by which they were confirmed, is to help to the salvation of souls. By entering into the Institute, we dedicate ourselves to the service of our neighbour, to root out vice, and to plant virtue, to beat down the wicked principles of the world, and to maintain the holy maxims of the gospel. It is easy to discover how great an obligation we have to apply to study with assiduity and diligence, more especially to know the Christian doctrine and the manners of a holy and spiritual life.

To neglect to improve according to each one's capacity and the assistance of divine light which God is willing to afford every one who uses her endeavours, though not equally to all, but according to the secret and adorable designs of his provi-

dence,— to fail, through negligence to improve, is to be wanting in a very material part of our duty to God, who has called us to the Institute, which has received us for this end.

It must be a very terrible account that such will have to render to God, who, being endowed with good talents, neglect the improvement of that which is entrusted to them. If the idle servant in the Gospel was so severely punished for not trafficking with his one talent, what will she deserve who buries many in the ground, without any advantage to the service of God, to the Institute, or to her neighbour !

It behoves us very much to consider often with Saint Gregory, and to reflect seriously on the rigorous account we are to give to God for talents received, lest our punishment in the next life exceed that of others, as much as the favours we have received from God in this life surpass theirs ; for, the more we receive, the more we have to answer for.

Having seen how necessary it is to apply with great alacrity and diligence to study, partly to promote better the glory of God and the good of souls, and partly to avoid being severely punished as idle and unfaithful servants, we will now examine what things we are most to study, and in what manner we are to apply in order to study well.

As people differ in genius, judgment, and wit, as much as they do in countenance, it is hard to fix any general rule for all in point of studies. It is generally observed when people are applied according to their genius, they profit most. Lest fancy or some other irregular passion may make some think they have a genius for what they have very little or none, in this Institute we are not to be guided by our own lights, but by our Rules, Constitutions, customs, and the direction of our superiors. As to the manner of studying, many things are required to do it well. In the first place, you must have a pure and sincere intention, not seeking the esteem and applause of men, but the greater honour and glory of God. If you have no other end than to comply with your duty and please God, your studies will not abate devotion, but increase it. The contemplation of natural causes will raise your hearts to the love of the Creator of them. Your understanding will be enlightened, and your soul inflamed with the fervour of charity. The more we know of the attributes of God, the more we shall



love him, and endeavour to draw others with greater zeal to love and serve him. If you only seek to please God, you will submit willingly to whatever he shall ordain ; you will rejoice and bless his holy name when you profit much in your studies ; and you will not be dejected and disquieted when you profit little. As you do not act by any human motive, you will be always resigned to the will of God, whatever happens : you will only be solicitous that no care or endeavour on your side be wanting to improve in learning, thereby to render yourself more capable of serving his divine majesty according to your vocation.

To know the purity of your intention, reflect how you are affected when you do not succeed so well in your studies as you proposed to do. If it disturb your peace of mind, fill you with disquieting fears of confusion when you are to appear in public, it is a sign that your intention is not pure,—that human considerations have a share in it,—that you seek the esteem and applause of men, — that you have not that indifference which our holy Rule requires.

Having rectified your intention, the next thing you are to observe before you begin your studies, is, to kneel down, and beg light of God through the intercession of our blessed Lady, Saint Ignatius, and your other patrons. This is not only a very pious, but a necessary devotion, by reason of the great want you have of divine light in order to understand well what you have to study, and to make right use of the knowledge you acquire.

Notwithstanding the great attention and application of your mind to study, endeavour now and then to raise your hearts to God, partly to renew your intention, and partly to implore the assistance of the Father of lights. Endeavour always to make your studies an actual exercise of the virtue of obedience, both as to time, place, and the matter you study.

As you are not to give to your studies any part of the time allotted for examens, prayer, or other spiritual exercises ; so you must not spend the hours appointed for study in private devotions. You must look upon it as a matter of great scruple to neglect your studies, or spend your time idly ; because the community expects that you endeavour to render yourselves serviceable members.

Let me recommend particularly a most exact obedience in the things you study, following therein the advice and direction of your superioress. Obedience will draw down blessings on you, and you will profit incomparably more by following her orders, than by giving way to your own fancy and inclination. Follow the example of Jouancy, of whom it is said, he never read any author merely for curiosity, but was always persuaded that the book he read was what God would have him read at that time.

The surest way to know this is by obedience or the advice of superiors, being mindful of these words of the Apostle to Timothy: "Attend, take heed to thyself and to doctrine. Be earnest in them; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and those that hear thee."

To conclude. Let me exhort you to apply with great diligence to your studies, that so you may be more capable afterwards of instructing others in the way of virtue, and deserve to shine as stars of the firmament for all eternity.

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### FIRST EXHORTATION ON THE SEVENTEENTH RULE.

"LET them endeavour to have constantly before their eyes the example of Christ our Lord, and to copy after it to the best of their power."

In delivering this Seventeenth Rule, Saint Ignatius expresses himself in such terms as oblige us to be very attentive to him. It is with just reason that he prepares us to receive a lesson so hard to be understood, because quite contrary to the maxims we have been taught and brought up with in the world. It is hard to be practised, because wholly opposite to the dictates of corrupt nature. Worldly wisdom esteems it folly, and our sensual appetite, an insupportable cruelty. At the same time, God

regards it as the highest wisdom. Our blessed Saviour has taught it as an eternal truth. The saints have practised it as the only sure way to arrive to the perfection of their state here on earth, and to an eminent degree of glory in heaven.

What is this sublime lesson, this important truth ? It is, that we must abhor wholly, and not in part, all that the world loves and embraces.

Behold in few words what Saint Ignatius recommends in this Rule ; and we must all allow that a great deal is contained in it ; for, how many things are there that flatter our pride and gratify our passions and sensual appetite ? *These* the world loves and embraces ; *these* it covets passionately, seeks with great diligence, and endeavours to purchase at any rate, even with the offence of God and loss of the soul.

These are the things we are ordered by this Rule not only to renounce, condemn, and abandon, but to abhor. It is not enough for one of this Institute to condemn these things, to leave them, to hate them : we must also abhor them ; which impresses so great an aversion as not to be able to see or think of them without being seized with a certain horror, such as we feel at the sight of some ghastly monster.

It is not enough to abhor only some of these things : we must abhor them all. But how comes it, that Saint Ignatius, without mentioning any other, only takes notice in this place of worldly honours, the desire of a great name, the esteem and commendation of men ? His reason was, that whosoever truly abhors all worldly honours, the vain praise and applause of men, does effectually abhor all that the world loves and embraces. On the contrary, as long as we retain a value and love for these, though we abandon all other things, the love of this world still keeps possession of our heart, which love of the world, being inconsistent with the love of God, as the Evangelist Saint John teaches us, and our perfection consisting essentially in the fervour of our charity, it evidently follows, that there is no advancing in the way of perfection without contemning the esteem and applause of men : we can never attain the height of perfection without abhorring it.

In conformity with the sentiments Saint Ignatius expressed in this Rule, I will exhort you to-day to a perfect contempt, nay abhorrence, of worldly honours and of the commendation

and applause of worldly men, first, by showing how dangerous and hurtful they are to our own souls ; second, how great a hinderance they are to the spiritual labours we perform for the good of our neighbour.

Vain glory is the most subtle vice there is, because it can make the most holy actions, nay all virtues, serve to increase and foment it. What more opposite to vain glory than humility ? yet, in the very practice of this virtue, in the exercise of the greatest humiliations, we may easily be carried away with thoughts of vanity, and seek the esteem and applause of men. How hard vanity is to be cured when the acts of the opposite virtue, the surest remedy to correct all other vices, are the occasions of our falling into vain glory ? Notwithstanding, all masters of spirit agree that the surest way to subdue pride and acquire humility, is to exercise ourselves in humble offices and all sorts of humiliations and abasements ; and, on the contrary, nothing more dangerous than to be employed in things that are much admired, and of their own nature acquire a great name and esteem in the world.

The Institute makes profession of being employed to the greater glory of God and the good of souls ; this often makes the world conceive a very high opinion and respect for us ; and the danger is, of being carried away with a vain conceit of ourselves when we succeed in these employments. Therefore, vain glory is a most dangerous passion, a sin highly displeasing to God, and what his divine majesty is accustomed to punish with the greatest rigour ; for his infinite justice cannot suffer that poor, miserable creatures should rob him of the glory he has reserved to himself.

To comprehend better how severely God punishes this vice, you need only reflect on the fall and reprobation of Lucifer, who, at his creation, appeared like a bright star of the firmament, full of light, beauty, and glory. According to the account of him in holy writ, he was a bright beam of the Divinity, a most beautiful image of his Creator ; he was full of wisdom and beauty, his nature was wholly spiritual, and endowed with all perfections, both physical and moral, in an eminent degree. This unfortunate creature, transported with admiration of his own perfection, took vain complacency in himself, and did not render that glory to his liberal Benefactor



and Creator : vain glory entering secretly into his mind, struck him with a deadly wound, cast him immediately down from heaven, from an angel transported him into a devil, from a star of the firmament into a firebrand of hell.

It is the same diabolical vice that has been the confusion and ruin of innumerable men famed both for learning and piety ; they seemed adorned with all precious gifts of nature and grace, rose like so many shining stars above the rest of mankind ; they charmed the world with their eloquence, erudition, and learning ; they astonished it with their virtues and apostolical labours, and some with prodigies and miracles ; and after all, by affecting the applause and esteem of men, lost the favour of God, and so fell from the high station they were in into hell.

The punishment of vain glorious people is so sudden, that it is compared to a flash of lightning, God being too much provoked by them to suffer them to remain without punishment. What a horror then ought we to have of honour, fame, the praises and applause of men, since they expose us to so much danger of taking a vain complacency in ourselves, and since this is a vice so displeasing to God and so pernicious to our souls. We have just cause to abhor and abominate these things the world embraces and esteems so much upon another account. Pride and vain glory are a bar to all supernatural graces and favours, a main obstacle to justification—consequently, to salvation. Proud men attribute to themselves the glory of all their good actions, which shows they are ignorant of their obligations to God for them, which ignorance prevents them from rendering due thanks to God for his graces ; and this ingratitude renders them unworthy, I may say incapable, of receiving any more ; it is in a particular manner opposite to the virtue of faith, without which it is impossible to please God.

Pride is the cause of obstinacy ; this of heresy ; both directly contrary to an humble submission of judgment in obedience to faith. Our blessed Saviour ascribed the infidelity and obstinacy of the Jews to their pride, and plainly told them that no better could be expected from them so long as they were given to this vice. As it blinds the understanding, so it perverts the will, and wholly extinguishes the fire of charity in both its branches.

A proud man is so much taken up with thoughts of himself, that he has no time to think of God. Whenever he is employed about his neighbour, it is not to do him good, but to despise him ; it is, perhaps, to force from him some vain commendations, so passionately fond such a one is of praise, a great name or reputation amongst men. But what does the Royal Prophet say ? They do all they can to be esteemed and appear great in the eyes of men ; but they will thereby be confounded and humbled, because God despises them for preferring so foolishly the applause of men before his love and esteem : all which shows how pernicious a vice pride and vain glory is ; how much we ought to detest it, and all such things as expose us to imminent danger of falling into it. Let us now examine how much we are hindered by it from doing good to our neighbour.

To labour for the good of souls, the perfection and salvation of all, and that with great care and diligence, is the very soul and end of our Institute : wherefore, whatever hinders us from doing good to souls, nay, renders us incapable of producing any fruit in them, ought not only to be avoided, but to be hated, detested, and abhorred. The better to conceive what prejudice vain glory does in this particular, I will propose some truths which may serve as principles to judge by in this matter.

It is certain that the salvation and perfection of our neighbour is the work of God, and not of man. Let a teacher be endowed with as great talents as you please, his eloquence will never convert a sinner, unless God speak at the same time interiorly to the heart, and assist with his holy grace : for we are only the instruments, God is the chief cause. As an instrument can do nothing by itself, so the wisest persons are unprofitable servants, and can do nothing, without the particular concurrence of God. Saint Paul tells us that it is neither he that plants, nor he that waters the tree planted, but God that gives growth to it. Natural philosophy tells us that a cause must always bear proportion to the effect. Now, there is no proportion between a natural cause and a supernatural effect ; wherefore, human endeavours are more incapable of sanctifying a sinner, than it is for a weak man to take up a huge mountain, and remove it from its place. Divines and holy fathers agree that the restoring of a sinner to the grace of God is a greater work than the raising of a dead man to life ; though both are

works above the power of man, yet the conversion of a sinner is of a higher nature. The raising of the dead is the work of God as the author of grace; wherefore, this as far surpasses that, as the state of grace excels that of nature—a supernatural life transcends a natural.

The work of God in favour of his creatures being perfect and excellent, the greater praise and glory redounds to him; therefore, as the injustice is the greater, so is he more injured and more displeased when creatures rob him of his glory by attributing the glory to themselves. The consequence that follows plainly from this is, that there is little good to be hoped from the labours of such as love the esteem and applause of men, first, because they can do no good unless God gives a blessing to their endeavours, and concurs with them in producing the intended fruit; second, because there is little or no appearance that God will bless their endeavours, since there is just reason to fear that they will rob him of the glory redounding from the salvation of souls. God is very jealous of his honour on these occasions; therefore he will not make use of such instruments in producing these wonderful effects of his mercy, as attribute the success to themselves, and seek by it the esteem of creatures: this is so insolent and insupportable a proceeding with an infinite bounty, that there is no enduring it.

All supernatural gifts and talents come from him. It is only by his help that we can do any spiritual good to our neighbour; therefore it is only he that deserves praise, honour, and glory for the good that is wrought in souls. Why then, says Isaiah, shall the axe glory against him that cuts with it, or shall the saw be exalted against him that draws it? The presumption and arrogancy of man is no less insupportable, who, being only an instrument in the hands of God, incapable of doing any good by himself, is so monstrously vain as to attribute the success of his labours to his own parts, and glories in himself, and not in God for it. If you have nothing but what you have received, why do you boast as if you had received nothing, but that all was your own?

Some wondered why our blessed Saviour chose poor fishermen and ignorant people for his apostles, that is, to preach his divine law, and convert the world. The chief reason no doubt was, that all the glory of so great a work might be given to

God, by whose power and wisdom alone it was effected. In the same manner, God will still have all the glory that arises from the conversion of sinners to redound to himself; he will not bestow talents, at least he will not work his wonders by so unfaithful servants as will rob him of it.

That we may not render ourselves unprofitable servants in the vineyard of Christ, and incapable of doing good to souls, let us take care to conquer this dangerous passion of vain glory. In order thereto, let us, with great care, humble and fervent prayer, endeavour to obtain of God, not only a sincere contempt, but a true horror of all worldly honour, the opinion of a great name on earth, the praise and applauses of men; that so, being well grounded in humility, we may more easily avoid vain glory, and become useful instruments of God in the salvation of souls.

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## SECOND EXHORTATION ON THE SEVENTEENTH RULE.

“As for them that walk in the spirit, and do in good earnest follow Christ, they love and desire what is directly contrary; for instance, to be clothed in the dress and livery of their Lord.”

In the first part of this Rule, as I explained, Saint Ignatius counsels us not only to fly worldly honours, the esteem and applause of men, but to hate and detest them with abhorrence. In the second part, he will have us seek with diligence, love sincerely, and covet fervently, such things as are directly opposite to the former; namely, humiliations, affronts, ignominies; or, in other terms, to be despised and condemned by all, and injured too, so far as it may be done without sin, or giving any just occasion on our side.



This, you may see at the first sight, is a high degree of perfection, much harder to practise than the former ; for it is much easier to despise honours than to love ignominy — that is, to be despised and contemned by all.

To despise worldly honours, the praise and esteem of men, it is enough to know the vanity of them. To abhor them, you need only consider the great dangers to which they expose you, and the hurt they do you. A great deal more is required to love ignominy, to suffer calumny willingly, to be glad to be despised by all as fools, or, at least, undeserving the regard and esteem of men. Many people arrive to this point, that they are not ambitious of rising higher, but are not willing to fall lower. They do not desire to overstep others, but they cannot bear to be trodden on. They are not moved to indignation nor envy at the preferment of others, provided they do not find they are laid aside as unfit. In fine, they can much easier overcome the passion of ambition than practise the virtue of humility, which the second part of the Rule requires of us.

To exhort you to love and desire ardently humiliations and contempt, I will make use of two considerations : 1. that without this love and desire we can never attain the high perfection our state of life requires of us ; 2. that we cannot fail of attaining it, if we once bring ourselves to love and desire humiliations, and that all may undervalue and despise us.

The first argument I shall make use of to prove my proposition, is the authority of Saint Ignatius, who, in the very Rule itself, sufficiently declares it. His authority is above all exception, especially in regard of us, first, by reason of his eminent sanctity, great experience, and knowledge in a spiritual life ; second, because he is the guide we have chosen to follow preferably to any other, by adopting his Rules. He being the person whom God chose to be the author of them, to whom he revealed most of them, he no doubt best knew the means most proper to attain the perfection we aim at. Therefore, when he says in this Rule, that all they who advance in spirit, or in the way of perfection, and do with a serious and sincere heart follow our blessed Saviour, always love and desire fervently such things as are contrary to what the world loves, seeks, and embraces, he gives us to understand that if we desire to advance in the way of perfection according to our Institute, we must be careful to

follow on in the same path that others have taken, which is, to love and fervently desire humiliations, contradictions, and injuries, these being the things directly contrary to what the world loves and embraces.

A second argument may be taken from the very nature of the perfection our Institute aims at, which is, to have so prompt and resolute a mind to fulfil in every thing the will of God, that it shall not be in the power of any creature to turn us from it. It is to be in the same disposition Saint Paul was when he defied all creatures above or below, in heaven or upon earth, to separate him from Christ.

Nothing hinders us more from complying with our duty on certain occasions than human respects, the fear of humiliations, of calumnies, and other injuries, to which we are exposed in the service of our neighbour. It is, then, very necessary that we should not be afraid of these. As they are naturally so shocking to flesh and blood, we can hardly secure ourselves against this fear, without bringing our proud nature to love and desire them.

This is a difficult point, a hard task indeed. However, it may be done with the assistance of divine grace and a sincere endeavour on our part. Many have overcome their proud nature, and so may we, if we take to heart our progress in virtue as sincerely as they did. Their repugnances were as great as ours are, and the same considerations that have prevailed on them ought efficaciously to move us. We all serve the same God, who is always mercifully inclined and ready to help all with his holy grace.

Saint Gregory says, that religious people die to the world when they quit and cease to desire the things which the world covets and esteems, which are, honours, riches, and pleasures ; but, that the world lives in them so long as they are pleased with the esteem and praise of men.

We make profession not only of dying to the world, but of making the world die in us. We must endeavour to imitate Saint Paul, who was not only crucified to the world, but the world was crucified to him ; that is, we must endeavour to be as little regarded by the world as if we were not living, but dead carcasses.

How does the world treat a dead body ? It buries it in the

ground, and then tramples on it. Many cannot endure the sight of a dead body: they fly from it, have a horror of it: they fear to be poisoned with the stench if it comes near them; therefore, they will not suffer it to remain above ground, but bury it as good for nothing else than to nourish worms. What undervaluing, what contempt is this? Yet the dead carcass does not complain; it is not troubled, it is not concerned nor moved in the least by all these indignities: it is insensible to all, and covets no better treatment. In the same manner, one who is truly crucified to the world, and the world to him, cares as little for the love and esteem of the world, is as little moved at the contempt or indignities she may suffer from it, as if she were truly dead, and felt them not.

There is this difference between a natural and a moral death, a natural death deprives the body of all life, and renders it incapable of being afflicted either with love or hatred, joy or grief. The moral death not destroying the subject, but only reforming it, the party is still capable of the same affections she had before, and may return to her former life. It is only by conviction of the understanding enlightened by divine faith, and the force of a pious will strengthened with grace, that, on one side, she regards no more the things of this world, is as little moved by the praises of men, and concerned at its contempt, as if she were really dead and had no concern at all. On the other hand, she loves and esteems such things as advance her in the way of perfection, and hates and avoids with horror whatever is a hinderance to it: for by this new life, living no more to herself, but to Christ, with whom she is crucified, she affects nothing but what unites her closer to him, so that she may say with the apostle, "*Vivo ego*," &c.

It is to die this moral death and to live this new spiritual life that we have come to religion; for nothing will help us more to do it than to love and frequently desire such things as are wholly opposite to a vain and worldly life, namely, to be undervalued, unregarded, despised, and contemned; for the more we are undervalued by the world, the more we shall be esteemed by God; the more we are displeased with it, the more we shall please him; the more the world shall hate us, the more will God love us.

It was no doubt upon these and such like considerations so



many great saints and servants of God found out so many ways of humbling themselves and rendering themselves little and despicable in the eyes of the world, and were transported with joy when they were despised by men. We read in the second book of Kings an admirable passage very suitable to my purpose. When the holy Ark of the Covenant was carried from the house of Obededam to Jerusalem, King David divested himself of his royal robes, put on very mean clothes, and went before the Ark, dancing like one of the common people; when Michel reproached him for it, he told her with great resolution and courage, that our Lord having chosen him preferably to her father and all the family of Saul, to be the king and leader of his people, he would dance and abase himself still more, that so he might appear the more humble in his sight. Saint Gregory admires very much this action of David; he prefers it before the greatest and most heroic actions of his whole life. I admire more, says this holy father, David dancing before the Ark, than fighting with his enemies; for, by fighting with these he defeated armies, but by dancing before the Ark he overcame himself, and gained a complete victory over pride and human respects.

In the same manner, we may truly say of many holy and learned men of the Society of Jesus, that they were not less to be admired for their great humility than they were for their eminent talents and successful labours in helping souls. They are not to be esteemed less in humble offices than they were in their apostolical functions in missions. The victory they gained over pride and vain glory by a generous contempt of themselves, is more heroic than that they gained over sinners by converting kingdoms to our holy faith.

Since, to gain a complete victory over pride and vain glory, it is necessary to abhor all that the world loves and embraces; since the virtue of humility cannot be acquired in an eminent degree, nor long preserved, without a generous contempt of ourselves; in fine, since a sincere love and desire of humiliations and injuries is so pleasing to God and so beneficial to us, let us resolve to be very exact in the observance of this Rule, and fervently implore the assistance of his grace thereunto.

There are certain things so necessary to obtain the end we propose to ourselves, that without them it is impossible to ob-



tain it ; for example, we desire or propose to ourselves to build a house ; it is necessary to have materials wherewith to build it. A racer proposes to win the prize ; he must run for it. A gladiator proposes to gain a crown ; it is necessary to engage with his adversary ; for, as Saint Paul says, a prize cannot be won without running, a crown cannot be gained without fair fighting. A means may be necessary, but not efficacious : it is necessary to have materials to build a house, to run if we desire to win the prize, to fight if one proposes to gain a victory ; but one may have materials without being able to build a house : one may fight, yet lose the victory.

If it be a just and sufficient reason to make use of necessary means in order to obtain the proposed end, though of themselves ineffectual, how much more reasonable is it to make use of such means as are efficacious, or do effectually procure for us the thing we aim at. A racer, for example, would go to the race with far greater alacrity, was he sure of winning the prize ; and the gladiator would go more courageously to the fight, was he sure of carrying away the laurel.

I have shown you how necessary it is to condemn the world, the esteem and applause of men, to attain the perfection our Institute aims at ; now, for your comfort and encouragement, I will endeavour to prove that it is not only a necessary, but an efficacious means to gain perfection, insomuch that we shall not fail of becoming perfect, if we do sincerely love and fervently desire to be condemned and despised by men, as the Rule requires. It is so good and so commendable a thing to be perfect ; it fills the soul with so much spiritual joy and true content ; it gives so great an assurance of being in the favour of God, consequently in a sure way to felicity and glory, that there is no religious, though ever so tepid, that does not desire to be perfect, and would not endeavour to be so, if the way to perfection were as agreeable as perfection itself is. But the way is no other than that to heaven : this, as our blessed Saviour assures us, is very narrow ; it is very rough and cragged, by reason of the many difficulties we meet with in overcoming our passions ; it is set with thorns, by reason of the repugnances of the sensual appetites, and the use of penances and mortifications to correct them : in fine, it is surrounded with dangers, by reason of the various temptations and deceits of our ghostly enemy.

Could we find a means to enlarge and plane this way, remove all difficulties and dangers from it, there are none who would not enter with alacrity into this way,—would not run cheerfully in it, and continue their course with great fervour till they should arrive at the very top of perfection. Do but once overcome the passion of pride and vain glory, the inordinate desire of the esteem and applause of men : despise generously all this, and procure a sincere love and desire of humiliations, and you will not only make great progress in perfection, but you will likewise remove all the obstacles that hinder people from arriving at the very top of it.

All must allow that a person is arrived at a very high degree of perfection, that not only contemns the esteem and applause of men, but loves and seeks to be undervalued and despised by all. Saint Ignatius clearly insinuates in the Rule, that this is a state of great perfection ; it is no less evident that a person arrived to this degree has surmounted the greatest, I may say all the difficulties and obstacles of a virtuous and perfect life ; so that once being arrived at this degree, every thing concurs to her advancement in the way of virtue, and helps her to the greatest perfection.

One who is arrived to this sublime degree of humility, to this perfect contempt of herself, will never be hindered from her duty by human respects ; for one that desires nothing more than to be contemned by all, will have no apprehension of what the world may think or say of her. The very hope of rendering herself more contemptible in the eyes of men, makes her with more fervour apply to the performance of her duty to God.

This entire disengagement from the world inflames her heart with fervent desires of heavenly glory and of becoming daily more pure and perfect in the eyes of God.

The Divine Goodness, who is particularly delighted with the humble, and is always infinitely more bountiful to his creatures, than they are liberal to him, ordinarily showers down upon them such abundance of spiritual joy and heavenly graces, as sweetens all the mortifications of a spiritual life, and makes the way of virtue, so rugged of its own nature, not only pleasant and easy, but incomparably more delightful than all the pleasures and satisfactions of this world.

Nothing helps more to unite our souls to God, especially in

our prayer ; and if it is observed that a true contempt of all earthly things, especially of the vain esteem and applause of men, is generally rewarded here with an eminent gift of sublime prayer ; and as this is the source of all sorts of celestial favours, so the fire of divine love is surprisingly kindled and inflamed by it in our soul, according to the Psalmist ; which fervent charity will purify our souls from all the dross of the minutest imperfections, and replenish them with all virtues. This may suffice for the proof of my second proposition—namely, that a fervent desire to be humbled, slighted, and condemned, is an efficacious means to attain the perfection our state of life requires of us.



### THIRD EXHORTATION ON THE SEVENTEENTH RULE.

“ BECAUSE they desire to resemble and imitate, in some degree, our Lord and Creator Jesus Christ.”

It may seem strange that, in exhorting you to condemn the world, the praise and applauses of men, and to love and desire fervently such things as are altogether contrary to what the world loves and embraces—namely, reproaches, slanders, injuries, to be held for fools and the like, I did not urge the example of our blessed Saviour to move you thereunto ; whereas this, of all other motives, seems the most generous, is the most proper for us to act by, and is chiefly urged by Saint Ignatius in the Rule. This is the reason why I deferred it till to-day : it is a subject that well deserves an entire exhortation ; it affords matter for many ; it can never be urged enough, nor ever considered sufficiently.

It is the example of our blessed Saviour that Saint Ignatius proposed to us in all the Rules ; it is him we took for our cap-

tain and guide in the holy exercise, especially in the two meditations of the kingdom of Christ, and of the two standards, and in the three degrees of humility. Saint Ignatius proposes his imitation as the highest point of perfection in this virtue ; therefore he delivers it as a certain maxim in a spiritual life, that our blessed Saviour having made a choice of an humble, poor, and mortified life, we ought to desire the same, though we were to have no other advantage from it, than to resemble him the more. In the third point of the three degrees of humility, Saint Ignatius lays down, that though it were equally for the glory of God whether we be rich or poor, honoured or contemned, yet, for the greater imitation of Christ, we ought to choose to be poor and despised with him, rather than to be rich, honoured, and esteemed.

I exhort you to propose to yourselves, in the practice of this Rule, the imitation of our Saviour, as Saint Ignatius admonishes ; nor do I doubt but that it will effectually excite you to a more exact observance of it.

All must allow that example has a sovereign power and almost an irresistible force on man's will ; it is the pole to which we naturally turn, like the needle to the north : it is the Rule by which the generality of mankind, I may say all, square their lives ; for example is a kind of an established law, like that of the Medes and Persians, which could not be recalled, much less transgressed, without punishment. The greater a person is, the greater power and influence his example has over others : thus we see new modes brought into the world every day by the great ones of the court, and many are so foolish as to endeavour to imitate the natural defects of their princes. God having regard to this natural inclination of man, proposes himself to us as a pattern to follow : thus we are admonished in the Gospel to imitate the perfection of our heavenly Father.

This example is infinitely above all others. In regard to us it is defective in this, that, though in itself infinitely perfect, yet God being invisible to our corporal eyes, and very obscurely represented to our understanding, his example does not strike us so much, nor affect nor move the will so strongly, as those we see. Hence two great inconveniences follow : 1. we are apt to take little notice of it ; 2. when we do, we often affect to imitate



him in things that are not to be imitated, and neglect to imitate him in things we ought; thus Lucifer, transported with a vain conceit of those admirable perfections of nature and grace with which he was created, would become like unto God in power, majesty, independence, and glory. Our first parents were also tempted to become like God in the knowledge of good and evil; by consenting to this temptation they were turned out of paradise, as Lucifer had been cast out of heaven for his pride and ambition. This shows that the perfection of an infinite and invisible majesty is not an imitable example in respect of men, unless made practicable by a visible person, capable of directing us in the imitation of an invisible God. This person, as Saint Austin observes, is the Divine Word, who, to be a safe guide and example to us in the practice of all virtues, rendered himself visible in becoming man. Man was visible, but not to be followed. God could not be seen, yet was to be followed. To the end man might have an example he could both see and follow, an invisible God became a visible man.

God being infinitely perfect, has some perfections to be admired by us, but not to be imitated; he has others both to be admired and imitated. Some are only to be admired, because they are inconsistent with the rank and nature of a creature; for example, existence from itself, independence of any other, immensity, sovereignty, and majesty. Others are to be imitated, as goodness, mercy, veracity.

You see by the example of our first parents and Lucifer, how dangerous a thing it is for creatures to aspire to or affect a likeness with God in these perfections which are proper only to God. On the contrary, we may very safely and very commendably endeavour to resemble our Lord and Creator in such as suit the condition of a creature. By word and example our Saviour exhorts us to the practice of these. He bids us be merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful; to pardon one another from our hearts, as he has pardoned us; to love and pray for our enemies and for such as persecute us, because our heavenly Father makes the Sun shine and the rain fall upon the fields of sinners, as well as upon those of his faithful servants and friends.

Though our blessed Saviour has given us many pregnant proofs of those virtues in divers passages of his life, yet the

virtue he seems most desirous we should learn of him is humility. Therefore he says: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." To teach us this virtue, he became little, whereas he was great. By nature he was an infinite majesty, equal in all things to his heavenly Father; yet he divested himself of his glory, became man, appeared and conversed on earth in the habit and likeness of a sinner.

The incarnation of the Son of God was so wonderful a humiliation, that it astonished the very angels. But it was not sufficient to correct our vanity, to humble proud man. For this reason he was not content only to become man, but he would live and be treated as the least and meanest of men. I may say, with the Prophet Isaiah, he was no man, but a worm, the reproach of men and outcast of the people.

He chose an humble virgin for his mother, a poor carpenter for his reputed father, a ruined stable to be born in, and brute animals for his companions in it.

In the house of Nazareth he exercised himself continually in humble offices, in subjection to his parents, and sweeping or cleaning the house, or working at the carpenter trade. No sooner did he leave the private life of Nazareth, and appear in the world, than a new scene was opened to him of humiliations and abasements, so much the harder to be borne, as they were more shocking to nature, than the voluntary humiliations we take upon ourselves.

He suffered affronts from all sorts of people, of all conditions and ranks; he was loaded with humiliation of all kinds; he was held for a malefactor and a seducer of the people, for an impostor and false teacher and a disturber of the peace. He was often called a lover of wine, a fantastical king, a false prophet, and a blasphemmer.

What affronts and humiliations did he not suffer in his sacred passion! He was spit upon by the lewd soldiers, condemned of blasphemy by the high-priest and his council; he was hauled and dragged along the streets as an infamous malefactor, accused as such before Pilate; he was postponed to Barabbas, held for a fool, and derided as such by Herod and his army. In fine, he was condemned to an ignominious death on the cross, and, for his greater confusion, crucified between two thieves. In a word, the whole life of our blessed Saviour, from

the manger of Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary, was an uninterrupted series of humiliations and a constant exercise of humility ; so that this virtue may be called the garment he always wore.

It is this we are also to put on in imitation of Christ. This is the lesson we are to learn of him above all others. An omnipotent God did not become a weak man, to teach us to frame a new world or to create invisible things, says Saint Austin ; but we are to learn of him to be meek and humble of heart.

We do not read any passage of his life wherein he gave us an example of desiring and seeking honours, or the commendation and applause of men. But in many places—I may say in almost every passage of his life — he teaches us to avoid, to fly, condemn, and to abhor them. When they would have declared him king, he fled to the mountains ; but when the soldiers came to lead him to his passion, to the ignominious death of the cross, he did not hide himself, but went to meet them.

Was it necessary that the Son of God should humble and abase himself so low, to teach poor mortals the virtue of humility ? says Saint Bernard. It was necessary ; for it is so great a thing for vile mortals to become little in their own eyes, that if an infinite majesty had not abased himself, their proud nature would never have submitted to desire contempt and to seek humiliations and abasements. It was only the example of an omnipotent God that could effectually recommend to us the practice of a virtue so very shocking to proud nature ; nay, it is hardly sufficient to make us practise it.

The passion of pride discovers itself in almost all our actions, even the most holy, sometimes in humiliations themselves. How sensible are we still of any slighting or affronting word ! How much are we disturbed at any contradiction ! How apt we are to repine and grieve when others are preferred before us ! This is not to learn of our blessed Saviour to be meek and humble of heart : it is not to be clad in his livery, in the same garment of ignominy and shame wherewith he clad himself for our sake, and which is so earnestly and particularly recommended to us in this Rule.

To encourage us to follow the example of our blessed Saviour not only in declining all vain honours and the esteem and applause of men, but also in loving and desiring fervently to be



despised and contemned by all, Saint Ignatius bids us reflect that our blessed Lord is the true way that leads to life. This agrees with the character our Saviour gives of himself.

This consideration may be well thought a subject of great comfort; for it is, as I mentioned, so hard a thing for proud man to conceive how the way of humiliations, contempt, injuries, and the like, can be the way to true greatness, life, and felicity. No human reasons can convince man of this truth. Nothing but example, and that of truth itself, could make him embrace it. Hence the Royal Prophet said: "Lord, it is high time to show and teach us by your example." For, notwithstanding all the persuasions of the prophets and patriarchs of the Old Law, if Christ had not taught it himself, none would comply with so hard and shocking a law.

If the Son of God only taught us this lesson by word of mouth, it would have availed little. If he had only commanded it, he would not have been obeyed. It was necessary to convince us of it, and to show us how to practise it by his own example. Otherwise it would have seemed impossible to proud nature to love humiliations, to desire fervently to be despised and contemned by all.

It is not only the security of going right that must move us to put on the livery of Christ, and to follow him in the same paths in which he walked. Saint Ignatius exhorts us to make love our chief motive: it must make us desirous of bearing him company at all times.

As we naturally desire to be like those whose company we keep, so we must endeavour to resemble our blessed Saviour in wearing the same garment of contempt and ignominy he put on for the love of us. Our Redeemer had no need of the garment, either to defend him from the temptation of pride and vain glory, or to secure the virtue of humility. It was not by compulsion and force that he abased himself so low, beneath the meanest rank of men, even the scum and outcast of the people. He had no advantage by it himself. It was only for our good, for our spiritual profit; to teach us by his own example the true way to glory by the secure way of humiliations.

It was not necessary for the redemption of man that Christ should suffer all the ignominies he did; for one drop of his precious blood was more than sufficient to ransom ten thousand



worlds It was only for our encouragement to suffer patiently contempt and ignominy, that he suffered more. It was to help us by his example to condemn the world and its vain applause and honours; it was to ground us in true humility.

Shall we, vile worms, swell with pride, extol and magnify ourselves, while the King of glory is so humbled? Shall we think it much to be contemned, having his example before our eyes? Is it reasonable that we should be better treated than he was? Shall the scholar pretend to be above his master, or the servant greater than his lord?

Let us, then, sisters, as our Rule prescribes, endeavour to procure a true abhorrence of all that the world loves and esteems. Let us love and fervently desire such things as are diametrically opposite. Let us desire to be despised by men, that we may be dearer to God and more precious in his eyes, as we shall certainly be, if, being clad in the same garment of ignominy, we become conformable to Christ.

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#### FIRST EXHORTATION ON THE EIGHTEENTH RULE.

“THE more easily to arrive at this degree of perfection, so much to be valued in a spiritual life, let every one with a more than common diligence seek after an increase of self-denial, and if possible a perpetual mortification.”

It is plain by the words of this Rule, that a perfect abnegation of our own will, and the continual exercise of mortification, was reckoned by Saint Ignatius as a necessary means to attain a perfect imitation of our blessed Redeemer, in the contempt of worldly honour and in the love of humiliations and ignominy; therefore we are to seek these with the same fervency and zeal as we desire to resemble our blessed Lord. As this is what all religious make open and solemn profession of, we can never

comply faithfully with our vocation, without seeking our greater abnegation and continual mortification as the means to attain this resemblance. This may seem a harsh and hard lesson to corrupt nature, which is always so violently bent on doing its own will and seeking its ease and satisfaction in most things ; wherefore it will be necessary to insist some time upon this Rule.

I will first treat of the necessity of mortification ; of the nature of it ; that we are obliged to it not only to become good religious, but even virtuous and good Christians. Mortification, according to the natural signification of the word, is a disposition to corruption, and so to death. In a spiritual sense, the virtue of mortification disposes to the corruption of a sensual life, and inclines and helps extremely to a regeneration in a spiritual life. By mortification we destroy what the Apostle calls the body of sin, and are enlivened by sanctifying grace : we cast off the old and put on the new man. The Apostle, in his Epistle to the Romans, explains this by the passion and resurrection of our blessed Saviour ; for, as Christ by his passion lost his natural life, and by his death raised himself to a new life, so by mortification we crucify the old man with all his unlawful desires and concupiscences. We shall also resemble our glorious Redeemer, by a spiritual resurrection. To this the same Apostle exhorts us when he says : “ As our blessed Saviour rose by the glory of his Father, so let us walk in the newness of our life.”

Mortification is divided into two branches,—interior and exterior ; interior mortification consists in curbing our passions, submitting our understanding, and abnegation of our will. The exterior consists in chastising and afflicting the body in order to bring the inferior or sensual part of the soul to reason ; whereby it appears that the perfect exercise of mortification makes a complete sacrifice of the whole man, which is consummated in the fire of charity.

The necessity of this virtue may be gathered, first, from the present situation of corrupt nature ; second, from the express will and appointment of God. You are to observe that our perfection consists in a perfect subordination to the will of God.

In the happy state of original justice in which man was created, this subordination was entire ; for he had a perfect

knowledge of his duty to his Lord and Creator, likewise a will ready to comply with it. In that happy state man had no irregular passions to blind his understanding or to pervert his will. He had no unlawful concupiscence to struggle with. The flesh was entirely subject to reason—the inferior part to the superior, and this to God.

Ecclesiastes had reason to say, “God made man right.” Our first parents, in the state of original justice, could suffer no violent temptations. The sensual appetite being subject to reason, Adam was naturally carried to love and serve his Lord and Creator.

Were we now in the same case, we should have none of these rebellions of the flesh we experience ; we should not be subject to anger, pride, gluttony, luxury, or the like. So that nothing would be able to withdraw our hearts and affections from God, or settle them on unlawful objects.

Nothing but the free use and determination of our will would make us fall into sin, as it made our first parents by transgressing the commandment of God.

This transgression was of fatal consequence to our first parents, likewise to all their unhappy posterity. To omit other bad effects of it, our understanding was darkened, our will perverted, concupiscence inflamed ; our passions became irregular, sense rebelled against reason, or the inferior appetite of the soul against the superior. Moreover, this was deprived of those supernatural gifts and graces, by the influence and help of which, man, in the state of original justice, was so sweetly inclined to love, please, and serve his Lord and Creator, that he found no difficulty in conforming himself to the will of God, and in exercising himself in the practice of all virtues.

It is the reforming of our nature, thus corrupted by sin, that makes the use of mortification so necessary ; for, without hard struggling with our passions, we shall never conquer them, nor correct our vicious habits without using violence to ourselves ; we shall never quell the rebellion of sinful flesh and of our sensual appetites, without mortifying and chastising our bodies.

To procure a settled and lasting peace, we must first engage in war. Our ghostly enemies are many, but none more formidable

than those that are within ourselves. There is no safety till these are subdued : there is nothing to be feared from foreign enemies when our domestic enemies are secured. Neither the world nor the devil can force an entrance into our soul, if no treacherous passion opens the door to them. Their assaults will signify nothing : they will be repulsed with ease, and beat back with confusion.

Nothing more detestable than a traitor, nothing more dangerous to the state. An ignominious death is the least punishment so black a crime deserves. It is the interest and concern of every particular member of a state to demand justice against a traitor.

Our sinful flesh and passions are traitors ; therefore deserve a severe punishment. For this cause, in a spirirual sense, our Saviour bids us pluck out the eye, or cut off the hand, that is a scandal to us. Saint Paul says, we are to cut off the old man with all his concupiscence and unlawful desires. If we have not the heart to go to this extremity, we must not, at least, fail to keep a strong hand over them, a strict guard upon our senses, curb our unruly passions, and check and mortify our flesh ; for, if we do not keep them under, they will master us, and betray us to our ghostly enemy.

Without this vigilance and care, we shall infallibly be eternally lost. How much less can we, without it, repair corrupt nature, and restore it to its original perfection ? I do not mean to all the privileges of the state of original justice ; that is not possible in this vale of misery and tears ; but to a readiness to comply in all things with the divine will of God, and to apply with ease to the exercise of our duty and the practice of virtue and good works.

This is the perfection to which we are all obliged to aspire : which, by our endeavours and the assistance of divine grace, we may obtain, if we do not fail to keep a strict guard over our senses, if we curb our unruly passions, and subdue our rebellious flesh by the continual abnegation of our will and the exercise of mortification.

This is so well-known a truth in the school of virtue, so received a principle by all spiritual men, both in the Old and New Testaments, that we do not need of any saint who did not



allow of the necessity of mortification—who did not teach it to others—who did not practise it himself.

Holy Job calls the life of man a continual warfare. This made Saint Paul punish and chastise his body. In fine, it is upon this account Saint Jerome, other saints and masters of spirit, lay it as a principle, that our progress in spirit and perfection depends entirely on the violence we use against ourselves.

Our blessed Saviour taught us the same when he said, “The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and it is to be purchased only by violence.”

Many natural reasons may be brought in confirmation of this truth. A crooked tree cannot be made to grow straight without using violence and force against the bent it has taken ; nor can a perverse inclination of the will to unlawful satisfactions and pleasures, be brought back to the love of God and spiritual things, without great difficulty and pain.

To cure an old festered wound it is often necessary to use both lancet and fire ; so, to cure vicious habits, severity and penances are necessary. As distempers of the body are generally cured by contraries, so the diseases of the soul are to be cured by following the same method. An immoderate love of ease must be cured by labour ; pride must be cured by humiliations and the exercise of ourselves in humble offices ; intemperance must be cured by abstinence ; and so of all other distempers of the soul ; which shows how necessary it is to use violence with our depraved nature, to chastise and mortify ourselves. But, suppose our disorderly passions could be conquered, vicious habits rooted out, and virtue planted, without this sharp means of mortification and penance, still it would not only be commendable, but necessary, to deny our own will, and to carry our cross, because in the present order of providence, God will have it so.

The Son of God became man, not only to satisfy for our sins by shedding his blood and laying down his life for us, but to be our guide and master in the study and practice of all virtues. It is from him we are to learn the science of saints ; it is our duty as well as our interest to be admitted into his school, to be received into the number of his disciples. As he came to instruct and teach all, he refuses none ; but he lays

down certain conditions with which he desires all should comply : such as refuse to follow him on the terms he proposes, he looks upon as unworthy of him, unfit for his school, incapable of being his disciple. That none should be ignorant of these conditions, but that all may dispose and qualify themselves to be admitted, the Evangelists have taken care to set them down in many places of the Gospel.

Saint Luke tells us that our Saviour requires absolutely of all who desire to be his disciples, that they renounce all they have in this world—that is, they must abandon their wealth and all their possessions, consequently, deprive themselves of all the satisfactions and conveniences that are procured by riches ; they must be content to be deprived of these, not only for a time, but during life ; for what we leave for God's sake and the kingdom of heaven, must be abandoned for ever, without any prospect of regaining it again. It is not only mortifying to corrupt nature to deprive itself of these conveniences and satisfactions, but much more to be exposed to the danger of wanting necessities and to other inconveniences of poverty ; yet this is one of the conditions of Christ's school ; there is no being his disciple without it.

The want of riches may sometimes be supplied by means of relations and friends ; the inconveniences of poverty may, in great measure, be prevented by them, at least it is some satisfaction in poverty to be with one's parents and relations ; therefore, the sacrifice we make when we leave the world would not be complete had we this to rely on. Our blessed Saviour does not only require that we leave all our possessions and worldly goods, but also our parents, friends, and relations. In the tenth chapter of Saint Mathew, our Saviour says that he came not into the world to bring peace, but war,—that is, to separate sons from their fathers, and daughters from their mothers. In Saint Luke, he declares he will admit none to be his disciples, who do not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters. By the first renunciation our blessed Saviour requires that we mortify and even destroy the passions of avarice, of ambition, vanity, likewise the inordinate passion of self-love and desire of pleasure, all which are fomented and increased by plenty and wealth, as the virtues opposite to these vices are procured and improved by holy poverty. By the second we

disengage our hearts from the dearest things we have in the world, to be more at liberty to settle our affections on God.

To overcome this passion for our parents and relations is a matter of great difficulty and pain ; it is an heroic act of self-denial, and a most sensible mortification. One act of self-denial, once mortifying ourselves, is not sufficient to render us worthy of being disciples of Christ.

We must have a will and be resolved to exercise ourselves constantly in acts of abnegation of our own will and of mortification, according to these words of Saint Luke : “ Let him who will follow me, deny himself, and take up his cross daily.” Without our crosses, we shall not deserve the company of our blessed Saviour loaded with a cross : we shall not be worthy to be his disciples ; for, since he would carry his own cross to give us an example to carry ours, he may well think us unworthy if we refuse to carry it.

When we came to religion, it was no doubt with intention to be disciples of Christ. Nor could we suppose he would receive us on other terms than what are common to all that pretend to follow him. It was not, then, to seek our ease that we left the world, but to seek our cross. We must not be frightened and disturbed when we find it. We must not let it lie where we meet with it, but take it up and embrace it, as Saint Andrew did, making use of his or similar words : “ Hail ! holy cross, long desired, and now prepared for me. Receive me into your arms.” Lay it upon your shoulders, that you may be worthy of following *him*, who carried his, and was crucified on it, for love of you.

By observing religiously this Rule, let us endeavour to verify in ourselves these words of Saint Paul : “ Let us always carry about us the mortification of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifest in us.” That is, let there appear in all our actions an abnegation of our wills, a willingness to suffer, a love and esteem of the cross, that thus we may conquer our passions, comply cheerfully with our duty, advance daily more and more in perfection, edify our sisters, and thereby promote the honour and glory of God.

## SECOND EXHORTATION ON THE EIGHTEENTH RULE.

“THE more easily to arrive at this degree of perfection, so much to be valued in a spiritual life.”

Having shown how necessary the practice of mortification is for all religious, by reason of the numerous dangers to which we are exposed of falling into sin without the assistance of this virtue, we will now proceed to treat of the different kinds of mortification, and the manner of exercising ourselves in them. As the matter is of too wide extent to be comprehended in one discourse, I will first divide this virtue into its several branches; then explain each separately.

The virtue of mortification is divided into exterior and interior. The former consists in mortifying, punishing, and chastising our flesh; in denying our senses some satisfaction, pleasure, or liberty, not only criminal, but lawful — such, for example, as may be enjoyed without offending God. Hence, exterior mortification is partly negative, partly positive. The first consists in denying our bodies and senses certain satisfactions and pleasures: the second, in giving some uneasiness or pain to them.

Negative mortification is practised by keeping a strict guard over our senses, not only in respect of sinful or dangerous objects, but of such as are innocently diverting or pleasing to us, which kind of mortification, for our greater merit, and the better to keep interior recollection, is prescribed by our Rule, and is carefully and very piously practised by such religious as are zealous for their perfection, and endeavour to advance daily in the way of virtue.

Of this mortification of our senses I shall have to speak more at large when I come to the Thirty-fourth Rule, in which we are expressly ordered to keep a strict guard over our senses. It being a matter of great importance, in order to advance in the way begun of God's service, and particularly recommended to us in our Rules, I cannot forbear treating of it in this place also;



for the practice of it is so necessary to avoid temptations and to obtain virtues, that it can never be too often recommended.

The soul of man is often compared to a fort or castle besieged on all sides by a vast army of ghostly enemies, no less formidable for their cunning and deceitful practices than for their strength. Though this castle be well stored within with provisions, and fenced with strong bulwarks without, it will signify very little if the gates of it are continually left open, or not guarded. Our senses are the gates of our soul ; it is by them that objects enter in, and our affections go out to them ; as long as these are unguarded, there is no security for the soul, infallibly it will be surprised sooner or later, and fall a prey to the enemy.

We have many examples, both in the Old and New Testaments, of such as have fallen into great disorders and sins by giving their eyes too great liberty. Perhaps, if we make a serious reflection on our past life, we shall find that the same negligence has been the chief cause of our greatest disorders.

How often have you found, by woful experience, your heart seized with inordinate affections and unlawful desires by the liberty you have given your eyes ? What remorse have you not felt in your conscience, by giving ear to evil discourses, or being too forward in speaking of the behaviour and lives of your neighbours ? Let the sad example of other people's fall, and the experience of your own frailty on similar occasions, convince you of the necessity of the mortification of your senses, and make you more cautious in using them for the future.

As your soul can be in no security without this mortification, so there is little or no danger to be feared if you are vigilant and careful to keep a strict guard over them : keep these gates locked, and you shut out all those dangerous temptations that are caused by external objects. If you can free yourself from these, you have no enemies to fear ; for the devil has no way of attacking the soul but by the objects of the senses ; he can make no impression upon your will and understanding but by their means. All sin, as Saint John says, arises from concupiscence of the eyes or of the flesh, and the senses inflame the passions.

The custody or mortification of the senses not only secures

from enemies, but procures an interior quiet and peace to the soul, which places you at liberty, and helps you to apply to the study and practice of all virtues. It frees you from innumerable idle, vain, and superfluous thoughts, which are apt to distract your mind in time of prayer, and disturb your recollection at other times. If you do not employ your thoughts upon terrene objects, you will infallibly entertain them with spiritual; for the mind is an active faculty that will always be employed upon some object or other. You cannot remain long without thought; the moment you exclude such as are vain and unprofitable, good ones will succeed in their place; your conversation will be in heaven: you will entertain your thoughts with God and his saints, who reciprocally entertain themselves with you.

The advantages and helps you will receive by this holy and heavenly communication with God in order to a speedy progress in spiritual life, are many and great; it will make you despise and loathe all conversation with creatures, because nothing is so sweet and delightful as to converse familiarly with God. Hence, the Royal Prophet bids us taste and see how sweet our Lord is. The more you converse with him, the better you will like him; you can never be weary of him, because his company never cloy; the satisfaction you take in treating with him is always new, and as various as his perfections, which are infinite. Solomon says: This continual discovery of new perfections in God inflames the heart with divine love, melts it into tender affections and ardent desires of pleasing him here and of enjoying him eternally hereafter.

2. By conversing familiarly with the saints, we learn by their example, and we are greatly moved and encouraged to put in use, what is perfect and pleasing to the divine majesty—that is, to exercise ourselves in the practice of all sorts of virtues and good works; by which we see how beneficial this mortification of our senses is, and how great a help in a spiritual life.

The other kind of mortification I call positive, because it consists not only in denying our senses the enjoyments of their proper objects, but in afflicting and chastising the body. The use is very holy, and much recommended by the saints, and the constant practice of holy persons, whose pious and ingenious

zeal for their perfection and spiritual profit have found out divers ways of exercising this virtue.

The more general and principal practice of it consists in prayer, watching, fasting, disciplines, hair cloth, and chains. There are innumerable other ways God's holy servants have invented to express their hatred of their sinful flesh, to quell the rebellion of their bodies, to keep them in due subjection by reason and grace, in order to satisfy for sins committed, and to preserve themselves from falling again.

It cannot be doubted but that this sharp method of treating our bodies is very holy and commendable. It expresses a great and sincere sorrow and detestation of sin, a true sense of our duty to God, and is a very congruous and efficacious means to prevent our falling again.

We cannot more express our love to God, than by resenting all injuries done to his divine majesty, and severely punishing the offender. It plainly shows that the love of God prevails over self-love,—that we love our souls preferably to our bodies, and prefer our salvation infinitely above all the pleasures and satisfactions of this life.

As to the use of these afflictions and chastisements of the flesh, also the mortification of the senses, we have divers methods and directions in our holy Rule: for example, in the Fourth Rule we are ordered to make use of penances and chastisements of the body, so far as, with the approbation of the superioress, it shall be thought conducive to our spiritual profit.

The superioress is empowered to enjoin to every one what mortification and penance she shall think necessary for her spiritual good and progress in virtue.

The Fifty-second Rule speaks also of corporal chastisements; and the Thirty-fourth, of keeping a strict guard over our senses, especially the eyes.

In other Rules we are ordered laborious, humble, painful and mean offices and employments, in order to break our own will and irregular passions; whereby it appears that the use of mortifications is very much recommended to us, but nowhere more than in the Rule we are now explaining; for, in it is required that we seek in all things our greater abnegation and continual mortification, not coldly nor tepidly, nor in a moderate degree, but as much as we can, with our chief and greatest endeavour.



Can any thing be expressed more strongly than this? Can any thing be recommended to us in more pressing terms? We are not only to deny our will in all things, with our inclinations, but we are to seek our greater abnegation, not indolently and with indifference, but eagerly and with serious application. We must seek with the like zeal our continual mortification in all things. We must earnestly desire to have always our cross upon our shoulders, because there is no following our blessed Saviour without it.

As to the practice of this Rule, in as much as it regards the two branches of external mortification—namely, the denying of our senses the enjoyment of their proper objects, and the chastising and afflicting of our bodies by labour, watching, disciplines, and other penances,—it is to be observed, that these are not to be taken indiscreetly and without measure, whereby we may prejudice our health, weaken our bodies, and render ourselves incapable of complying with our duty in things of far greater moment for the service of God and good of our neighbour.

We are particularly admonished of this in the Seventy-third Rule. To make you more sensible of the importance of this precaution, Saint Ignatius goes yet further. Fearing that the too great zeal of some might make them believe certain rigours and practices of penance discreet and necessary for them, he will not have particulars be their own judges, but orders them to acquaint their superior with what they do in this kind. This is conformable to what we are taught in the Fourth Rule.

These exterior mortifications are rather means to acquire virtue, than virtue itself; for virtue is defined, “a habit inclining to what is good.” Whereas these may be performed without any good or benefit to the soul. The devil often puts people upon doing extraordinary works of mortification and penance, to foment their pride and vanity, and when he cannot induce them to commit sin, he will endeavour to hinder a greater good. For these reasons, in the use of corporal penances and mortifications, great regard must be had to the end for which we use them. As they are means, they are so far to be taken and made use of as they help to the acquiring of the end for which we take them: the first and principle design of these is, to



bring our stubborn and rebellious nature to a perfect submission to the will of God, and to a ready and constant compliance with it, by an exact and faithful performance of the duties of our vocation. Whether we make use of them to satisfy for our sins or to obtain any favour or blessing of God for ourselves or others, we still must have our first and chief end before our eyes, we must do nothing to hinder it; on the contrary, we must act for it in every thing we do. Hence I draw this consequence, that all mortifications and penances that so weaken our health or strength of body, as may render us incapable of performing our duty in the Institute, are immoderate, indiscreet, and are to be avoided. All such as dispose and help us to perform it better are very commendable and to be used.

The mortification of our senses must be chiefly exercised in regard of sinful or dangerous objects; for, a sincere fear of offending God will not allow seculars, much less religious, to gratify their senses with so dangerous things. Holy Job made an agreement with his eyes that they should not look upon a virgin; we are to make the same agreement, not only with our eyes, but with all our other senses, to avoid all such objects as are apt to be an occasion of sin; such, for example, as are either criminal in themselves, or in respect of us, by reason of our state of life. In the next place, we are to mortify our senses in such things as are forbidden by our Rule, or by our superiors; because all mortifications that help us to serve God are commendable. It follows that the custody of our senses must extend to objects innocently diverting, not for any danger of falling into sin, but to gain new victories over our passions, and, by voluntary offerings and sacrifices, to draw down new blessings and graces, so to increase daily our merit.

As to corporal labours and afflictions of the body, such are most to be esteemed as are of obligation, by reason of the precepts of the Church or statutes of our order. These we must prefer before any of our own choosing. Next are those which our superioress shall enjoin for our faults and transgressions. These are to be received humbly and performed willingly. 3. Such as God inspires us to perform in satisfaction for our sins, and for the increase of our merit.

But, for fear of being deluded and falling into indiscretion,

let us have the approbation of our superioress or spiritual director for every thing we do in this kind.

Our penances and mortifications are to be so ordered and made use of, that they do not oppress, but quicken the spirit,—do not destroy nature, but render it more vigorous in the service of God. Though many divines and holy fathers do allow so great a maceration of our bodies as to shorten our lives ; yet, in practice, such mortifications are generally more to be admired than imitated ; therefore, they are not to be rashly undertaken, especially in our Institute, where we have an express Rule to moderate the chastisements of the body, and to permit ourselves to be directed and governed in these things by our superioress.

Some persons, by giving too great scope to an indiscreet zeal, have rendered their lives so uneasy, that they have fallen into great disquiet and trouble of mind. To get rid of this, they then fall into the other extreme — they become great lovers of ease and great indulgers of themselves.

In the use of exterior mortification, observe diligently what measure of penances helps you to overcome your passions and disorderly affections, and to go on cheerfully and vigorously in God's service. As to the practice of this particular Rule, bring yourself to this disposition—to desire most such employments and offices wherein greater abnegation of your own will, and continual occasions of mortifying yourself, are found.

### THIRD EXHORTATION ON THE EIGHTEENTH RULE.

“THE more easily to arrive at this degree of perfection.”

In my last exhortation I spoke to you of exterior mortification : to-day I will treat of that of the interior, which I will divide into two branches. The first regards our passions ; the second, our understanding and will. We cannot make a complete and perfect sacrifice of ourselves, unless all three be killed with the sword of mortification or self-denial, and consumed with the fire of charity.

I shall only speak to-day of the mortification of the passions. What I mentioned of the necessity of mortification in general plainly shows how necessary this of our passions is. Considering of what importance it is to gain an entire victory over these, I will treat particularly of this point.

Though this victory is not the sole end for which we make use of external mortifications, yet it is the first thing we propose to ourselves in using them, and what we chiefly aim at.

Let us examine what passion is ; where it resides in us ; what influence it has upon us and the whole conduct of our lives.

Saint Thomas of Aquin defines passion to be a sensible motion of the concupiscible faculty, arising from a lively apprehension or imagination of good or evil. This power called concupiscence, not only signifies an inordinate desire of carnal pleasure, but of all other worldly delights—as wealth, honours, and the like, these being represented to our depraved imagination and fancy as things truly valuable and good. Hence, the Apostle Saint John divides concupiscence into concupiscence of the eyes and concupiscence of the flesh. The etymology of the word expresses it plain enough ; for *concupiscentia* is derived from the word *concupiscere*, to desire or covet. It is well known that riches and honours are desired and coveted ; therefore, the desire of them, as well as of sensual pleasures, is concupiscence, which is the cause of love, in as much as love is taken for the act or effect ; for this is a power that makes us

desire or covet things absent when they are proposed to us by our imagination as good ; when we possess the thing we love and desired, it occasions joy.

With respect to such things as are bad, or are represented to us as such, this concupiscible power causes a hatred of them : if they are absent, a fear ; if present, it occasions grief or melancholy. So that many passions rise from concupiscence as from their source.

The object of concupiscence is good or evil—*that* it desires, *this* it detests and flies, the former it seeks. In flying evil or in seeking good, it belongs to the irascible power of our soul to surmount all difficulties, either in obtaining all the good we desire, or in avoiding the evil we fear. When the good cannot be acquired, nor the evil avoided, it inclines us to anger. If there appears a possibility of acquiring the one and avoiding the other, it makes us bold, daring, resolute, indefatigable, and obstinate in our ways.

Both these faculties, in the state of innocence, were of very great use and benefit : in this state of depraved nature, they are become, through our fault, great grievances and hinderances in the way of virtue, in prosecuting our only good, in avoiding sin and securing our salvation ; for concupiscence, being now inflamed, sets all our passions on fire, and causes that terrible rebellion in the sensitive or inferior part of men, of which the Apostle complains, and under which we all groan with incredible prejudice to our souls, by reason of the disturbance of our peace of mind, the danger of losing the grace and favour of God now, and glory and happiness hereafter.

O ! what a cruel law does this barbarous tyrant impose upon mankind ! what slaves does it make us ! compelling us to do what we would not, and not suffering us to do what we would. For it is not the good, says Saint Paul, that we have a mind to do, but the evil we have no mind for, that we do.

These sensible motions, arising from concupiscence, are called passions, because they work upon or make an impression both on body and soul. This appears visibly in a man transported with anger, but no less true in other passions ; they also obscure reason, and pervert the will. They deceive the understanding with imaginary appearances of truth, and debauch the will with deceitful promises of good — as pleasures, content, and



happiness : hence nothing but disorder and confusion in the inferior part of man, nothing but mistakes and error in the superior.

It is in this concupiscible and irascible part of man that our passions are formed, and rise as clouds. Rain, hail, thunder, and lightning are formed in the middle region of the air, as the earth is disturbed with these ; so the inferior part of man, disquieted by passions, which, working upon the body, sets up sensuality above reason, and causes a rebellion in the flesh. It is not only the inferior part that it effects, it also disturbs the superior and chief part of the soul, for passion blinds the understanding and renders it incapable of comprehending natural and supernatural things ; it clogs the free will with the apprehension of difficulties in the performance of virtuous actions, and so discomposing both body and soul, the order of nature is perverted and destroyed—man is reduced to that deplorable situation of which Ecclesiasticus speaks. “I have seen footmen on horseback, and princes walking by as servants.” Who would not be shocked and moved to indignation at such a sight. Yet this is truly verified in us when our passions get the upper hand and domineer over reason and free will, for these are the princes that have a right to rule and govern all our actions ; our passions ought to be subject and subservient to them : when this order is kept, all goes right, when perverted and changed, nothing but disorder and confusion follow.

This shows the necessity of keeping our passions under and in due subjection, even to live a rational or human life, for it is by the two noble powers of reason and free will, that man is distinguished from beasts : for they have external senses and sensual appetites like us ; they have a concupiscible and irascible power, they have an interior apprehension or imagination, they have also their passions of love, hatred, fear, anger, and the like. They only want a rational or free soul, or a soul endowed with reason and free will ; but, for want of these, they are only guided by their blind passions, therefore place their summum bonum in satisfying their senses and brutish appetites. If we permit ours to get the mastery over reason and free will, we shall live the life of beasts and not of man.

Much more is the subduing of our passions necessary for a

moral, virtuous, and christian life, still far more to attain that high degree of perfection to which a religious state of life aims—that is, an eminent degree of humility, a lively faith, the gift of prayer and perfect charity; for, Saint Austin says, you nourish charity by diminishing cupidity; you perfect it by quite extinguishing cupidity: that you may increase in charity, you must take great care to diminish cupidity.

This mortification is still more necessary for those of the Institute, because the harm caused by not subduing the passions and the good that is hindered is so great, that in the examen we are ordered to inquire to what passions the candidate who desires to be admitted, is subject; if we find they are so violent that probably they will never be conquered, the person is to be rejected as unfit. The mortification of our passions is of greater benefit to us than the external mortification of the body and senses. Without this, external penance and chastisement of our flesh will avail us little, for it is generally our passions that cause disorder in our senses and rebellion in our flesh; our chief care must be to mortify, defeat, and destroy them. A castle is in no security by having the gates shut, if there is a treacherous enemy within that can open them when he will; our senses are the gates and windows of our soul; our passions are treacherous domestics, who are always ready to let in dangerous objects to betray us to our ghostly enemies: our chief end must be to conquer them.

In seeking your greater abnegation and continual mortification, let it be your greatest care to find out what is your most predominant passion, what most influences your life and actions, what most exposes you to the danger of falling into sin. Some have a passionate love for ease, which makes them slothful in the exercise of all good works, especially such as are accompanied with labour, pain, and difficulty; let their mortification be in rising punctually in the morning, in exercising themselves in laborious and painful employments when they are enjoined, and in showing a readiness and offering themselves when any hard and painful thing is to be done. Some have a violent passion of curiosity to know all that passes both at home and abroad; this often makes them break custody of eyes and silence, fills their heads with innumerable unprofitable thoughts, and ruins recollection: let these mortify themselves by keeping

custody of eyes, and not asking curious questions, and they will have a very good occasion of continually practising this Rule with great spiritual profit to themselves.

Others often think of indulging their appetites. In a religious state we make profession not only of temperance, but of abstinence or mortification in diet: religious aim at perfection, their state of life obliges them to acts of supererogation. How then do they offend against their calling, how little have they of the spirit of mortification, who are always thinking of their diet, often complain of it, and exceed the bounds of temperance at their meals.

The first step of mortification in this kind is, to be content with what providence sends, or religion affords; and how much reason have we to be satisfied who are so charitably provided for? How many other religious orders are not so well off? how many great servants of God have hardly sufficient to support nature? The second step is for our greater mortification, to retrench something of what is allowed; but, to prevent doing harm to our health and hindering a greater good, let us be sure to have the approbation of our superioress for what we do. We have many examples in history of rigorous examples in this kind; some may very commendably be imitated, others are more to be admired than followed, for their abstinence was so great that they seemed to live by miracle.

Another most violent and dangerous passion is pride, which makes us fond of the esteem and applause of men, and as averse to humiliations. Hence, vain people are apt to say things to show their wit and other good parts; are troubled when others are preferred before them, are impatient when corrected for their faults, and being, in general, envious, repine at the success and talents of others. Such have a large field to practise mortification in, and the best they can use is to check and curb their pride; for example, to be silent as if they had nothing to reply, when they receive a slighting word from a companion, is a very great and meritorious act of mortification, a notable victory over pride.

To be silent when one has some witty thought, that would gain the applause of the company; to speak well of, and show particular esteem of such as stand in competition with us; to applaud what they say, and to yield the preference to them to

say nothing in our own justification when told of or reprimanded for our faults, are also great acts of mortification, and of great merit in the eyes of God.

Some will even desire public reprehensions for their greater humiliation, which is still a higher degree of mortification, and shows a complete victory over pride.

People that are subject to the passion of anger, never want occasions of mortifying themselves ; because trials of patience are always at hand. It is no small mortification to hold their peace when a sharp word is said or a contradiction given ; to overcome their passion so far as to speak mildly and kindly to the party is heroic. To moderate their passion on such occasions is more repugnant to nature, harder for people of their temper to perform, than it is to take a discipline, wear a chain, or, perhaps, to fast on bread and water.

We may discourse after the same way of many other passions. This mortification of them has another great advantage over external penance,—they make no outward show, they are hidden from the eyes of men, only known to God ; therefore, they are not liable to vain glory. They may be practised without any one's perceiving them ; consequently, they are more safe, yet not less meritorious.

Let us, dear sisters, apply all our forces thereunto till we have obtained a complete victory over our passions ; we can never be perfect till we have quite conquered them, which, though hard to do, may be compassed with the assistance of divine grace and our own endeavours, but not without using great violence to ourselves.



#### FOURTH EXHORTATION ON THE EIGHTEENTH RULE.

“THE more easily to arrive at this degree of perfection, so much to be valued in a spiritual life.”

Having spoken of the mortification of our flesh, senses, and passions, it follows that I should now treat of mortifying our understanding and will, which sort of mortification as far surpasses the former, as these two powers excel our body, senses, and passions, or, as the rational and spiritual part of man excels the sensitive.

These are the two principal powers of our soul, being wholly spiritual as the soul itself. They are the directing and commanding powers ; they are the favourite and darling powers of man. Hence, nothing harder than to cross and contradict them, yet nothing more dangerous than to follow our own will depraved with malice, and to adhere constantly to our own judgment blinded with passion and ignorance.

In the exercise of mortification, our greatest attention and chief study must be, to destroy our own perverse will, so as to have no other to act by than the will of God ; to subject and captivate our understanding to the decisions of the Church and the determination of superiors, so as to admit of no reasoning that contradicts or clashes with these two certain rules of truth.

To-day I will exhort you to mortify self-will. What I have already said of the mortification of our senses and passions may seem sufficient, since we never mortify them without abnegation of our own will. Notwithstanding, since self-love is a distinct passion from those of pride, anger, sloth, and other vices, and is generally the most predominant in us, and the cause of yielding to vice ; since we often act by the principle of self-love, without the instigation of any other passion, being inordinately bent upon doing our own will, as well in indifferent good as in bad things ; since this acting by self-will may take away the merit of our best actions, may even render them vicious and displeasing to God, it is very proper to exhort you particularly to the

exercise of self-denial, by contradicting and breaking your own will.

I will first show how necessary it is to do this, if we desire to please God and advance daily in a spiritual life.

Self-will is that depraved will that acts purely for itself, without any regard to God's holy will and pleasure. This is the notion Saint Bernard gives of it:—Self-will arises from self-love, which is wholly opposite to the love of God and our neighbour; for, as the Apostle tells us, true charity does not seek itself; it is not solicitous about its own ease, interest, satisfaction, and advancement in this world, as it is for the glory of God and spiritual good of its neighbour. Whereas these self-lovers are more concerned for their own than God's interest. Hence comes that terrible opposition of self-love with the love of God, which Saint Austin describes by the opposition of the two cities mentioned in his book. The diversity is caused by the difference of their love. In one city is encouraged self-love, with the contempt of God; in the other, flourishes the love of God, with a contempt of themselves.

Saint Bernard represents to us in very strong terms the malice and impiety of these wilful self-lovers. Their endeavour is, says this holy father, to withdraw from the power and jurisdiction of their Lord and Creator, whom, upon so many just titles, they are obliged to love and serve. By seeking their own will in all things, they would, if possible, take all from performing the will of God; for they would have all study to please them.

I dare boldly say, though all the world should join to serve and please them, it would not satisfy their exorbitant desires; for their malice is still of a darker die; it strikes at God himself. Were it in their power, they would have no God to oppose their will, or, what is the same thing, they wish he did not know their sins, or would not punish them, or that he had not power to do it.

Self-will, being opposite to the will of God, is of its own nature criminal. It makes people that are wedded to it transgress God's commandments, fall into many sins; consequently, renders such as follow it guilty of severe punishments, which self-love will make them desirous to escape.

At any rate, even to wish there was no God to punish them,

or, as Saint Bernard observes, they wish God was not omnipotent, was not just, or, at least, was ignorant of what they did.

To show the malice of self-will, Saint Anselm makes use of this reflection. It is a perfection proper only to God, to do in all things his own will, 1. because, having no superior, he is not subject to the will of another ; 2. being infinitely holy and perfect, he cannot have a more perfect will to follow than his own. Hence, it would be a defect to follow any other's will.

The perfection of his will is essential to him ; whence he can no more cease to follow his own will than cease to be God. As it is necessary and best for him to follow his own divine will, so it is his divine will that it should be the rule of other wills. The blessed in heaven have no other will than that of God ; it is the daily prayer of all good Christians, that we upon earth may have no other.

By seeking in all things our own will, we go directly contrary to this prayer. We arrogate to ourselves a prerogative only belonging to God ; we pervert that holy and wise order he has established ; we take off the subordination of the creature to his Creator ; in fine, we leave the most holy and secure rule, to follow one that is both deceitful and wicked, with infinite danger and prejudice to our souls.

As the will of God, is the source of all good, so our depraved will is the cause of all evil. By following that we make ourselves happy ; by following this we become miserable. When we are once so happy as to conquer our own will, there is nothing in this world that can do us harm. Neither the sting of concupiscence nor the rebellion of the flesh, the allurements of the world nor the suggestions of the devil, will be able to annoy us ; flatterers and false friends will not be able to affect us ; hatred and persecution of open enemies will not frighten us ; our bad inclinations and passions will not hurt us ; prosperity will not transport us ; nor adversity deject us. All the furious waves of temptation will break against this firm rock of the will of God : if we adhere closely to it, we are safe ; if we leave it to do our own will, we shall infallibly be swallowed up.

The bad consequences of following self-will are very visible in regard of seculars ; perhaps we may know them by woful experience : that is, by the many disorders and sins we com-

mitted when we were in the world. Such as are always accustomed to have their own will, as princes and other great men, cannot bear contradiction nor suffer to be thwarted in their desires ; it makes the law of God and of the Church so uneasy to them that they cannot keep either, and so fall into the greatest disorders, and give way to their passions in every thing. Perhaps the faults it makes religious fall into are not so criminal, at least at first ; however the danger they expose us to is very great, and the harm we suffer is very visible. It creates vast uneasiness and disturbances of mind. These self-lovers meet with innumerable mortifications, and are perpetually tormented with remorse of conscience, apprehensions and fears. Self-love puts them continually upon doing irregular things, and taking certain liberties that are not to be suffered in a regular community ; this obliges superiors to make use of reprehensions and penances, which they, for want of a greater stock of virtue, are little able to bear. It makes them shun as much as they can all humble, laborious, painful offices, and throw all the burden on their sisters, which causes great uneasiness in a community : frequently disputes and breaches of charity when they meet with people as little mortified as themselves. They are generally not esteemed nor loved neither by their companions nor superiors ; they are slighted and laid aside ; hence follow many mortifying disappointments, complaints, murmurings, detractions, which render them not only uneasy but miserable.

Not to drive things to this extremity, what treasures of merit do these self-lovers lose ? they generally lose the merit of obedience in all their actions ; because when the thing commanded is hard and repugnant to sense, they either neglect it entirely, or perform it so imperfectly, that is, with so much unwillingness, so many excuses, complaints, and such grumbling, as to take away all the merit of the action. In things that are easy and agreeable to them they do not act by the principle of obedience, but upon natural motives ; what they do is without spirit, merely out of custom, or to please themselves. In every thing they do they seek themselves, not God ; therefore he will not reward them ; whilst others by doing the very same things lay up vast treasures of merits ; they at the



hour of death will find themselves destitute of good works, poor and naked, without any merit at all; their very mortifications will avail them little, not even their alms-deeds and fasts. You call upon the Lord, says the Prophet Isaiah, and the Lord does not hear: and he gives the reason why: "Because on your fast days your own will is found."

So hurtful a thing is self-will, so prejudicial to our soul, so displeasing to God, who is highly pleased with such as deny their own will for love of him, it is no doubt the most acceptable sacrifice we can offer to his divine majesty; because it is the most precious and the dearest thing we have. All other offerings we make to God, even of the vows of religion, are nothing in comparison with it; they are only preparations or dispositions to this grand sacrifice of the will: it is this that gives a value to all the rest, without it they are all nothing.

The sacrifice of self-will may be well compared with that of Abraham; our will is our Isaac; it is as dear to us and we are so tender of it as Isaac was to Abraham. It is our will that God will have offered up in sacrifice, not with intention to destroy it, but to revive it, and to heap innumerable blessings on us and on all who belong to us: for he can refuse no favour to them who will not spare their dearest son in compliance with his divine will. God will say to them what he said to Abraham, who little thought this great action of his would have the event it had. He little thought that after so express a command of God, and all things were prepared and ready for the sacrifice, that God would spare his son and accept of a ram in lieu of him.

If we are ready in obedience to the command of God to sacrifice our will, we shall experience quite a different event than we expected; not quite in the same manner Abraham did, for that would not be for our advantage. God will not be content with our willingness to sacrifice our will and then spare it; no; he will have it killed and consumed in the flames of divine love; but then he will take care that out of the ashes of self-will there will arise a new will—a perfect will; because wholly conformed to the will of God.

By mortifying our will we do not lose it, but only change it; we destroy its passions, malice, and stubbornness, and so reduce it to its primitive state of rectitude, in which it was

created; to a perfect conformity to the supreme will of all good wills — the most holy will of God. What a happy exchange it is to part with a malicious, perverse will, for a will that is upright, regular, and holy. To exchange a will that exposed us to so many dangers of offending God and losing our souls, for a will to secure our salvation, and draw down infinite blessings upon ourselves and such as appertain to us; for example, all that are under our care, or who live and converse with us,— whole nations will be blessed in our seed; God will multiply it like the stars. For so generous an act he will give so great a blessing to our pious labours in the service of our neighbour, that we shall flourish in spiritual children, or gain innumerable souls to God.

By transforming our will in the manner I have mentioned, we unite it to the will of God, or rather, we come to have one will common with him; that is, the same all-powerful, divine will, that with one *fiat* created the world, and produced all things out of nothing; by this means we become in a manner omnipotent; we gain by it a sovereign ascendancy over the souls of all we treat with and labour for; we produce in them what fruit we please, because no malice of creatures can resist the sovereign will of their Lord and Creator. Nor is this self-denial and breaking of our wills pleasing to God only in heroic actions, like that of Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac: it is very meritorious and beneficial to us in the daily occasions we have of condescending to others in things of no great amount.

God is infinitely pleased with every little victory we gain over self-will; he rewards with extraordinary favour every little compliance with the will of another. How much was God pleased with Abraham for his condescension to his nephew Lot. Both their families being very great, there happened such difference between their servants that there was no living any longer peaceably together: it was necessary to separate their goods, and to divide their lands. All the country thereabouts was theirs; and it belonged to Abraham, as elder, uncle, and chief, to choose first; but he, in condescension to Lot, gave him the first choice; who having chosen all the fertile country about the river Jordan for his share, Abraham was content with the worst part. What was the event? Lot following

his own will, his country was soon destroyed by the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah; whereas, Abraham's grew into a great and numerous nation, in reward of this act of abnegation of his own will in compliance with Lot.

How many occasions have we every day to practise this virtue of self-abnegation with great increase of merit, yet in things of so small moment in appearance, that we can hardly be perceived by others to do it? How many opportunities have you in time of recreation of condescending to your sisters? How often may you take on yourself a burden that would otherwise have fallen on them? How many other occasions are there of breaking your own will, in not satisfying curiosity, gratifying the senses, and the like?

That spiritual man Blossius puts this case: Two, says he, are walking in a field, and see a beautiful flower. One has a mind to gather it; but, reflecting that it is more meritorious to break his own will, lets it alone. The other, without reflection, gathers it and smells it. The difference between these two is as wide as heaven is distant from the earth. He infers from this, that, if the merit of so small a self-denial be so pleasing to God, how great must their merit be that condemn all the satisfactions of this world for the love of God.

A religious man, says he, ought always to have those or similar words in his mouth, or say them interiorly in his heart: "Not my will, but thine be done."

We read of one of the fathers of the Society, named Sanchas, who was observed never to touch any fruit or flower in the garden. When asked why he did so, his answer was, that a religious man ought always to be like a covetous merchant, who never slips any opportunity of increasing his store.

Our greatest care, in the practice of abnegation of our will, must be in regard of holy obedience. Saint Ignatius particularly recommends and requires this of us in his admirable epistle on this virtue; for we are not only to show our obedience by executing the thing commanded readily and fully, but also willingly, making the will of the superioress ours. Nor will it be hard for us to do this if, as the Rule commands us, we regard the order of the superioress as a declaration of the will of God.

If once, with the assistance of divine grace, we can bring ourselves to have no other will than that of God, the abnegation of our own depraved will will give us no uneasiness : thus we shall always do our own will, yet lay up inestimable treasures of merit here, and of endless glory and felicity hereafter, which is the greatest of all comforts, the most advantageous thing that can happen to us.

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#### FIFTH EXHORTATION ON THE EIGHTEENTH RULE.

“THE more easily to arrive at this degree of perfection, so much to be valued in a spiritual life, let every one with a more than common diligence seek after an increase of self-denial and, if possible, a perpetual mortification on all occasions. For this purpose, in the performance of humble and abject offices, let them show the greatest willingness for those which nature most abhors.”

Having exhorted you to mortify self-will, it now remains to exhort you to the mortification of self-judgment, or, in other words, to persuade you to have great care of all stiffness, and much more obstinacy, in your own opinion and sentiments. Nothing more dangerous in a spiritual life, especially for beginners, than to be wedded to their own ideas. The devil desires no better play. He will by no means bring them sooner to their ruin than by persuading them to neglect the counsel of their superioress or director, and to adhere to their own opinion.

Stiffness of judgment is a spiritual distemper of our soul, which is more dangerous than self-love, and so much harder to be cured, that it almost seems incurable : however, with the assistance of divine grace, it may be done, provided a faithful coöperation be not wanting on our side.



For your entertainment to-day, I will first speak of the origin and nature of this vice ; then, of the pernicious effects of it ; lastly, of the means and manner of correcting it.

The understanding is the most noble power of the soul ; its object is truth. Though it is not free, as the will is, yet it is endowed with a prerogative of discerning, which the will has not. In the state of original justice it was endowed with so much knowledge and light, that the will could not mistake in following its direction ; therefore, the sin of our first parents cannot be attributed to any defect of their understanding, but only to the bad use of their free will.

Since the fall of Adam, man's reason or understanding is so much damnified that we cannot always rely on it, especially in our own cause, for it is involved in great ignorance, not only of supernatural, but of natural things ; that small knowledge that still remains is often darkened by gross and thick mists, arising from concupiscence, sensual appetites, and violent passions ; this makes our reason liable to very great mistakes and dangerous errors, and become incapable of itself of judging right. This plainly appears by the diversity of opinions in all human sciences, in which we find doctors so very much divided, that we may almost say, "As many heads, so many different opinions ;" nor is this diversity of opinions only in hard or abstruse matters, we see it in the most easy and obvious things. How strongly do people differ in their judgment in temporal affairs and business ; you will hardly find two of the same mind ; they can never entirely agree on the same thing.

If it is so hard to make a right judgment in those natural and obvious things, how uncertain are our sentiments of spiritual matters, of things that are above the reach of nature and belong to another world ; at the same time an error in these matters, nay, a mistake, may be of dangerous consequence, our salvation may depend thereon. What rashness, what folly, to set up for our own guide, to adhere obstinately to our own opinion in matters so obscure as these are ! yet of such importance and of such danger ! If it is the part of a wise man not to trust to his own judgment, especially in his own cause, even in worldly affairs, it must be the height of folly to depend entirely on it where eternal happiness and welfare is concerned. This is a truth that regards all, even the most ancient and most

experienced : how much more does it concern beginners and novices, who have neither sufficient knowledge nor experience in a spiritual life to be directors to themselves or others.

The vice of obstinacy in one's own opinion arises generally from pride as its chief source ; that is, from a vain and too great conceit of one's self ; for none are so obstinate in their opinions and notions as proud people. Nothing blinds the understanding more than pride, which fills it with such a crowd of vain thoughts, so great a conceit of itself, that it cannot conceive itself subject to error, nor understand why it should submit to others less capable of judging than itself. Proud people think none so capable of judging as themselves ; therefore, they will have all to submit to what they say. They are always certain, always positive in their assertions. They can bear no contradiction ; are always in the right. They cannot submit to consult others ; they are not capable of receiving advice. Hence it comes that they always remain in ignorance, and have no means left to improve. For this reason their case is deplorable.

A cure is never more desperate than when one is insensible of the evil ; for in spiritual diseases of the soul it is much the same as in diseases of the body. A man that fancies he is well, that he ails nothing, will not easily hearken to the physician ; much less will he give himself the trouble of taking proper remedies, which generally are not only unpleasant, but painful and loathsome.

Hence, nothing harder than to correct an obstinate judgment, because it is insensible of its fault. Such always think they are in the right—that all are mistaken besides themselves.

Saint Bernard calls this obstinacy of judgment a leprosy, nay, the worst of leprosies, because the most hidden—consequently the hardest to be cured. I will make use of the same comparison to explain some of its pernicious effects.

A leprosy is first in the skin, and thereby will render the greatest beauties deformed and ugly. If not cured in time, it corrupts the whole mass of blood, and brings a general corruption through the body. It is a very infectious distemper ; therefore lepers are not to be suffered to live in towns, but are separated from society.

In the same manner, let a person be of ever so good parts,

conversation, and humour, if she be always stiff in her own opinion, will never submit to others, but will have all submit to her, her company will become disagreeable and troublesome. If she do not correct herself, she will fall into innumerable faults of contention with her equals, grumbling and murmuring against her superioress, and the like.

This vice is contagious, and often infects others ; for from this pride and obstinacy of judgment, discord is raised among brethren, dissension in communities, rebellion in the state, schism and heresy in the Church ; for, as Saint Bernard says, these people are destroyers of unity, enemies of peace, are void of charity ; they are full of vanity, very conceited, and great admirers of themselves.

None are more obnoxious to the illusions of the enemy than these people ; for, on the one side, their pride and other passions are subject so to blind and confound their own reason, that they cannot discern evil from good. On the other, they will not permit themselves to be directed and guided by others ; and, to complete their misfortune, they are deprived of supernatural lights, because God will not communicate his favours with the proud.

These obstinate people are either of a wide or strait conscience. If they are of a large conscience, the devil will not fail to make it larger. He will not fail to suggest so plausible reasons for it, so suitable with the inclinations of her humour and passions, as will convince her that some mortal sins are no more than venial, and that venial sins are not so much as imperfections.

The devil is cunning and subtle enough to do this when one is destitute of those supernatural lights that are imparted to the humble, but are refused to the proud and obstinate. A depraved will is easily induced to embrace and follow what is represented to it as good, and is at the same time agreeable to sensuality. How many and how great disorders do flow from hence ! What excuses of all kinds ! what disorders ! what wickednesses ! Great and scandalous disorders are often committed by those people of a large conscience, and at the same time wedded to their own sentiments. They live without any regard to discipline ; they speak freely against their superiors, and are generally contentious with their equals in conversation. They make



bold with their Rules on all occasions, and are far from being scrupulous in regard of their vows, especially of holy poverty and obedience. And if the superioress be obliged to take notice of their irregularities, they will not fail to complain of her as weak, indiscreet, severe, and imprudent; for, abounding in their own sense, they condemn all that differ from them in sentiments.

With such as are of a nice and delicate conscience the enemy takes quite a different method. He will represent to them in lively colours the great rigour of God's secret judgments, the strict account they are to give of every thought, word, and deed. By inflaming their imagination, he will magnify small faults into grievous sins, and indifferent actions into great defects. Thus he will fill them with vain fears, anxious scruples, and despairing thoughts. These will put them on a perpetual rack, on a thousand ineffectual methods of calming their disturbed minds. Then, to prevent their receiving any ease or benefit from the advice and direction of others, he persuades them that every one is the best judge of the state of her own soul,—that every one must answer for herself at the day of judgment,—that a confessor or superioress may be mistaken, either for want of sufficient learning or experience,—that the confessor may be prejudiced with so favourable an opinion of his penitent, through a mistaken charity, or because the circumstances of her sin were not duly expressed. What is the consequence? In this disturbance of mind it is impossible to satisfy herself. These preventions will not suffer her to have any satisfaction from her superioress or director. She can neither apply to her devotions, nor perform her ordinary actions and duties as she ought. Then the devil will not fail to torment her mind with desponding thoughts. If she be not very much on her guard, he will push her on to despair of ever being able to avoid sin or to save her soul. The next step he will tempt her to make, is, to murmur against holy providence, to seek to make herself happy, at least in this world, by abandoning herself to pleasure and giving way to her inordinate desires and sensual appetite.

Do not think this an exaggeration, or pushing the thing too far: it is what the devil aims at, and to what he has more than once brought unfortunate people; and all this because they were stiff in their judgment, would not submit and let them-



selves be guided by others. Nor can it be denied but that every step I have now mentioned is a natural disposition to the next.

With how much reason does Ecclesiasticus warn those that are alone, or, what is much the same, will guide themselves by their own lights, and not hearken to the good advice of others. For, when they fall, they have no one to help them up again; that is, they will not humble themselves to ask advice. If a kind friend give it, they will not receive nor follow it; therefore they are in no better case than they who live alone.

What remedy for so great an evil? The cure, I own, is very difficult, because, as I said, these people are blinded with pride, and do not see their fault. They may truly be called blind, because they cannot discern what every one sees besides themselves. For example, they do not see their folly in adhering to their own judgment rather than to the judgment of innumerable others, both more ancient in religion, more learned, more experienced, and wiser than they. They do not see the danger of mistaking and being deluded; yet, what is more plain and evident?

The first means to be made use of is prayer; for, till they see their folly and are sensible of their danger, they will not take their cure seriously to heart. They must, then, fervently apply to the Father of lights to dissipate those dark clouds which their pride and passions have raised.

The blind man in the Gospel being asked by our Saviour, what he would have him do for him, he presently made answer, "Lord, that I may see." It was his sight he wanted most; therefore he would ask for nothing else; his blindness was his greatest misfortune; he could think of nothing but to be cured of it. Let all obstinate and self-conceited people make use of the same prayer, and with the like lively faith of being cured; let them cry out, as he did; "*O Jesu, fili David,*" &c.: he thought himself truly miserable, otherwise he could not have pressed so hard of our Lord to take pity of him. Let their prayer be accompanied with profound humility, with a deep sense of their misfortune and misery: let them do this, and no doubt but he who is the true light will illuminate their darkness, make them see their fault and be sensible of their danger.

The second means to correct this vice is, often to consider and ponder well the dangers and inconveniences they expose themselves to by this stiffness of judgment. They will be more sensible of this if they consider it in others, and think how much they dislike it,—how much they are mortified in the company of such as are of this temper, that will have all think as they do, will have all submit to them; how troublesome and disagreeable their conversation is; how apt they are to raise warm disputes, to lash others, to disturb peace and unity in a community. How often do such censure the proceedings of superiors, despise their orders, grumble and murmur against them; by which due subordination is broken, obedience destroyed, factions and sedition caused, to the great disturbance, if not subversion, of discipline and government?

You may reflect on the great advantages a religious family reaps from an humble submission and a ready compliance with one another; what peace and unity among equals, what a quick and exact obedience to superiors, what heavenly content and harmony, will there be in a house; for, this agreeing in judgment will infallibly produce a perfect union of wills and sincere love and esteem for one another, consequently all the blessings which always accompany, and are the delightful fruits of charity.

Saint Ignatius earnestly exhorts us in the Fifty-fourth Rule, to be all of one and the same mind, to say one and the same thing, to avoid with all possible care diversity of opinion and sentiments. He looks upon such as are of an obstinate temper, abounding in their own sense, and hard to submit, as unfit for religion, dangerous persons to any community; therefore, by no means to be received; wherefore, in the Constitutions, he excludes such.

You may consider how imprudent and foolish a thing it is in young people to be stiff and positive in their judgments. How many ancient, learned, and experienced men have erred,—nay, by their wilful obstinacy, have apostatized from their faith and become heresiarchs? The ripeness of their judgment, their great learning and experience, rendered them far more capable of judging than what young people can pretend to; yet they were mistaken, and, by a just judgment of God, for their greater confusion, as well as condemnation, were permitted to fall into so

gross errors as the meanest capacities would be ashamed of;—notwithstanding, they were fully persuaded that they were in the right, as much as you can be. If they were mistaken, you may be so too. You have as much and more reason to suspect yourselves being in the wrong; consequently, you are more rash in relying on your own judgment.

To correct effectually any vicious habit, there is nothing better than to exercise acts contrary to the vice. Let all, then, accustom themselves to acts of diffidence in themselves; let them often ask advice of others—sometimes, for their greater humiliation, of their inferiors.

In indifferent things or matters of little moment, when the evidence of the known truth does not hinder you, endeavour to submit your judgment to that of others. Let not your reasons to the contrary, though they may seem more weighty and stronger, hinder your submission. Though they should be in the wrong, the prejudice truth would suffer by your submission is not comparable to the spiritual advantage you will gain by overcoming yourself, breaking self-judgment and your own will: at least, hold your peace; do not contend; for it is very doubtful whether by contention you will convince your sister, but you may be sure that charity will suffer by it. Good breeding obliges people in the world not to contradict, though the thing said be ever so improbable; shall not a virtuous motive be as prevalent with religious.

If we are to submit our judgment to our equals, much more are we to our elders and superiors, especially in spiritual matters, in things appertaining to the soul; young people have great reason to suspect themselves and no less to believe, that their superiors are more conversant in them, for they have been longer in the school of virtue, have studied it more, and have had greater experience. For scrupulous people it is absolutely necessary to submit to the director or superioress; to depend entirely and follow in every thing the advice given them, though it appear ever so contrary to their judgment, even to the dictates of their conscience. Scruples are apt to disturb the mind, to fill their imagination with so many foolish fancies, to disquiet their soul with so many vain and groundless fears that they have not a free use of their understanding, therefore are not competent judges of the state of their souls. If they want

perfect submission to their director they remain exposed to all the inconveniences I have mentioned, to innumerable deceits and delusions of the enemy. They will never procure peace and quiet of conscience, and cannot be cured of their scruples ; but will always be unhappy here, and in great danger of being so for all eternity. All which reasons being duly considered, let us take seriously to heart the mortifying and curbing of self-judgment, by complying as much as possible with the sentiments of our equals, and having an absolute submission in all things to our superiors.

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#### SIXTH EXHORTATION ON THE EIGHTEENTH RULE.

“IN the performance of humble and abject offices, it is advisable to show the greatest willingness for those which nature most abhors, in case one be ordered to enter on such employments.”

In the preceding Rules, Saint Ignatius speaks in general of humiliations, self-denial, and mortifications of our flesh, senses, passions, will, and understanding, and delivered in them those principles whereby we are to govern ourselves on all occasions of exercising these virtues. But there is a vast difference between speculation and practice,—between conceiving resolutions in general, and putting them in execution on particular occasions, which daily occur in the exercises of a religious life.

Saint Ignatius begins in this Rule to mark out those things wherein he would in particular have his children humble and mortify themselves, namely, by accepting and performing willingly humble and abject offices. He will have us in these seek our greater abnegation ; therefore, to be most desirous and ready to embrace such as are the meanest and the most repug-



nant to sense. By employing ourselves in these, we shall never want occasion of mortifying our sensual appetite and passions ; consequently, we may always have an opportunity of complying with what is recommended to us in the Eighteenth Rule.

I will exhort you to-day to an exact observance of the second part of this Rule. To make you better affected towards humble offices and employments, I will first show how proper and efficacious a means they are to acquire the virtue of humility, a perfect contempt of ourselves, likewise a complete victory over sensuality. Then, to encourage you to undertake and to perform them willingly, I will propose the example of our blessed Saviour and his saints.

We read in the book of Kings, that David being the youngest of all his brothers, his father kept him at home to mind his flock, and sent his other sons to the war ; in which humble station he did some actions which gained him more credit and a greater reputation for strength and valour, than any thing his brothers did in the war ; for, a bear coming out of the woods to devour a lamb, he fought with it and killed it. Another time, a lion setting at one of his father's sheep, he snatched the sheep from him, and taking the lion by the jaws, strangled him. Thus would God dispose David for greater victories, first over Goliath, afterwards over the armies of the Philistines.

This resembles in some manner what we see observed in the Institute, which employs her younger children in the noviceship in the exercise of mean and humble offices, to ground them well by this means in all sorts of virtues, but particularly in true humility, in a generous contempt of themselves, and the spirit of mortification.

This is looked on as the best preparation for any noble enterprise afterwards : none are more fit for such functions than such as are well grounded in mortification and humility.

During this time that you are particularly exercised in humble offices you will not want occasions of showing your courage and great zeal for God's honour and your own perfection. There will always be a bear and a lion at hand to set upon and to snatch from you these humble employments and offices. The bear of sensuality will first attack you, especially in such employments as are most repugnant to sense, by reason of their nauseousness and pain ; sensuality on these occa-

sions is very apt to rebel, to cause great repugnance, and to tempt young beginners. Unless you have great courage and stand resolutely against it, it will make you avoid many occasions of exercising yourself in such actions, consequently it will rob you of the merit of them ; or else, when obedience enjoins them, this bear of sensuality will be ready with excuses, which, if not allowed of by superiors, will make you apt to murmur and grumble against them, and perform these offices with great uneasiness and trouble of mind, which will rob you wholly or in part of the advantages you might have received from them.

Pride will second sensuality, and set upon you with the force, fierceness, and rage of a lion. It will suggest a thousand specious pretences and reasons to persuade you that these humble offices are beneath a person of your education, parts, quality, and the like ; that they better become some servants, scullions, or such as have not been brought up to better things. It will represent these offices as of little or no benefit either to your neighbour or yourself. It will endeavour to persuade you that you may spend your time much better in your studies, devotions, helping your neighbour, and the like ; by these you improve yourselves both in virtue and learning, fit yourselves for greater employments, and are qualified to undertake great enterprises for the credit of the Institute, the glory of God, and benefit of souls. On the contrary, what improvement will you make by sweeping the house, serving at table, or in the kitchen, washing dishes, or doing the infirmarian's office ? Do these base offices inspire noble and generous thoughts ? or rather, do they not debase the mind, accustom it to mean actions, and render the soul incapable of rising high ?

Those who would always crawl upon their hands would lose the use of their feet ; those who bend down come at last that they cannot walk straight. With these or such like fallacious arguments does this fierce lion attack young beginners in the way of virtue ; if they are not on their guard, firm and resolute in their vocation, it will make them ashamed of humble employments, it will create a dislike of them, make them avoid them as much as they can, condemn the use of them, and if they do not choke the lion soon, it will make them quit the state of life in which they are practised.

I call these fallacious arguments, because, though fair and plausible in appearance, there is no truth in them. These humble employments are of great use and benefit, not only to the particulars who are employed in them, but to the whole Institute, likewise to our neighbour, for whom we labour.

The foundation of a stately building, though covered in the earth, is a very necessary and useful part of it. The deeper it lies, and the larger it is, the stronger and securer is the fabric. Humility is the foundation of virtue, and the higher the tower of perfection is that we design to raise upon it, the more profound must our humility also be.

Without deep and solid humility, neither our studies, devotions, or functions, will avail us any thing. All our virtue and labours will fall to ruin without it, as a stately building will tumble into a heap of rubbish, that has no foundation.

We do not lessen ourselves or become base-minded by humble employments; for, the less we are in our own eyes, the greater we are in the eyes of God. Those who despise the world and trample upon it, are above the world. Such as cannot content themselves with worldly honours, the vain applause and esteem of men, but seek to be great in the kingdom of heaven, such are not to be esteemed low-spirited, but to have a large and generous heart, a noble and great soul.

In the service of men many actions may be esteemed vile: in the service of God, all is great. The viler the thing is we do for God's sake—the more repugnant to sensuality, the more heroic it becomes, and more to be admired and esteemed.

Can any action be thought mean, the reward of which is a crown of glory? What more honourable than to overcome oneself? — to gain a signal victory over pride and sensuality? We do not find that any are less esteemed for being humble, or that any one has a less opinion of the saints for having exercised themselves in humble employments. On the contrary, they are more esteemed for it. We are so far from thinking one undervalues himself by so doing, that the greater the person is, the more admirable is his humility. Saint Francis Borgia, for example, has gained greater reputation and esteem in the world by serving in the kitchen and washing dishes, than he would have done if he had remained Duke of Gandia. His heroic virtues and great actions for the glory of God and the good of

his neighbour, plainly show that these vile employments do not occasion mean thoughts, but enlarge the heart, render it bold and resolute in the service of God, and inspire the soul with most noble and generous sentiments.

As nothing gives greater courage to an army than victory, so nothing excites good religious more to fight manfully against all their ghostly enemies, than to have fought successfully and gained a complete victory over sensuality and pride.

You are to reflect that these humble offices in the noviceship are not designed by superiors for trial of your virtue only during your noviciate. No; they are to serve for your whole life; they are to help for laying the foundation of that noble building you are to raise afterwards: they are to prepare you to suffer harder things when you shall be employed in assisting the sick; they are to accustom you to bear humiliations willingly and cheerfully, that the occupations of catechising poor children, and the like, may not shock you; for these are the proper functions of the Institute; in these we may be employed all our lives. They are religiously practised by us, according to our Institute; therefore it is very necessary we should beforehand be inured to take pains, to suffer, and to bear humiliations, to the end we may more readily and with more alacrity apply to these duties.

If you are nice and delicate now, and unwilling to suffer pain and labour, you will find excuses without end to exempt yourselves afterwards from such employments, as sense will abhor. If you have not a sufficient stock of humility to do the humble offices of the house, you will lose innumerable occasions of doing good, vast treasures of merits, with great loss to your neighbour, no less prejudice to the service of God and dishonour to the Institute. It will not be amiss when you find a natural repugnance or abhorrence to certain offices, which by reason of their nauseousness, are very offensive to our senses.

It often happens that we must assist, and this for a considerable time together, the sick of the most loathsome distempers. It will often be necessary, for the salvation of their souls, to spend a great deal of time at their bedsides, exhorting them to bear patiently their sufferings, comforting them, and giving them good advice.

To perform your duty efficaciously and with edification, you



may be obliged to place your face sometimes so near theirs, that their breath will almost poison you. It may be necessary to hold a basin to them when they vomit, to clean their linen, and dress their wounds.

What will those nice and delicate novices say to this, who cannot bear the steam of a wash-house, the smoke of a kitchen, who find it difficult to put their hands into greasy water, or the like? How will they afterwards be able to overcome themselves on these occasions, wherein so many of our sisters have and do daily give such proofs of an extraordinary virtue and complete victory over sensuality.

How far are such off from having that resolution and courage which Saint Francis Xavier and others had, when, to obtain an entire victory over sensuality, they with great humility and charity sucked the putrefaction out of the ulcers of those they served; which kind of heroic mortification is generally attended with miraculous cures, God being pleased to testify thereby how acceptable these generous acts are to him.

It is very certain that if people have not a large stock of humility, the more they improve in learning, find themselves endowed with rare talents, and seem qualified for the greatest employments; they will think much to be employed in catechising children, in instructing poor people, or in serving in the infirmary, and thus taken off from governing, teaching, and the like. Their pride will be apt to make them look upon the former employments as beneath them, consequently will push them on to make excuses and to decline them; or if they cannot avoid them, they will perform them very unwillingly, with repugnance, discontentedly. Perhaps they will murmur and blame the superioress for making them lose their time in so vile things, as might be as well done by another of a meaner capacity.

It is to conquer this pride and vanity, to obtain perfect humility, that the Institute from the very beginning endeavours to make us well affected to humble employments; for, as all spiritual writers teach, as well as experience, nothing helps more to acquire profound humility than the practice of humble actions and offices.

Saint Bernard says, humiliation is the way to humility, as suffering is the way to peace of mind or patience, and reading to

knowledge. Saint Basil gives the reason: the disposition or habit of the soul is conformable to the exercises and studies it relates to: it puts on, as it were, the figure and likeness of its actions; thus we see that people employed in great employments and charges often become high-minded; such as apply to war become fierce and warlike; merchants who are always intent upon improving their stock, become avaricious. In the same manner, by applying to the exercise of mean and humble offices, our souls become humble and meek.

Saint Dorotheus remarks, that one sitting upon an ass is otherwise affected than if he were sitting on a throne, and has quite different thoughts when richly clad than when in poor clothes. Thus you see of how great importance this Rule is, how necessary to employ ourselves in the noviceship in humble offices; for this reason Saint Ignatius so much recommended the use of them. For your comfort and encouragement, reflect a little upon the example our blessed Saviour has given us in this kind. You all know that of the thirty-three years he was pleased to remain on the earth, only three were spent in public, in teaching, preaching, and establishing the New Law: the other thirty were spent in private life, to teach us how necessary it is to prepare ourselves well for an active life. He had no need of any preparation, but we have; and we could not better prepare ourselves than by following his example, and living as he did.

According to the account we have in the Gospel of his hidden life, it was mostly spent in mean and humble offices, in a perfect subjection and obedience to his holy parents—our blessed Lady and Saint Joseph. All holy fathers and saints agree, that during his stay at Nazareth he employed himself in the carpenter's trade and the humble offices of the house, helping Saint Joseph in the one and his virgin mother in the other. He brought and carried wood, helped to cut, saw, or plane it, as Saint Joseph bade him. He swept the house, made the fire, washed the dishes, and the like. All this he did, not for a short time, but for many years, with as much care and assiduity as if he had come into the world for no other end.

What an astonishing sight was this to the angels! but what an extraordinary example of humility was it to man! How mean soever these actions may seem, considered by themselves,

being now sanctified by our Saviour's example, they are become holy and precious in the eyes of God. Since the King of glory thought them a fit occupation for himself, we must not be ashamed of them, but have just reason to esteem and value them extremely. As these were the daily exercises of his life, we may conclude that it was by these he increased daily in the love and esteem of men, and in the favour and grace of God. How true then is it that the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve. He truly came to serve others, since he actually spent the greatest part of his life in serving his parents.

How great an esteem, then, ought we to have of humble offices! How piously ought we to be affected to them! How willing and desirous to be employed in them, that so we may the better resemble our blessed Saviour, and become daily nearer to perfection and more pleasing to God.

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### FIRST EXHORTATION ON THE NINETEENTH RULE.

“LET all endeavour to have a right intention, not only in their state of life, but in all particulars.”

We are admonished in this Rule with great application and attention to use our endeavours to procure a right intention, not only in our state of life, but in the performance of our daily actions, even the least. In other terms, Saint Ignatius would have us very careful and watchful to direct all our actions to God, desiring and seeking in all of them with great sincerity to serve and please his divine goodness out of a motive of pure love, and a deep sense of gratitude for these inestimable blessings we have and hope to receive from his bountiful hands.

This is the intention he recommends and prescribes in this Rule. To comply with it, it is not enough to have a general

intention, whereby we direct our state of life to the honour and glory of God ; we must in all the particular actions of the day have this same great motive before our eyes. All our thoughts, words, and deeds are to proceed from it : all are to be stamped with it. No human or terrene consideration must have any share in them ; no carnal affection, no vanity, no passion.

It was this the Apostle Saint Paul recommended so much to the Christians of Corinth. “ Whether you eat or drink, or whether you do any other thing, do all things for the glory of God.” He advises them to perform the most indifferent actions of the day with a good intention, directing their eating and drinking to the glory of God. Can any action have less relation to God than these, which are only natural — not human, but common to man and beast ? Yet these, and all other natural actions, are, as the Apostle advises, to be directed to the honour and glory of God.

If Christians are to do this, much more ought religious, who make profession of following the evangelical counsels, and wholly dedicate themselves to God in a state of perfection, much more ought they to take care to have a right intention in every thing they do.

I will first speak of the influence an intention has upon our actions ; second, how pleasing it is to God ; third, in what manner we are to practise it.

To act with an intention is to act for an end, which is only proper to rational creatures ; for the brute animals do many things that we do ; yet, for want of understanding, they do not propose to themselves any end in them, but are carried on to the performance of them by force of a natural instinct, as philosophers call it, with which the Author of nature has endowed them for the preservation of their lives and species.

Such, then, degrade themselves, and live like beasts, who perform their actions without thought, without directing them to some end ; having no other reason for doing them than because they have a custom of it, or because they are agreeable or pleasing to sense.

When we act for a bad end, we distinguish ourselves from beasts, who cannot act for any end, but we do not act like religious, nor even like Christians ; for, Saint Paul says, all Christians are to act for no other end than the glory of God.



We may do our actions to please God, or for his glory, out of different motives ; for example, out of fear of punishment, hope of reward, or pure love. All three motives are very holy, and render our actions pleasing to God ; but that of pure love, or perfect charity, is perfect ; therefore Saint Ignatius recommends it to us in this Rule, seeking in them, that is, in our particular actions, always sincerely to serve and please the divine goodness for itself, and for the charity and singular benefits wherewith he has prevented us, rather than for fear of pain or hope of reward.

To teach us how sincere and pure he would have our love be, he goes on in this Rule, "In all things let them seek God, casting off, as much as may be, the love of creatures, that they may place their whole affection on the Creator of them." This right intention is to be so directed to God, out of a motive of pure love, that it must have no inclination or tendency to any creature. Even in acts of mercy or charity to our neighbour, we are only to regard God, whom we contemplate, love, and praise in his creatures, loving him in all, and them all in him, according to his most holy and divine will. If our intention has any inclination to creatures, it is not right, no more than a line that bends to either side : many lines may be drawn from one point to another, but all are crooked except one. There may be infinite crooked lines drawn from two extremes, but there can be but one straight one ; this mathematicians define to be the shortest line that can be drawn ; it is the shortest, because it bends to neither side, but tends directly to the other point : so our intention is not right, but crooked, if it be not immediately directed to God, without any inclination to creatures.

Our Saviour explicated the nature of a right or pure intention by the eye, which he calls the lamp of our body : if your eye be strong and clear, your body will be enlightened—that is, you will behold objects truly as they are in themselves. Persons who have bad and weak sight are often deceived,—things appear otherwise than they are ; they often see double—that is, fancy they see what they do not ; if the crystalline humour be tainted with any colour, all the objects seem of that colour ; if it be overcharged with humours, the objects appear dim and as it were shaded. The intention is the eye of our action ; if it be pure and sincere, if it be not vitiated with any passion,

or disorderly affection for creatures, it will not be liable to mistakes in regarding God's will and pleasure; it will seek his honour and glory with sincerity and truth, and have no other motive in what we do than what is religious and holy.

The intention distinguishes and specifies our actions, rendering them virtuous or vicious, natural or supernatural. The best actions we can do are of no merit if our intention be only natural; the smallest and most ordinary deserve a crown of glory when animated by a supernatural motive: the most holy actions become sinful when our intention is vicious; and actions that are little less than sinful, become virtuous when our intention is right. This shows what influence the intention has upon our actions, consequently upon our lives, since they become religious or secular, holy or profane, good or bad, according to our intention, which may be compared to the royal stamp which is put on money, and enhances the value of base metal, of brass, and copper, as well as of silver and gold; it renders our meanest actions which have the least relation to virtue, current coin in the kingdom of heaven, and a sufficient price to purchase a crown of glory. It is the very soul that gives a supernatural life to natural actions; it is the source of virtue here and of glory hereafter.

Whence comes it, that in a religious community some make daily so great progress in virtue, and leave others so far behind in the way of perfection, notwithstanding their employments and way of living is the same? Whence comes it that in heaven there will be as great a distinction among the blessed in degrees of glory, as there is among the stars for brightness and magnitude? It will proceed from the great difference of the intention wherewith the fervent and tepid perform their ordinary actions and offices; for God does not so much regard the things we do, as the intention for which we do them: he is more pleased with a good will than a precious gift; he values more the sincerity of our heart than any offering we can make. Many of the Scribes and Pharisees put large contributions into the treasury of the Temple, but the poor widow's two mites were valued by our Saviour above their rich gifts; though the Apostles had little to leave, yet leaving it with a generous heart to follow Christ, deserved for it a hundred-fold here, and life everlasting in reversion for their reward.

Saint Ambrose says, the love wherewith we make our offerings renders them more or less valuable in the sight of God. Saint Austin, in a discourse on these words of the Psalm, "Thou art my God, because thou standest not in need of my goods," says, our services are of no benefit to him; he is neither richer nor poorer, gainer nor loser by them. Whatever we do, God is always the same; we do not spare his bread when we fast, nor is it we who preserve his goods when we watch; he becomes not more holy by our prayers, nor richer by our gifts. As we have nothing worth presenting to God, he does not regard so much the gift, as the affection and love with which we offer it: the greatest and most precious things we can offer to him are nothing without this, and with it our least and meanest offerings are most valuable and precious in his sight.

A right intention requires that the thing we do be directed wholly to the honour and glory of God, and this with a generous and free heart, out of a motive of pure love and a deep sense of gratitude for the many inestimable favours we daily receive from his bountiful hands. This intention Saint Ignatius practised in every thing he did. "Ad majorem Dei gloriam," was the motto he always had before his eyes; he had it when he wrote our holy Rule and Constitutions; the same he often recommends to us in keeping them. You also see how much it imports to have this right intention in all our particular actions, since the worth and merit of them depend thereon. Let us now consider how we may effectually reduce what I have said to practice.

We are, first, carefully to endeavour to remove all obstacles—that is, to overcome our passions, and to root out all disorderly affections to creatures. Of all our passions, self-love and the desire of praise are most to be feared; they, of all others, hinder most purity of intention; they are the deepest ingrafted in our nature, and will infallibly have a share in our actions, if we are not very watchful and keep them under with a strong hand. Self-lovers will seek to please themselves in every thing they do, for, according to Saint Austin, love is the bias that rules all our motions. As self-love is directly opposite to the love of God, it does not direct our actions to him, but from him; it is very ingenious and full of invention; it will find out a thousand stratagems to compass its ends, to



bring every thing to its own desires, satisfaction, or profit. In people of a tender conscience, of a good and virtuous disposition, it will not at first incline them to things that are criminal, for it abhors anxiety or trouble of mind, as well as pain and uneasiness of body : it will often push us on to good works, to observe our Rules, and to live regularly, with a plausible pretence of serving and pleasing Almighty God. It will often so blind us, that we really think we have no other intention in the discharge of our duty than the honour and glory of God. But if this were the only motive we acted by, we should make no distinction between work and work, office and office, one duty and another ; we should perform with equal promptitude, exactness, and constancy, things that are hard, painful, and repugnant to sense, as we do those that are easy and agreeable : or, if frail nature found any repugnance in such things, we should, with resolution and courage, offer violence to ourselves, and make use of all convenient helps to bring ourselves to a faithful compliance with our duty.

The natural repugnance and difficulty we feel on these occasions may show that the passion of self-love is not dead in us, but it does not prove that we have not conquered it ; our love for God may be very sincere and strong, our intention very right. If we find that the love of ease makes us avoid such offices as are hard, or makes us perform them superficially or by halves, perhaps with impatience and grumbling, we have just reason to suspect our best actions, and to fear that our intention, even in them, is not right,—that some natural consideration has a share in our motive,—that self-love has, at least in part, the direction of our actions.

If the love of God were the sole motive we acted by, it would move us to a compliance as well in things that are hard as in such as are easy and agreeable, though perhaps with some difficulty, by reason of the opposition of self-love, which is not entirely dead in us. As it makes us seek our ease and satisfaction in every thing, there arises the passion of vain glory, or an inordinate desire of the esteem and applause of men. This is a dangerous vice and directly opposite to a right intention. As this directs all to the honour and greater glory of God, so the other inclines us violently, yet almost imperceptibly, to seek in all things our own praise and glory. This passion is



most injurious to God, because it robs him of the glory that accrues from our best and most holy actions, and us of all the merit of them, and is highly pernicious to body and soul : suffer it not to have any share in your good actions, lest it deprive you of them.

Be careful, says our blessed Saviour in the Gospel, you do not your good works to be seen by men : if you do, you will receive no reward for them from your heavenly Father. We must not pretend to be twice rewarded for the same thing ; if we prefer here the commendations of men before God's divine will and pleasure, we shall have no title to a reward hereafter. It will be said to us : " You have received your reward ;" because vain glory is a subtle vice, and often insinuates itself into our best actions without our perceiving it, unless we are continually on our guard.

Let me recommend you daily to examine your intention by the following Rules, especially in things that are honourable and proper to gain a great name in the world. First, Examine whether you are equally content to be employed in humble offices, as in things more honourable. Second, When you are employed in them, do you perform them with the like diligence and exactness. Third, Whether you leave off honourable offices as readily as you do humble offices, when called from them by obedience. Fourth, Whether you are as exact and punctual in your devotions and exercises of penance in private as you are in public. In fine, whether the desire of improving in learning and other natural talents, makes you break in upon other religious duties, and act against the orders of your superiors.

If you are faulty in any of these points, do not flatter yourself that your intention is right—that you only seek the glory of God out of a motive of perfect charity ; let your pretensions be what you please, it is not purely the glory of God, but yourselves, you seek—that is, your own praise and advancement in this world. Your intention in appearance is not only holy, but perfect ; your design, for example, is to render yourself a fitter member of the Institute, a more useful subject, a more able instrument of God's glory hereafter ; but all this is an illusion of the enemy, who, to draw you to himself more securely, covers his hook with this most agreeable bait—to per-

suade you to take his poison, presents it to you in a golden goblet.

The last thing I have to recommend is, to take care, in offering up your ordinary actions to God, you do not render them vicious by any bad circumstances. The light of reason tells us that we are not to offer up to his divine majesty any action of itself sinful. This would be the most injurious of mockeries; it would be like the Jews falling down and adoring our blessed Saviour as king in derision. When you make your morning oblation, you only offer up your good and indifferent actions. The good may be vitiated by a bad intention afterwards: your prayers, devotions, and mortifications may be done out of vanity or human respects: your indifferent actions,—eating, drinking, sleeping, and the like, may become sinful by excess. When you offer these to God, be careful to avoid these excesses, observe temperance and moderation in them, otherwise you do a thing to please God, which displeases and offends him very much.

I conclude by exhorting you to observe this Rule, which is so much to the glory of God, and helps you to lay up vast treasures of merits for the life to come. By little gains every day, people make great fortunes in the world: it is inconceivable how much they increase their crown of glory, who lose no action they do in the day for want of a right intention.

## SECOND EXHORTATION ON THE NINETEENTH RULE.

“DESIGNING sincerely in what they do to serve and please the divine goodness for his own sake, upon a principle of charity.”

I have exhorted you to serve and please the divine goodness purely for itself, out of a motive of pure love. I will treat to-day of the five different motives Saint Ignatius sets down in the Rule; from a due consideration of them I propose to draw many great advantages, chiefly two; 1. To help such as are not so spiritual and strong in virtue, to proceed gradually to the greatest purity of intention. 2. To preserve others who are more advanced and perfect, from mistakes and illusions. I will briefly explain each motive, and show how useful they may be to procure a right intention. Saint Ignatius begins with the motive which is perfect, that is, the love of God for himself alone, that is, for his infinite goodness; for goodness is the proper and sole object of love. It is proper to goodness to be communicative, as philosophers say; therefore it may be considered absolutely as it is in itself, or relatively with regard to others; as we may consider the Sun as it is, a luminous body containing light in itself, or we may consider it diffusing its light for the benefit of this inferior world.

Goodness, considered absolutely, deserves to be loved purely for itself, which is perfect love, because disinterested. We find by experience that goodness is amiable wheresoever it is found: when a person is recommended to us excelling in any virtue or perfection, we are naturally carried to have an affection for the party, though a stranger, or one from whom we never have, nor ever can hope to receive any favour or benefit: when we read in history of the noble and generous exploits of great men, the heroic virtue and perfection of many holy servants of God, we find ourselves affected with an esteem, veneration, and love for them, even to rejoice at their prosperity, to grieve at their misfortunes, to be moved to indignation against such as were the cause of their sufferings: thus we find an affection for Abel on

account of his piety ; for David by reason of his meekness ; for Solomon because of his wisdom ; for Moses on account of his life and the great love he had for the people of God.

If the limited perfections of creatures deserve our esteem, veneration, and love, even considered by themselves, without any regard to us, how much more does an infinite and boundless ocean of all perfections, as in God, from whom all the perfections we behold in creatures are derived, how much more does his infinite goodness deserve and provoke us to serve, honour, and love him purely for himself, without any regard to our own satisfaction and profit.

The blessed in heaven, who continually behold in a clear light the infinite perfections of God, are not only overwhelmed with joy and delight in the clear contemplation of the divine attributes, but are necessitated to love and praise him continually. When God promised to show himself to Moses, he said : “ *Ostendam tibi omne bonum.* ” The blessed behold intuitively this infinite goodness or, as Saint John says, face to face, and by this clear vision so plentifully partake of it, that they seem transformed into the same. Saint John says : “ We shall be like to him, because we shall see him as he is. ” This vision is called beatifical ; it is the substantial part of the felicity of the saints, rather their whole felicity consists in it according to our Saviour. “ This is eternal life, that they know thee the true God. ” It puts the blessed in perfect possession of God, consequently of all that is good, of all his divine attributes and perfections, of all the delights and happiness that he himself enjoys.

In this vale of tears and place of banishment we cannot have so clear a sight of God ; therefore we are not necessitated, as the saints are, to love him : what we know of him shows how much an infinite goodness deserves to be loved and honoured by us. Saint Ignatius was so transported with this pure and disinterested love of God, that in his Constitutions he recommends it in twenty-four places, as venerable Father Lancituis remarks. In his instructions to Father Brandamus about the time we are to give to prayer, he says, that if we always seek God in our employments and studies, the ordinary times will abundantly suffice. As this is the perfect and sublime motive of our love for God ; it is no wonder if all are not capable of acting by it.



The next motive Saint Ignatius mentions in the Rule is more easy, at the same time it comes very near the perfection of the first. It is thus expressed : “ By reason of the charity or love wherewith he has prevented us.” The Apostle Saint John makes use of this motive to stir us up to the love of God : “ Let us love God, because he has first loved us.”

This is an endearing circumstance that facilitates extremely, I may say provokes, the love of God in us ; for as one fire easily begets another, so love naturally begets love, especially when the party that loves first is most deserving of our love, by reason of his known perfections and goodness. You find yourself otherwise affected when one speaks of a person that you know loves you, than you are at the praises of those who never knew you, though both may equally deserve your affection ; though both may draw from you esteem, you will find yourself more tenderly affected towards a friend, than to a person unknown.

The consideration of God having first loved us, helps us very much, and in a manner compels us to love him ; for what an astonishing demonstration is it of an infinite goodness for so great a majesty to regard so vile creatures as we are, to vouchsafe to love so base worms ; yet we are assured by the spirit of truth that God has loved us, does love us, and will love us for all eternity, unless we by ingratitude and malice render ourselves the objects of his indignation and hatred. God has always loved us according to these words of the Prophet : “ From all eternity have I loved you.” He loved us before we were born ; he did not love himself sooner than he loved us ; the effusion of goodness towards us has been as long as God has been. Our blessed Saviour assured his disciples, and us in them, that his heavenly Father loves us. “ For the Father loveth you.” Saint John tells us, that by this divine love we truly become the children of God. “ Behold what kind of charity the Father hath given to us, that we be called and be the sons of God.” What greater assurance can we have of the continuance of this love for all eternity than his promise of being himself our reward in the next life ? “ I shall be thy reward exceedingly great.” We must observe a very material circumstance in God’s love for us. It was so intense and great, that our ingratitude, malice, and sins were not sufficient to abate it : they moved him rather to pity than indignation or anger ; therefore it is said : “ With

perpetual charity I have loved thee, having compassion on thee." Though by our sins we were become children of wrath and objects of his justice, he so loved us as to give his only Son for our redemption.

This second motive of loving God is inferior to the first, because it implies a regard to ourselves; yet the difference is not great; the reflection we have to ourselves is hardly perceptible. It is the divine goodness itself that is the motive of our love, when we love God by reason of his infinite love and charity to us: for God is this charity that moves us to love him.

God's love is not like ours. When we love, we produce certain affectionate acts we had not before; it is by them that our heart is said to turn itself to God, and to love him. God does not love us by producing new acts; because he is unchangeable: his love is essential to him and identified with his divine nature, considered in itself, without any regard to its amorous effects produced in creatures; and being essentially goodness and charity, he does not stand in need of new acts to love us.

When the consideration of God's love and charity moves us to love him again, as gratitude obliges us, we exercise an act of love that is pure charity, though not in that perfect degree as when we love the divine goodness purely for itself, proceeding from his having first loved us.

In the meditation or contemplation of divine love, which is the last of the holy exercise, Saint Ignatius sets down two great principles for our direction: 1. That love depends more on deeds than on words; 2. That love consists in a free communication of goods between the party that loves and the party beloved. He does not mean by this, that love essentially consists either in an actual communication of goods, or the performance of deeds; for these are only marks and effects of a sincere love, and not love itself.

According to the common notion, to love is to wish one well. It is a vital act of the will, or a favourable disposition or habit of it, inclining us to do good to others upon account of their own innate goodness and merit, or by reason of some good we have received, or hope to receive, from them. His meaning, then, is, that deeds are the surest — one may say a certain — proof of love, according to these words of Saint Gregory: "Probatio dilectionis exhibitis est operis."

To raise our hearts to the love of God from a consideration of the innumerable blessings and favours we have received from his bountiful hands, is the third motive. Though not equal to the former two, it is very pleasing to God, and of great merit and benefit to ourselves, "for the charity and singular benefits with which he has prevented us."

The benefits we have received are very strong and powerful motives to oblige us to love and serve his divine majesty ; for, nothing is so binding as the obligation of gratitude. Philosophers say, that he who first found out the way of obliging others with good offices, found out shackles ; that is, when people receive favours from others, they are so fast bound by the tie of gratitude, that they seem to have lost their liberty, and become as it were incapable of not loving their courteous benefactor. What a shame it would be for men to be ungrateful, since brute animals, even the most wild and fierce, are often sensible of good turns, and become tame and gentle by kind usage.

The Roman soldier that was condemned to the beasts, was very fortunately convinced of this truth, when a fierce lion that was let into the amphitheatre to devour him, fawned upon him, and prevented him from being hurt by other wild beasts ; and this was, he believed, for having drawn a thorn out of his foot in the desert of Africa. We have many examples of this nature in history, and daily experience of the fidelity and gratitude of other dumb creatures that are cherished by us. This plainly shows that a sense of gratitude is engrafted in their nature. If this is so great for benefits received from creatures, if we are so strongly moved by them to love our benefactors, how much more ought the blessings we have received from God oblige us to love him ! Their number far exceeds, they also infinitely surpass in dignity, the favours we receive from our greatest friends, because they are of a superior order. If by deeds we are to judge of love, the favours God has conferred on us evidently prove that his love is infinitely greater in every respect, more sincere, constant, and intense.

I will only desire you to reflect on what God has done for our eternal happiness and glory, to convince you of this truth. What has the infinite goodness omitted to do, or what more

could he have done ? Call to mind his having created you out of nothing, without any other intention than to make you happy with himself for all eternity ; his having redeemed you at the price of his own most precious blood, shed on an ignominious cross ; his having sanctified you by means of the Holy Ghost infusing into your soul his divine grace, with the addition of all supernatural habits and virtues. From how many dangers both of body and soul has he preserved you ? Add to these your vocation to a religious state, particularly to the Institute, in which we are preserved from so many dangers of falling into sin, and are so plentifully provided with convenient helps and means to acquire all sorts of virtues, both moral and divine.

As these and infinite other favours received from the bountiful hands of God, discover an infinite goodness and most tender love for us, so they press and oblige us to a return of as great a love as frail mortals are capable of. Moses thought nothing would keep the obstinate and stiff-necked Jews so steadily to their duty as a lively memory of the great favours they had received from God ; therefore, as we read in holy writ, he not only frequently put them in mind of them, but he also made a summary of them, which he ordered to be constantly read to the people, at times appointed after his decease.

The Psalms are full of recapitulations of benefits received from God. It is plain how much the memory of them melted the heart of the Royal Prophet into most pious and tender affections towards God, sometimes moving him to great compunction and sorrow for his sins, sometimes to acts of gratitude, praise, spiritual joy, zeal for the glory of God, and heroic resolutions of faithfully serving his divine majesty ; these devout affections arising from an inflamed heart set all on fire by meditating upon God's bountiful liberality.

How many saints, following the example of this holy king and prophet, have inflamed their hearts with a most ardent love of God. Saint Ignatius chiefly makes use of them in the contemplation of spiritual love, as the most proper and effectual means to excite us to it. Nor does he propose to us the consideration of the benefits we have received with the intention that our love should rest upon this motive ; no ; he would have us act upon a more noble and a perfect motive, and only make



use of those considerations as an efficacious means to raise us to it.

The Rule says, we are to love and serve the divine goodness purely for itself; and no doubt a lively apprehension of his infinite love and charity, declared to us by so many and so signal demonstrations of his bounty, will oblige the heart in the most engaging manner possible to love God for himself—that is, for his own innate perfection and goodness. Saint Ignatius having set down these three motives, prudently admonishes us to help ourselves also with those of hope and fear: he says, we must, in all our actions, endeavour to serve and please the divine goodness out of these three motives, rather than for hope of reward or fear of punishment.

This advertisement is very prudent and may be useful to the advanced and perfect in the way of virtue, but is often necessary for the imperfect and tepid. It was chiefly to help these that he cautions us to make use of hope and fear, because the imperfect and tepid are too low-minded to be prevailed on by the sublime motives of love and charity: was it not for the fear of punishment or hope of reward, they would be lost; whereas, by help of these, they are often converted from the state of tepidity to that of fervour. The Ninevites sufficiently show how useful and prevalent the motive of fear is with sinners: being struck with it, they are converted to God and preserved from ruin.

Our Saviour often inculcates the use of this motive of fear. In the Gospel he bids his disciples not to fear men, who could only take away their corporal life, and had no power over their souls, but rather him that could cast both their bodies and souls into hell. He insinuates the same when he says, it is better to pluck out an eye, or to lose a hand and a foot, and so be saved, than to be lost eternally with them in hell fire. The holy Council of Trent calls this servile fear, a motion of the Holy Ghost, and a good disposition to justification. The philosopher says, that men are naturally more inclined to fear than hope, therefore are more easily kept from doing evil for fear of punishment and pain, than they are for hope of some reward.

Though this motive is more necessary for the imperfect and tepid, it may also be of great use to the perfect, because they cannot be always sure of remaining in the same state; they that

stand may fall, as others have done ; at least, in time of desolation and temptation, they may become insensible to the perfect motives of love and gratitude. This is the reason why it is said : “Blessed is the man who is always fearful.” This fruit Saint Ignatius would have us draw from the contemplation of hell, that when motives of love cannot prevail, the motives of fear may keep us in our duty to God.

Fear is an excellent, I may say an immediate, disposition to hope ; for the moment we avoid punishment, we are encouraged to hope for a reward, which divine goodness promises to those who do not deserve punishment. The motive of hope is more pleasing to God and nearer to perfection than that of fear ; though they are the imperfect that generally act by it, yet it is commendable and of great use even in the perfect. Our Saviour often made use of it to encourage his apostles, also the holy martyrs and confessors who were to succeed them ; for, after having told them of the persecutions and torments they would suffer for his sake, he bid them remember that their reward in heaven was exceedingly great. Saint Paul witnesses that it made the saints in the primitive church suffer not only patiently, but joyfully. It will help us to do the same when occasion offers, and in the same time it will encourage us to be very exact and fervent in the service of God.

As our holy Rule requires, we must, as much as with the assistance of God’s grace we can, purify this motive of hope, and change it into the pure love of God, which will not be difficult, since hope is a theological virtue, and has a very near relation to charity.

## FIRST EXHORTATION ON THE TWENTIETH RULE.

“It will be highly beneficial to perform such offices with all possible devotion, which afford the greatest occasion of practising charity and humility; for it is only into vessels of humility that the oil of divine charity is apt to flow.”

The great design of our Constitutions is, to excite and help us on to a most pure, solid, and perfect love of God. Saint Ignatius, therefore, in every one of them, either treats of such exercises and virtues as dispose us thereunto, or recommends to us the practice of it. He exhorts us to perform our actions in general out of a pure love of God, to express our love to God by our words either in domestic exhortations, or in spiritual discourses with one another. In this Rule he recommends us to apply devoutly to those offices wherein humility and charity are more exercised. He would have us love to be employed in these, embrace willingly and with joy all occasions of performing them, and exercise ourselves with great exactness, fervour, and devotion in them, out of pure love and an ardent desire of serving the divine goodness for itself. After this, he exhorts us earnestly to give ourselves generously and entirely to God—that is, without any restriction or reserve; assuring us that the more generous and liberal we are to the divine majesty, the more bountiful we shall find him in regard of us.

We will, first, examine the reasons which moved him so particularly to recommend the exercising of ourselves devoutly in humble and charitable offices; second, why he so earnestly exhorted us to be liberal with God.

Whenever Saint Ignatius treats of the love of God, he always goes upon this principle of Saint Gregory,—the most certain proof of love is the performance of deeds; or, as he himself says in the contemplation to excite spiritual love, love consists more in deeds than in interior affection or in words; for love is an active fire that cannot be contained in the narrow

compass of our hearts; it must indeed first burn there, then it will flame out by our words, and afterwards break forth into action, devouring and consuming all difficulties which come in its way. Such was the love of the spouse in the Canticles; the lamps and torches of her love did not only burn interiorly in her heart, but flamed out by her tongue, and caused so great a fire, that floods of tribulations, labours, and sufferings could not quench it.

We cannot flatter ourselves that we truly love God, if our love does not break out and show itself in words. Saint Gregory concludes, that love which refuses to work is no true love. We cannot rely upon certain affectionate motions and sensible flashes of devotion, which every one feels at certain times in the heart. If they do not break out into action, they are no more than natural effects of a sweet and grateful temper, or at most only flying sparks of a supernatural love, which the Holy Ghost endeavours to kindle in the soul; they do not rise from a real fire already lighted, but are supernatural graces wherewith God excites and helps us to love him.

It is not enough to break out only into words, because, as Saint John says, we must not love God with our tongue and words only, but in deeds and truth. We can only know the sincerity of our love by our deeds, as we can only discover the goodness of a tree by its fruits. God testifies his love for us, not only by words, but by deeds; for God the Father so loved us that he gave his only begotten Son for us. The Son loved us; therefore he shed his blood for us to cleanse us from our sins. His love could not be idle and unprofitable to us; our love for him must be also active.

This is what our Saviour taught us in express terms in the fourteenth chapter of Saint John. "Whosoever loves me, will keep my words," that is, will observe my commandments; for it is a certain mark we do not love God when we break them: which is as much as to say, that, unless love break forth into deeds, it cannot deserve to be called love. This being granted, the harder and nearer to perfection the things are we do for God's sake, the greater is our love for him: hence, martyrdom is an act of perfect charity, because we can do nothing greater for God, than to sacrifice our lives for him. We must then be ready and willing to die for Christ; but it is



not always in our power to do it, for want of a tyrant and executioner to put us to death ; whereas it is always in our power to mortify ourselves—that is, our passions and sensual appetites, our vanity and self-love : thus we are to express our love to God, particularly in overcoming our vanity by acts of humility and charity.

Saint Ignatius particularly recommends the practice of these two virtues in this Rule. By earnestly exhorting us to the exercise of humble and charitable offices, he endeavours to remove all difficulties of applying entirely and constantly to the service of God, and the performance of his holy and most divine will.

Pride makes us abhor humiliation and contempt ; self-love makes us avoid pain and labour : it often happens that God's service requires we should suffer both. If these two passions are not perfectly subdued, they will be apt to make us neglect our duty on many occasions, if not all, where humiliations and labour are to be met with. How often is it required of us, in the performance of our duties, to employ ourselves in humble and painful offices, in instructing little children, serving the sick, &c. Now we are to show our love to God by a willing, ready, and faithful performance of these duties : they are contemptible in the eyes of men, frequently laborious and painful. It is only by virtue of a profound humility and ardent charity that we can bring our proud and corrupted nature to embrace them willingly, to perform them faithfully, and to continue in them courageously : it imports very much to habituate ourselves to such offices now wherein humility and charity are most exercised, since the most ready and effectual way of acquiring virtue is, to exercise frequently acts of it.

If we are well grounded in humility, which is the foundation, and charity, which is the perfection, of virtue, nothing will be able to hinder or abate our love of God ; we shall be always ready to show it effectually by our deeds, to the glory of God, the edification of others, and to our own great benefit and advancement in virtue.

In the latter part of this Rule Saint Ignatius earnestly exhorts us to be liberal and generous with God, assuring us at the same time, for our encouragement and comfort, that the more liberal we are to him, the more liberal we shall find him in showering down and heaping his blessings on us. What an

encouragement! how advantageous the exchange! What have we poor miserable creatures to present to the infinite majesty of God? What have we but poverty and rags? We have nothing beneficial or useful to him: our best services are nothing, our most holy actions are vitiated, our virtues themselves are imperfect; so that after we have done all we can and as well as we can for his service, we have great reason to cry out, that we are unprofitable servants.

Notwithstanding our great poverty and the meanness of our actions, God, to show the treasures of his mercy, is pleased with every little thing we do for love of him; he has promised to reward our giving a cup of water to a thirsty traveller for his sake. Our mite, when given with a free heart, is a valuable present; he wants nothing that we have; he does not desire our offerings to enrich himself, but to enrich us with treasures of blessings here and of glory hereafter. His liberality to his creatures is as boundless as his goodness; but you are to reflect that though he is infinitely bountiful, he is not prodigal of his favours; he will not throw them away at random; he requires a title to bestow them on us. This title is not so much according to justice as to mercy, because nothing we can give him bears any proportion with what we receive from him; our best actions have no value nor merit of themselves; it is only by his gifts and liberality that they become meritorious; their merit arises from his gifts—that is, from sanctifying grace. All that our coöperation with him adds is, to make the merit of them our own. Yet, how great a share has God also in this, since it is by the powerful assistance of his holy grace that we coöperate; without it, we are as incapable of doing any good work, as the withered branch is of bearing fruit. It is from the fruitfulness the branch receives from the vine that it is capable of yielding fruit; and it is from the influence our actions have from the grace of God, that they become meritorious.

What a shame then is it to be so niggardly with God, to be always counting with him, and as it were, to sell back by detail what we have received from him wholesale. This ingratitude cannot be borne with; it provokes an infinite bounty to be sparing of his gifts. Therefore our Saviour declares that our **harvest shall be conformable to our sowing**—if we sow sparingly, we shall reap sparingly. Our blessed Lord also says, that if

we sow plentifully, we shall have a plentiful crop in harvest time ; or, as he says in another place, with the same measure we measure out, it will be measured again to us. If you are liberal, he will be liberal ; if your measure be full, well shaken down, and running over, God will measure out his graces, gifts, and blessings after the same manner.

Saint Ignatius, in his incomparable annotations to the Exercises, sets down as a necessary disposition to perform them well and with great spiritual profit, to come with a generous and liberal heart, ready to obey God's call without any limitation or reserve, resolved to break through all difficulties and obstacles which may occur in complying with it, determined to stop at no degree of virtue lower than the highest and perfect. Those who commence the holy Exercises with such resolutions as these, will not fail to receive great benefit from them ; though they were great sinners when they began, they will infallibly come out saints.

Much more ought those who embrace a religious state of life have these same good desires and generous resolutions, first, because the singular favour God has shown in calling us to it, demands this return of us ; second, because the state requires we should aspire to the highest perfection. If we set any bounds to our virtue, we fail of complying with our vocation ; without this general disposition, it is impossible to be a perfect religious ; with it, we can hardly fail of it.

These were the noble sentiments which raised Saint Ignatius to so eminent a degree of sanctity, and made God so liberal, I may almost say profuse, in heaping his favours and blessings on him. It was this noble disposition of soul that made Saint Xavier so glorious an apostle of the Indies, and innumerable others of the Society so famous for their apostolical labours, miraculous lives, and eminent perfection : they were generous and liberal with God, and God was bountiful with them ; they consecrated their lives without reserve to his service, and he refused them no graces or supernatural gifts requisite for their sanctification and glory.

On the contrary, with such as come to religion with narrow hearts, with certain weak desires of perfection, with many limitations and restrictions, proposing only to save their souls by avoiding, in a religious state, the many dangers of falling



into mortal sin, God is not so liberal ; it is much to be feared that he will refuse them those succours of divine grace which, though not absolutely necessary, yet are so much so that without them they will infallibly fall into some grievous sin, and perhaps lose their vocation too.

Sometimes people come to religion with very mean thoughts, perhaps moved thereunto by human considerations ; for example, because they want means to live comfortably in the world, or because they apprehend their friends will be offended or uneasy with them ; in fine, because they have met with some great disappointment, contradiction, or loss, which puts them out of humour, and makes them dissatisfied with the world. As these and such like are only natural motives, they do not fill the soul with generous sentiments, or inflame the will with zeal to undertake any great matter for God's sake. These are apt, when they are in religion, to give themselves all the liberty they can conveniently take, to seek their own ease, to mind their diversion and interests, to make certain projects and schemes of living, not according to virtue, but sensuality, at least not according to the greater glory of God, but their own greater convenience and ease.

These persons have no title to any particular favours from God ; he has no reason to bestow those extraordinary graces on them, which he has promised to those who quit all to follow him. If they do not change their motive and rectify their intention, they will either leave the Institute, or live very irregular lives in it ; for with their own forces, I may say, too, with ordinary helps of divine grace, they cannot continue long in a regular observance of the Rules, and they do not deserve extraordinary helps of God to keep them.

There are others who come to religion out of a good motive to save their souls, and with a resolution to avoid all deliberate venial sins, or notorious breach of their Rules. But they do not aspire higher — they do not endeavour to become great saints ; they do not aim at any thing that is heroic ; they will seek all the conveniences that religion affords ; they will avoid humble and mortifying offices as much as they can without offence ; they are not willing to perform hard duties and the like.

This I call being niggardly with God—this is to be close-



handed and strait-hearted with him : such a disposition of mind extremely hinders God from heaping his blessings on them. They will never rise to any high degree of perfection ; they will never do any great matter for the credit of the Institute ; they will never render any great service to God or to their neighbour, for they tie God's hands, and render themselves unworthy of receiving any extraordinary assistance from him.

Let us be very careful, as the Rule directs, to be generous and liberal with God. Let us endeavour to be as soft wax in his hands, ready to receive any impression or figure he is pleased to give it. Let us resolve to serve his divine majesty in any office in which obedience shall employ us, to carry any cross he shall think fit to send us, to undertake any enterprise, howsoever difficult it may be, when the honour and glory of God shall require it. In fine, let us not content ourselves with an ordinary degree of virtue or perfection : let us aspire to the highest, endeavouring and wishing to serve and love the divine goodness with angelical purity and seraphic fervour. If we set no bounds, God will not set any, but will heap his blessings on us with a most bountiful and liberal hand. Who knows but that he designs to raise you to the sanctity of a Stanislaus or an Aloysius ?

Let us give ourselves freely to God, and think we can never give him too much, who has so gratuitously bestowed himself entirely upon us. He has done great things for us, and is ready to do infinitely more, if we by our ingratitude do not stop his hands.

## FIRST EXHORTATION ON THE TWENTY-FIRST RULE.

“IN proportion to the measure of grace that is given them, must be their endeavours to increase in devotion.”

These words declare why we are to be so exact and faithful in our spiritual duties. They not only declare the end at which we are to aim in these spiritual exercises, but oblige us to procure it with great diligence and eagerness ; for the Latin word *insistant* implies more than a passing and moderate endeavour.

Here are two things to be explained : 1. What Saint Ignatius means by the devotions we are to seek. 2. Why are added these words, “according to the measure of grace that is imparted.”

The devotion that is recommended to us in this Rule is a virtue that inclines the will and makes it prompt and ready to comply in every thing with the holy will of God, and particularly to employ or entertain itself in things belonging immediately to the divine service. This is the notion Saint Thomas gives of it when he says : “*Est voluntas quæ dam prompte se tradanti ad ea quæ pertinent ad Dei famulabum.*” From the etymology of the word it appears that devotion essentially consists in this readiness and promptitude of the will to all acts of religion—as prayer, meditation, the use of the sacraments, fasting, mortification, sacrifice, and the like. This is gathered from the natural signification of this word devotion, which, being derived from *devovendo*, necessarily implies a devoting of ourselves to the service of God.

Saint Ignatius in this Rule requires that we should be prompt and ready to obey in all things the will of God, particularly to be well affected to all acts of religious worship, which are principally called works of piety and devotion, because they more immediately appertain to the service of God. Whereas prayer, above all other acts of devotion, is most pleasing to God and most necessary and beneficial to man, Saint Ignatius would have all apply with extraordinary care and diligence to

obtain of God the gift of prayer, so as to be able in exercises of devotion or charity to have recourse to him with the same confidence and ease as children fly to their parents in their necessities.

This devotion is often attended with great sweetness, interior delights, and divine consolations. Many people, not distinguishing rightly between the cause and the effect, take these consolations, delights, and sweetness to be devotion itself. So, when these are wanting, they are extremely dejected and troubled, thinking they want devotion, because they do not feel the sensible effects of it. I say sensible, not the necessary effects of it. I might call them better,—the present reward of a devout mind flowing from the bountiful hands of an infinite goodness.

Sensible sweetness and comforts in prayer and other religious duties, may seem the natural effects of devotion; for, what more natural than to find sweetness in an immediate communication with God by prayer? Can any one approach a fire, and not feel the warmth of it? or take sweetmeats into the mouth, and not taste a sweetness? God is charity, therefore the most pure and penetrating of all flames; he is an ever-flowing source of all heavenly delights and sweetness. How is it possible for a soul united to him in prayer, either to remain cold, or without the sweet comforts of sensible devotion?

The Royal Prophet seems to confirm this reasoning when he says: “Taste and see how sweet the Lord is.” These words import, that, to feel how sweet the Lord is, it is enough to treat devoutly with him in prayer; for, one cannot converse with him, and not be delighted and charmed with his company, as one cannot taste a thing naturally sweet and pleasant to the palate, without perceiving the sweetness, and being delighted with it.

We are directed in prayer to employ our greatest care and most of our time in exciting and producing devout affections, which affections naturally cause sensible feelings in us. Thus, the affections of fear cast a damp upon the heart that is very sensible, and even seems to pierce the very flesh, as the Prophet prays: “*Confite timore tuo carnes mea Domine.*” The affections of sorrow and compassion prick the heart and cause compunction. The memory of extraordinary favours begets generally sensible feelings in a well-disposed heart, and the enjoy-

ment of an infinite goodness overflows the heart with joy and sweetness, and makes it break out into tender affections of love. In what sense, then, may this sensible fervour or sweetness be called devotion? In this, that it encourages and strengthens the soul to apply with firmness and alacrity to all duties belonging to the service of God; consequently, the notion Saint Thomas gives of devotion agrees with it. It may be called the effect of devotion, because it effectually proceeds from applying to prayer, meditation, penance, and other exercises of devotion. It may properly be called the reward of devotion, because it proceeds more from the bountiful goodness of God than any endeavours of our own. Our pious efforts may indeed move the divine goodness to bestow it upon us; for God is infinitely kind and liberal to those who sincerely and cheerfully endeavour to serve and please him.

Thus we see in the lives of saints how liberally God has dealt with his devout servants, pouring divine consolations and sweetness in so great abundance into their souls, as to throw them into raptures and ecstasies. Those favours are sometimes the reward of heroic virtue, of a complete victory over pride, self-love, and other passions, by humility, patience, abnegation of our own will, rigorous penance, and a most fervent love of the cross.

God, to convince us that these are his own gifts, and not the effect of any endeavours of ours, though he bestows these sweets and consolations on some, he refuses them to others not inferior to them in perfection, consequently no less deserving. What is more, God often deprives such of his holy servants as have served him many years with great exactness and fervour, of all sensible devotion, sweetness, and comfort, and gives it to others who are only beginners in the way of virtue, are still entangled in their vicious habits, still attacked by disorderly passions, and have little more of the religious than a good will and a sincere desire to serve God.

In this appears the infinite wisdom, fatherly care, and providence of God over his elect. Thus he disposes all things sweetly, likewise efficaciously, to bring them to their respective ends. By which we are taught that these sensible comforts are not so much the fruits of our pious endeavours, as they are the gifts of an infinite bounty. His gifts are always precious; they



are to be looked upon and valued by us as great blessings; we must be very grateful for them, and careful to make that use of them for which they were given.

In this vale of misery and state of corruption in which we are all involved by the sin of our first parents, these sensible comforts are often necessary to encourage and support frail nature in a virtuous and spiritual life. They help beginners to disengage their hearts entirely from the world, and to condemn the carnal delights of it. They are also often necessary for persons more advanced in the way of virtue; for, as long as we live in this life, our nature is changeable and frail, our passions, like weeds, often put up their heads. We have always need of prayer, mortification, and penance, to keep them down. Without hard struggling, they will get the mastery of us, and we easily grow weary with fighting, unless from time to time God encourage us with sensible proofs of his divine assistance.

In fine, these spiritual consolations with which the divine goodness so abundantly rewards in this life the heroic labours and sufferings of the greatest saints, plainly show the world that the yoke of Christ is sweet, and his burden light,—that, though the way to heaven is narrow and set with thorns, the life of the perfect is neither hard nor uneasy; so that the same blessings wherewith he rewards his faithful servants in this life, serve as strong chains and powerful motives to draw many more to his divine service.

Though this sensible devotion is so great a blessing and so beneficial on some occasions, yet it is not the devotion we are admonished to procure in this Rule, nor are we to be too solicitous and earnest to have it. Very often it is far better and more meritorious to want these sensible consolations than to have them. Without any sensible devotion we may be truly and solidly devout; because, without it we may be willing and ready to apply to all religious duties immediately belonging to the service of God, in which, according to Saint Thomas, consists true and the best deuotion.

Our blessed Saviour was a perfect model and pattern of devotion, because he always did the will of his heavenly Father, and with so great readiness and alacrity, that it was to him his daily food. Whenever his apostolical labours permitted, he retired to mountains and other solitary places to pray: and he

was most exact in going to the Temple at times appointed by the law, and in observing all the devotions, feasts, and ceremonies of it.

Though he made it so much his business to be employed in things belonging to the service of God, we do not read in the Gospel of any sensible comfort he had to sweeten his great labours or painful sufferings. On the contrary, the Evangelists give us an account of the great desolation he often endured, of fears, grief, tediousness, agonies, and being abandoned by his heavenly Father in the very height of all his sufferings. Though an angel was sent to comfort him in the garden of Gethsemani, he was left in so great desolation, that it threw him into an agony, and forced blood from all the veins of his sacred body. This torrent of grief that overwhelmed our blessed Saviour's soul in the garden, did not abate nor cool his devotion for his heavenly Father ; for he continued the longer for it in prayer, and that prostrate on the ground, with profound reverence and perfect submission to the will of God.

After a severe conflict between the spirit and the flesh, and a complete victory gained over the latter, he rose from his prayer, and went courageously to meet his enemies, resolved to drink of the bitter chalice his heavenly Father had prepared for him.

All these particular circumstances marked down so carefully by the Evangelist, are to teach us that sensible comforts and sweetness in prayer are not necessary to true and solid devotion ; that we are not to be too solicitous to have them, nor anywise dejected and disturbed if we have them not ; but make it our chief care, as Saint Ignatius admonishes us, to go on continually in the way begun of God's service, with more spiritual visits or fewer.

Many great saints, moved by the example of our blessed Saviour and the many advantages of this solid and spiritual devotion above that called sensible, have made it their earnest prayer to God, to be deprived of all sensible sweets and consolutions of a spiritual life. The great Apostle of the Indies humbly begged of God to put a stop to those heavenly consolations wherewith he replenished his seraphic soul. "*Satis est, Domine, satis est.*" With similar fervour he begged an augmentation of aridities and sufferings. "*Amplius, Domine, amplius* "

Saint Teresa so much preferred suffering to contemplation, that she desired rather to die than not to suffer. Saint Mary Magdalene de Pazzi was so enamoured with the suffering part of a spiritual life, that she even desired not to die to suffer more. "Pati non mori."

These heroic sentiments show how we are to moderate our desires as to sensible devotion, the consolations and sweets of a devout life. If they desired to be deprived of them, it was not out of a careless, indolent humour, or because they had not a right value of them. They were great saints, very devout and fervent, very much addicted to prayer and all things belonging to the immediate service of God. They were great proficients in the science of saints, were ignorant of nothing belonging to a most holy and perfect spiritual life. Wherefore, the preference they gave to devotion that is purely spiritual, above that which is called sensible, was most rational, and according to true virtue.

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## SECOND EXHORTATION ON THE TWENTY-FIRST RULE.

"In proportion to the measure of grace that is given, must be their endeavours to increase in devotion."

In my last exhortation I spoke of devotion both as it is accompanied with sensible sweetness and consolation, also with interior aridity and desolation. I represented the necessity we sometimes have of sensible devotion, also the many advantages we may receive from it in order to go on cheerfully and with courage in the way begun of God's service. At the same time I mentioned that many saints have preferred desolation before

sensible comforts, and made it their earnest prayer to God to be deprived of all those sensible consolations wherewith the faithful servants of God abound so plentifully in this life, through his tender charity and fatherly care and providence over his elect. I will treat to-day of the reasons which made the saints make this choice and address themselves with so much fervour to the divine goodness to be deprived of the most delightful comforts of a spiritual life. I will then explain these words of the Rule, "according to the measure of God's grace imparted to them."

The chief reason that moved the saints to petition God not to heap upon them so sensible comforts, was, because they ardently desired to imitate our blessed Saviour, whose life in this world was a life of labour and suffering, insomuch that in holy writ he is represented to us as a man of sorrow, which character not only implies suffering external pains and uneasiness of body, but the enduring of much grief and great desolation of soul.

This divine example provoked the saints to treat their bodies with so much rigour in the use of mortification and penance, also to desire to be deprived of interior comfort. Their greatest glory was to resemble perfectly this divine original. They thought it unworthy of a follower of a crucified Redeemer to covet those comforts of which he deprived himself for their encouragement and example. They were sensible that a delicate member does not become a head crowned with thorns, and that it was not reasonable the disciple should flow in delights, whilst he contemplated his Saviour and Master absorbed in the ocean of bitterness.

Saint Paul was of this sentiment, and disdained to have any other satisfaction or comfort in this life than to resemble in suffering his crucified Lord. "Far be it from me to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." The world was crucified to him, and he to the world. The example of his crucified Saviour made him covetous of nothing more than to be himself crucified, not only in body by corporal chastisements, but also in spirit by interior conflicts and desolation; for his greatest ambition was to resemble his crucified Lord, who suffered both corporal pain and spiritual dereliction on the cross.

The second reason the saints went upon was the great spiritual advantages they hoped to receive by it. They held it as a



certain principle, that the more they resembled our blessed Redeemer in labours and tribulations here, the greater resemblance they would also have with him in heavenly glory hereafter: according to the share they had in his sufferings in this life, the more should they partake of his consolations in the life to come.

The saints had a true and lively knowledge of the difference between time and eternity; they were sensible how short time is, yet how precious every moment of it ought to be accounted; since, by a momentary suffering here, an immense weight of everlasting glory may be purchased. This made them jealous of every thing that could rob them of a moment of their time, and as carefully watchful to employ it to their best advantage. Knowing that tribulations and crosses here are the seed of glory and bliss hereafter, they were fearful and jealous of all sensible comforts in this life, even such as were interior and spiritual. Our blessed Saviour on Mount Calvary, before his crucifixion, would not drink the wine mixed with gall, because he would not admit of any comfort in his sufferings; so they would not admit of any mixture of sensible consolation in their prayers, labours, and sufferings, to the end the whole reward of them might be reserved for the next life. They did not doubt but that the more pure their sufferings were of sensible comfort, the greater their merit would be now and their reward hereafter.

A third consideration, which was of great weight with the saints, was, that being deprived of sensible consolation helps to humility, which, being the foundation of all virtue and of a spiritual life, is to be profound, sincere, and solid. Sensible devotion and fervour in prayer and other spiritual duties, is very apt to fill the mind with a vain conceit of one's self; to make persons think themselves more devout and virtuous than they are in reality. This is very visible in beginners who, by reason of the sensible comfort God is pleased to impart to them in the commencement of a spiritual life for their encouragement, are often pestered with thoughts of vanity, of rash judgment, and contempt of others, who do not seem to have so much fervour as themselves; and with respect to such as seem to surpass them in natural or supernatural gifts, they are often

attacked by envious thoughts, and are tempted sometimes even to repine and grieve to see others excel.

As these are generally the effects of secret pride lurking in their hearts, so they discover the spiritual foundation to be often faulty, consequently the building they have raised upon it is weak and in danger of tumbling down.

Sensible devotion often begets a certain confidence in ourselves ; it makes us rely on our good resolutions. This often provokes God to abandon us in time of temptation and trial, to withdraw from us on these occasions in punishment of this vain confidence in ourselves. By depriving us of those sensible marks of his presence and divine assistance, we easily fall into disturbance and dejection, by which our ghostly enemy obtains a great advantage over us. The Royal Prophet observed this change in himself in the twenty-ninth Psalm, where, having said in the height of consolation that nothing should disturb or move him any more, he was soon made sensible of his inconstancy and frailty ; for, in a verse or two after, he acknowledged that he was very much disturbed.

Happy they who are made sensible of their presumption as King David was, by the interior disturbance of the mind arising from the subtraction of sensible consolation. Sometimes God punishes it by permitting them to fall into sin, as he did the presumption of Saint Peter : this is the most terrible of all corrections, and what we must, by fervent and humble prayer, endeavour to avert.

Pride is a vice so displeasing to God, and so very prejudicial to us, that God will rather let us fall into some enormous and scandalous sin than not cure us of it ; so that such as have the grace to repent after having fallen into some great sin, and are truly humbled at it, have reason to bless God, as King David did for his fall : “ It is good for me, O Lord, that thou hast humbled me.”

It often happens that in time of prayer we have a great deal of sensible devotion and fervour, that we rise from it with a secret complacency, and are apt to think we have done great matter ; whereas, when we have suffered many distractions in time of it, aridity, and desolation, we go from it full of confusion, with a very humble opinion of ourselves, very sensible of our frailty : consequently we are more upon our guard the

whole day after, and have recourse to God with greater humility in all our difficulties and temptations.

The fear of becoming vain or proud made the saints jealous of sensible consolations and fervour in their devotions, and much more afraid of high and extraordinary gifts and favours. They preferred the low but sure way of humility before the more sublime way, by which God leads many. Though they were very thankful to God for such privileges, and were very faithful in corresponding with them, they never prayed for them, much less did they set their hearts on them.

Another advantage much regarded by the saints, and which gives a most spiritual and solid satisfaction to them, though not sensible, is, that virtue in desolation and tribulation is tried, as gold in the furnace. Our perfection consists in an eminent degree of charity—our love is proved by deeds and mostly by suffering. To serve God when he heaps his favours on us and fills our heart with sensible devotion, sweetness, and fervour, is neither so very wonderful nor commendable a thing for us. A Kempis says: “He rides at ease that is carried by the grace of God.” But to be exact and punctual in all religious observances, without the encouragement of any sensible comforts, shows that our desire of serving and pleasing God is sincere, our love pure and perfect. You will easily allow that a person who commits a grievous sin deliberately and in cold blood—as murder,—shows far greater malice than he who should commit the same in a sudden violent manner. In the same manner, those who serve God cheerfully and with great exactness without the helps and assistance of sensible consolation, show a more resolute and determined will to serve God, consequently a greater and perfect love of God, than they who are carried on to love by the force of sensible devotion and fervour; these may be properly said to serve God in hot blood, the others in cold.

Experience teaches that such as serve God faithfully, without the assistance of sensible devotion, are more constant and steady in God’s service, are not easily daunted at difficulties, nor yield to temptations, but go on courageously, and ordinarily persevere; whereas, people who abound with sensible devotion, especially if they are fond of it and are solicitous to have it,

as soon as their sensible sweetness passes, they lose all devotion and soon come to fail.

Saint Ignatius, in the Rules he has given for discerning spirits, says very prudently, that, in time of consolation, we are not to let ourselves be so far transported with the delight of it, as to forget to reflect upon the state of desolation, and to consider seriously how we are to behave in time of it. He warns us to go on steadily in the way begun of God's service, with more spiritual visits or fewer ; that is, whether God is pleased to give us abundance of consolation, or to try us with desolation, we are still to serve him with equal alacrity and constancy. If you strip devotion of all sensible fervour and sweetness, how can it be said to mollify the rigour of a penitential life, and sweeten the bitterness of the cross ?

To understand this, you are to reflect that in a spiritual life there are two sorts of comforts—some that are purely spiritual, others that are partly spiritual and partly sensible ; the former affects the soul, which is a spirit, the latter the whole man, because composed of body and soul. Though the first are not so preceptible, because not sensible, yet they are more solid and perfect, likewise more efficacious ; they content the soul more, and render it steady and constant in the service of God.

The natural reason that may be given is, that the disposition of the soul at the time we come to execution—that is, to put our good purposes and resolutions in practice, is much the same as it was when we made them ; consequently, the difficulties that occur in the practice cause no considerable alteration, they do not frighten nor discourage so much. In the heat of sensible fervour we think every thing not only feasible, but easy ; when this fervour is past, what before seemed small mole-hills, presently appear great mountains ; the difficulties that seemed nothing in the height of devotion, appear insuperable when left as it were to ourselves.

Devotion that is purely spiritual, does not prevent reason ; it does not flatter us, much less deceive us with persuasions of meeting no obstacles in the execution of our good purposes ; it gives time to reason to examine every thing, to prepare and arm ourselves against all difficulties, by a due consideration of the motives that ought to persuade us, and the proper means



that are to be taken to reduce to practice what we resolve on, for the service of God and our own perfection.

Reason having acted its part, and duly weighed these means and difficulties on one side, the frailty and corruption of our nature on the other, this spiritual devotion excites us calmly and solidly to put all our confidence in God, believing with a firm faith that his infinite goodness will not fail to assist us with his holy grace, and enable us to perform what he inspires us to do. Though this devotion that is purely spiritual does not affect the body with sensible delight, it strengthens and confirms the will with solid comfort, and thereby renders the practice of virtue easy in spite of all suggestions of the Devil, and the opposition of corrupt nature.

By what I have said you may easily gather these following truths: 1. That true and solid devotion does not consist in having sensible consolations and fervour. 2. When God is pleased to favour us in our prayer and other spiritual exercises with extraordinary feelings, tenderness, and sweetness, we have no reason to be proud, but very often great reason to humble ourselves, believing that the divine goodness favours us with these sensible comforts in consideration of our frailty and want of courage and resolution in the way of virtue. 3. That we ought not to be discouraged if we have them not; at the same time we ought to be very thankful to God when he pleases to give them, for they certainly are great favours, since so necessary to confirm and make us steady in the way of virtue.

What do these words mean, "According to the measure of grace imparted to them"? These words signify that we are to be very careful in corresponding with divine grace and holy inspiration; for divine grace is the talent we are to traffic with in this world, and we are obliged to improve it, under pain of being reproached and punished as slothful servants. God does not require as great an improvement of all as he does of some; the improvement must be according to the measure of grace imparted: to some are given five talents; to others two; to whom more is given, more will be required. If she who has received two, gains by her industry two more, she will receive the commendation and reward of a faithful servant, and be more regarded by God than she who, having received five, would

only gain three ; because in that case two would remain idle, which would argue her guilty of sloth or negligence. God does not regard so much the gain we make, as the fidelity and industry wherewith we labour. Let our measure of grace be ever so great, he requires of us a faithful correspondence—he is satisfied with our fidelity, let our gain be ever so little, provided it answer the measure of divine grace imparted to us.

When God, out of his divine goodness, makes choice of any one for a vessel of election, to serve him in any high station—for example, a founder of a religious order,—he gives a proportion of divine grace proper to qualify him for the undertaking. People of every calling have likewise a measure of divine grace imparted, sufficient to improve them in all virtue and perfection suitable to their vocation. Many of the same Institute are designed by divine providence for different employments and service: some are called to a more eminent degree of sanctity, so that it is hard to know what proportion of grace every one receives ; but it is every one's duty to be very watchful and faithful to improve what she has received, according to the interior lights God shall impart from time to time, also the directions she shall receive from her confessor and superiors. What is certain is, that we all have had imparted a sufficient measure of grace to comply with our vocation ; therefore Saint Ignatius admonishes us to be very careful not to lose any degree of perfection to which we may attain by the exact observance of all our Rules and Constitutions. This we must all aim at with great diligence ; if we acquire it, we have reason to be content, for God requires no more of us.

This is a remark of great importance, and what those words signify. When religious, especially beginners, give themselves to the service of God, and aspire to perfection with great fervour, they are apt to fly at every thing they read in spiritual books, or in the lives of saints ; they are presently set on fire by what they read, and think all undone if they do not practise what others have done. Their zeal is very commendable if kept within the bounds of discretion ; but zeal without discretion is no virtue ; it exposes them to many illusions, which Saint Ignatius prudently endeavours to prevent by this Rule. When you read of any extraordinary example of virtue in others, you must consider whether the method they used in practising it be

according to the spirit of your vocation—whether consistent with the observance of your Rules, the advice and direction of your superiors.

Our sanctity consists in obtaining the end of our vocation, at least in being careful and diligent in endeavouring to obtain it according to the ways and means prescribed by our Institute; for this is most certainly the will of God, this is what he has called us to and requires of us; therefore he has imparted to us such a portion or measure of grace as is sufficient to enable us to acquire it.

Whatever practice of devotion or mortification is a hinderance to us from complying with our vocation, is not an example for us; it is rather to be admired than imitated. For one of our sisters to try to practise every thing she reads of others of different vocations or orders, would be to aspire to perfection, not according to the measure of grace imparted, as the Rule admonishes; besides, it would render the practice of virtue impracticable, because it would render us incapable of complying with the most essential duties of our vocation, and engage us in practices inconsistent with one another: in fine, we should undertake more than any of the saints did, consequently more than we are able to perform, which manifestly shows how unprofitable and vain the attempt is.

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### THIRD EXHORTATION ON THE TWENTY-FIRST RULE.

“THEY are to spend in prayer, meditation, &c., the time that is appointed, with all diligence in our Lord.”

These words have a double meaning: they may either signify that we are to spend all our time in spiritual things, or that we must be faithful in employing in spiritual things all the time

that is allotted either by our Rule, custom, or the express leave or order of the superioress. If we take them according to the first meaning, they are conformable to the advice of the Apostle to the Ephesians, whom he exhorts to pray at all times in spirit: again, according to those other words of the same Apostle to the Thessalonians,—“pray without intermission.”

It is plain that these words are not to be taken so as to neglect all other things besides our prayers; for the most solitary anchorites and greatest contemplatives are obliged to provide for the exigences of nature, to spend some part of their time in rest and in nourishing their bodies, in manual works or corporal exercises. The Apostle himself sometimes intermitted his spiritual exercises and apostolical functions, as he himself testifies, to work for a livelihood, to maintain others, and to give charity to the poor, without being burdensome to the faithful. “You all know,” says he, “that I have provided for myself, and for those who are with me, with the labour of my hands; and not only for them, for we are also in this manner to provide for the sick.”

As the Apostle did not spend all his time in prayer, so he did not forbid the new Christians of Ephesus and Thessalonica to attend to their temporal affairs and business. The true meaning of the above words is, that we must be careful so to employ ourselves in exterior things as to merit by them; which we do when we perform our actions with a right intention, and keep our minds and hearts united to God.

The words of the Rule, “all must bestow their time in spiritual things,” import, that we are faithfully to bestow all the time allotted for them. This is conformable to what we are desired in the first Rule: “Let every one bestow, with all diligence in our Lord, the time prescribed her for examining her conscience twice every day, for prayer, meditation, and reading.” By which we are also given to understand what Saint Ignatius meant by spiritual things.

This also agrees with what the Holy Ghost teaches us in the third chapter of Ecclesiasticus, in which there is a proper time allotted for every thing; then, descending to particulars, tells us there is a time for speaking, and a time for holding one’s peace, a time for planting, and a time for cutting, and so forth. In religion our time is cut out and appropriated to



several duties. There is a time allotted for rest and a time for labour, a time for talking and a time for silence, a time for diversion, a time for recollection, a time for studies and a time for prayer, a time for temporal business and a time for spiritual affairs.

It is by this distribution of our time that religious persons are called Regulars ; and it is by living up to it that we are said to live regularly, in so much that, when any house comes to neglect this distribution,—that is, to live without regard to time, or to confound one time with another, for example, sleeping when they ought to be at work, talking in time of silence, or studying in time of prayer, and the like, — this community is said to live irregularly.

The exact observance of this distribution of time is accounted in a religious state of so great importance, that it is looked upon as a fault against regularity to spend the time in devotion, prayer, or spiritual reading, which is appointed for refectation of the body and relaxation of mind. If so, you will easily conceive how much a greater fault it would be to rob time from these spiritual duties, to spend it in studies, diversion, or temporal affairs.

I will suggest some considerations which will make you more sensible of the greatness of this fault ; then I will explain the meaning of Saint Ignatius in this Rule,—“ All must bestow their time in spiritual things.”

All spiritual writers agree, that order is not only the beauty, but the perfection or support of a religious state. Nothing more edifying in religion than punctuality and exactness in observing the distribution of time. Where this regularity is observed, virtue will infallibly flourish, because it renders the performance of virtuous actions both easy and pleasant.

The most ordinary actions of life, performed according to order, become both meritorious and edifying. God is highly pleased by them, and our neighbour conceives a great opinion of a religious community. For when people see religious exact and punctual in obeying the bell, they do not consider the thing to which they are called, but admire and are charmed with their prompt obedience and quick compliance with the call of the bell or order of the superioress. Whether they are called to their prayer or recreation, to the church or refectory, it is all

one to them; for they piously suppose that the same motive makes them as exact in one as in the other, as punctual in going to their prayer and other spiritual duties, as they are in going to the refectory and place of recreation.

Thus a religious life is interwoven with so great a variety of different actions, that nothing seems tedious. Time can never lie long nor heavy upon them. The most mortifying and humbling employments seem short; the practice of all virtues and charitable offices becomes easy.

When every thing is done in its proper time, it is incredible how much and how many good actions are done in the day, and this with little or no pain,—I may say with pleasure; for there is no greater delight than that which arises from having spent the day well.

Persons who are regular in performing all their actions in due time, scarce ever complain of any thing but want of time; which evidently shows their easiness and content of mind. Consequently, this regular way of living helps extremely not only to the right performance of our actions, but to constancy and perseverance in them.

The holy founders of religious orders were very careful to appoint proper times for the exercise of all religious duties. Saint Ignatius in this follows the example of other founders, and particularly recommends to us the exact observance of method or regularity in our studies, devotions, rest, labours, &c. Saint Bernard says: “The virtue of discretion makes the use and practice of all other virtues orderly.” Order adds method, beauty, and perpetuity to them and all good actions.

When we observe an exact distribution of time, or act according to order, we imitate God, who, in the government of the universe, bestows his favours and gifts to creatures in weight, number, and measure.

Order makes a religious state a heaven; disorder makes it a hell on earth: for in heaven every thing is done in order; in hell there is nothing but confusion and disorder. What confusion would it cause in this inferior world, should the Sun fail to rise at its due time, or should it set at mid-day! What pain, torment, and convulsions are often caused in human bodies when nerves or arteries get out of their place, when the mass of blood, or spirits is disordered! A note played out of

tune grates the ear and spoils symphony. Let a man speak ever so good sense, if he time not his discourse to the place, company, and other circumstances he is in, he will not gain any credit, but contempt, by what he says: he will be thought to fail extremely in discretion, though he abound in eloquence; to want judgment, though he shows wit: therefore, in the main, he will not acquire the esteem of men, but will infallibly be blamed and despised by all.

In the same manner, when, in a religious community, things are not done at proper times, it causes disorder, is a deformity in religious discipline, and often causes disturbance in a house that is not again composed without great difficulty, and giving trouble both to the superioress and sisters.

If it be so great a prejudice to regular discipline to disturb the order of a convent by performing ordinary actions at undue times, or by employing ourselves in one thing when obedience calls us to another,—for example, to stay in our chamber when called to the refectory, to continue to read when we are to go to bed, or continue in bed when we are to rise,—how much worse is it to study in time of prayer, to employ ourselves in temporal affairs or the business of the convent, when we are to be employed in our devotions and examens, spiritual reading, and the like! How much worse is it still, not only to put off our spiritual duties on this account, but to neglect them entirely—a least, not to give them their full time!

A little stretching of the sinews beyond their due place will cause pain; an unusual disturbance of the elements will endanger a vessel at sea, or at least give trouble to the mariners, but a violent disturbance causes so great a storm as sinks the ship. when there is a disorder in the noble part of man, some malignant distemper or death itself ensueth. I call our spiritual duties the most noble and vital parts of a religious and virtuous life; therefore, to omit them, to shorten them, or even to change their times, without necessity and leave, does not only give trouble, but causes great and dangerous disorders in a community, an entire decay of spirit, and the subversion of discipline.

It is impossible to maintain spirit, health, and strength of the soul, without prayer, examens, spiritual reading, &c., as it is to support the health and strength of our bodies without corpo-

ral food : they are as necessary nourishment of a spiritual life, as meat and drink are of our corporal life. It is with great reason that Saint Ignatius admonishes us in this Rule to spend the full time in spiritual things, and again, that we are to bestow, with all diligence in the Lord, the time prescribed for examens, prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading.

Having seen how necessary it is to live according to order—that is, to attribute to every thing we do the proper time allotted for it, we will now particularly consider what Saint Ignatius means by these words: “Let all spend their time in spiritual things.”

I observe, first, that we must be careful to give the full time to spiritual things ; we must not on any account omit or shorten our spiritual duties in order to gain time for other things, as our studies, corporal labours, or even works of charity. We must not omit or shorten them on account of our studies, because we are taught in the Sixteenth Rule, that the study of solid and perfect virtue is of far greater moment than either learning or other natural and human gifts ; without a solid foundation of piety and devotion, learning is apt to puff us up with pride, and become very dangerous, if not pernicious to our souls. When great learning and natural talents are grounded in solid virtue, they render us capable of doing much good, both for the glory of God and the benefit of souls ; for it is from the interior that force must flow to the exterior to bring us efficaciously to the end proposed.

We must not neglect or shorten our devotions on account of labour or temporal business ; for we cannot labour for any thing that is so beneficial to us as the improvement of our souls in virtue and perfection. This is an advantage that far surpasses the body, it is a duty that God requires from us, with which he is pleased above all others, and is of so great consequence in order to salvation, that it may justly be called the “*unum necessarium*,” our chief or only business in this life. We must not even neglect our spiritual duties for works of charity, because well-ordered charity begins at home ; it will avail us little at the day of judgment to have converted sinners, and to have saved others, if we lose ourselves. What will it avail a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? We must not only not neglect prayer, &c, on any account, but we must



be punctual to perform it at the proper time, since order is so great an embellishment to virtue, is so pleasing to God. When we break order and put off our devotions to another time, they are often forgotten, or not performed entirely ; for, our life being regular, we can hardly find in the day any time that is not allotted to some duty ; as this is required of us, it takes up our thoughts and hinders us from reflecting on what we have omitted.

In the noviceship there is no great fear of omitting spiritual duties, because there is not only a time appointed for them, but you perform all your exercises together, under the eye of one who has charge of you : afterwards it will not be so ; your exactness in complying with your spiritual duties will depend very much on your fidelity, on the zeal you have for your own perfection, and the desire you have to please God. When in the height of your studies you are just upon the point of solving the difficulty, or finding out the truth of which you are in search, the bell may call you to examen, or some other spiritual duty, then the Devil will tempt you to stay to pursue your point, for fear of losing the thought and being obliged to begin anew. Unless you are well grounded in solid virtue, and have a great esteem of this Rule, you will be in danger of being overcome by the enemy, and persuaded to neglect wholly, or in part, the thing to which you are called.

The Rule not only obliges us to spend in spiritual things all the time that is allowed, but to spend it with all diligence in our Lord. There is a vast difference between spending the full time in spiritual things, and spending it well. Superiors, with care, may see that all give their full time to prayer, examens, &c. ; but the right performance of these duties does not depend on superiors, but particulars. Visits at prayer and examen are appointed to oblige all to be corporally present ; but it is the interior law of charity that must make them present in mind and with devotion ; their presence in body satisfies the exterior form of government, but if interior attention, devotion, and fervour be wanting, it will not be agreeable to God. To perform these spiritual duties with all diligence, it is not enough to be at them merely from custom or fashion's sake, we must perform them in spirit and truth, with a sincere desire to do them

well, to reap spiritual profit from them, and to please our Lord and Creator.

To conclude. Let me exhort you, dear sisters, to be very careful in giving the full time to your spiritual duties ; perform them in spirit and truth—that is, with sincere devotion and fervour, with zeal for your progress in virtue, with a pure intention, out of a sincere desire of serving and pleasing the divine goodness purely for itself, and for the infinite favours and blessings wherewith he has prevented us. Look upon these spiritual duties as the most essential part of a virtuous and religious life, as the most necessary means we have to defend us from our ghostly enemies, to arm and strengthen ourselves against temptations, to overcome our passions, and to avoid falling into sin ; look upon all reasons persuading you to neglect or shorten your spiritual duties, as manifest suggestions of the Devil, and reject them as most dangerous illusions.

Perhaps you are not now so sensible of the danger of this temptation : you may not be apprehensive of it ; you are still in your primitive fervour : you have the spirit of recollection, and so great an esteem for spiritual things, that you cannot easily believe you will deprive yourself of them for your studies, business, diversion, or the like.

Continue in this fervour, and there will be no danger. Preserve this zeal for your perfection, and it will frustrate all the malicious designs and attempts of your enemy.

But who can assure herself of always continuing in a state of fervour ? Frail nature is very inconstant ; it is almost as changeable as the wind ; it can never continue long in the same state. There is nothing permanent. Devotion and fervour have their ebbs and flows, like the sea ; their increase and decrease, like the Moon. It is when our fervour is abated and our devotion cooled, that there is danger of neglecting spiritual duties for studies, &c. It is against these times that I now exhort you to arm and strengthen yourselves by frequent prayer and good purposes.

## EXHORTATION ON THE TWENTY-SECOND RULE.

“LET them beware of the illusions of the Devil in their spiritual exercises, and fence themselves against all temptations. The better to succeed, they must know the proper means to overcome them.”

This Rule comprehends divers parts, all necessary to be known and considered by all those who give themselves to a spiritual life and do earnestly desire to advance daily in the way of God's service.

In the second part Saint Ignatius bids us to beware of the illusions of the Devil in our spiritual exercises. He makes a difference between illusions and temptations. He bids us defend ourselves from these and beware of those.

By temptations the Devil attacks us an open enemy: by illusions he imposes on us a false and treacherous friend. As we are always at war with a declared enemy, so we are obliged to be always upon our guard and have our arms ready. Thus we are not in so great danger of being surprised and conquered. Whereas a false friend, a treacherous companion, a malicious neighbour, may easily surprise us; because the trust and confidence we place in his friendship lays us open to be made a prey to his malice.

We all look upon the Devil as an open enemy, who declares war against us, — as a roaring lion that seeks to devour us. When he attacks us with temptations, and incites us to commit sin, we are sensible of the war; therefore, we stand upon our guard, and prepare for the assault; we betake ourselves to prayer, the most powerful means we have to overcome temptations; we examine our conscience, frequent the sacraments, advise with our ghostly father; we exercise acts of virtue contrary to the vices we are tempted to commit; we endeavour to conquer our passions, to quell concupiscence, and to keep our senses under a strict guard, thereby to overcome all domestic

enemies, the best auxiliaries the Devil has in this spiritual warfare.

The known enmity and malice of our ghostly enemy frees us from the danger of confiding in him, or looking upon him as a friend. Wherefore, the better to compass his designs, often in respect of the most virtuous and pious, he transforms himself into an angel of light from a spirit of darkness, and dazzling their eyes with the deceitful lure of apparent virtue, easily imposes on and deludes them. The Devil transformed into an angel of light, has nothing that is frightful, or that gives us a fear and horror of him. He does not attack us as an enemy, but accosts us as a friend. His professions not only seem reasonable, but pious; his designs good and much for our interest. He makes a show of sincere friendship, and all his suggestions seem to tend wholly to the glory of God, the perfection and salvation of our souls, persuading us that he is a friend, and no enemy, an angel, and no Devil.

Rash people are apt to put a confidence in him, and to take his suggestions for inspirations coming from God. Hence, they are often caught, like the unwary fish that greedily swallowed the hook because covered with an enticing bait.

Illusions are so called from the word *illudere*; for, when the Devil brings one to evil by making her believe that the thing he proposes is good, she is said to be deceived or deluded. The Devil imposes upon her, and as it were laughs at her for it. Hence we may gather, that illusions are also, in a certain sense, temptations. Nor does Saint Ignatius exclude them from the category: he only distinguishes them by the great difference of the way of tempting. His enticements and persuasions to do what is sinful, to give way to our irregular passions, to indulge our senses, or to break the commandments, Saint Ignatius calls temptations.

When he persuades us to perform certain devotions, penances, or good works, in order to a bad end, he is not so properly said to tempt us as to deceive and delude us.

These suggestions may be also called temptations, because they push us on to what is evil in effect, though in appearance good; for the end he proposes is certainly bad, and the means, though in appearance holy, yet, by reason of their irregularity are certainly evil.



To pray when obedience calls you to something else ; to use immoderate rigour and afflictions of your body, contrary to the Rule, and with danger of prejudicing your health and rendering yourself unfit for the labours of the Institute ; to be so intent upon your studies, in order to become learned, as to hurt your head, are all bad. Though prayer, mortification, and study are virtuous and commendable actions of themselves, they are not so in this instance, but become vicious, and are not to be permitted ; their effect is still worse, and evidently bad.

As God is not pleased with prayers and devotions that are contrary to obedience, no blessings are obtained by them ; but they often draw down punishment. Such prayers do not make you more humble, more patient, and more charitable ; but often more proud, contentious, and arrogant.

In the same manner, learning acquired by irregular study is apt to make us despise others and have a vain conceit of ourselves ; or, if we render ourselves by it, or by indiscreet and immoderate penances, incapable of performing our duty, we commit an injustice to the Institute, which received us to labour for others.

To frustrate so holy a design as this is very displeasing to God. It is this that the Devil aims at when, with the plausible pretence of devotion and greater perfection, he imposes on unwary religious, and incites them to indiscreet and immoderate penances and afflictions of the body.

What I have here said may serve to make you understand the nature of an illusion of the Devil, and how an illusion differs from a temptation, and in what it agrees with it. The difference may consist in this, that in temptations the Devil assaults us in his own shape, as an evil spirit and an open enemy inciting us directly to do what is bad. When he endeavours to delude us, he changes his shape, personates a friend, transforms himself into an angel of light, and persuades us to nothing that has not the appearance of good. Illusions may be truly called temptations, because they incite us to what is bad, under the appearance of good. They are innumerable, as appears by the vision Saint Anthony had, when he saw the Devil's nets spread over the whole world.

Those who are most advanced in virtue are in danger of being caught in these snares, if they are not very watchful and always

on their guard: beginners are in much greater danger, particularly if they rely on their own judgment, and neglect the advice and counsel of their directors and superioress. This is one of the most dangerous illusions to which novices are subject—I speak of fervent novices, such as have a great desire and zeal to advance daily more and more in perfection. The Devil is busy in trying all means to hinder their progress: he will not fail to set all engines at work; but the most dangerous are those that work secretly under the appearance of virtue. One mine, sprung at a right time, will destroy more men than a file of musketeers can; so one plausible illusion will do more harm to well-intentioned people, than many open temptations.

Novices, when carried on with an indiscreet fervour and zeal for perfection, are often apt to form a false idea of it by the suggestions of the Devil, which they take as holy inspirations coming from God, because at these times the Devil transforms himself into an angel of light. This sometimes happens not only after an invisible or an insensible way, but in a very sensible or visible manner, by apparitions or visions, God so permitting it for reasons best known to himself.

When a novice finds herself strongly inspired, as she thinks, by God, and is confirmed in this persuasion by the visible appearance of an angel, or of some saint, or even of our blessed lady, as it seems to her, to apply to certain devotions, and the practice of severe penances and mortifications, she afterwards finds the superioress or spiritual father does not approve of them, forbids her the use of them, and tells her that they are illusions of the Devil; she is often tempted first to condemn the superioress, to think her ignorant in these matters, and then to conceal them from her for the future. Others, of a very nice or rather scrupulous conscience, conceive, by the same deceitful arts of the enemy, great apprehensions of the judgments of God, great fears about the interior disposition of their soul, a vehement desire to purify it from all the relics of sin. These go to their superioress, and because she prudently admonishes them to confide in God, and not to give way to these anxious fears, they begin to think she does not understand the state of their soul, or is too indulgent or favourable to them, and hence are tempted, first, not to acquiesce to her determination, then to seek for new direction. They are always uneasy

and disquieted in mind, are hindered from performing their ordinary duties ; the service of God often becomes so insupportable, that, being no longer able to bear it, they fall into despair, or seek a remedy by giving scope to their passions and sensual appetites, with the eternal loss of their souls.

There are innumerable other illusions of this kind. I should be a whole day enumerating them, should I undertake to give you an account of all ; but this is not necessary : these two may serve as examples to judge of the rest. Let us now come to the means to defend ourselves from all these deceitful artifices of the enemy, of what kind soever they may be. This is what the following part of the Rule advises : “ And fence themselves against all temptations.”

Saint Ignatius, in these incomparable Rules of discerning spirits, has provided us most plentifully with excellent means to defend ourselves from the illusions of the Devil. It is hardly possible for the enemy to deceive us if we sincerely follow the directions he gives us in these Rules ; therefore, I recommend to you in a particular manner a frequent and an attentive perusal of them. Every Rule deserves to be particularly treated of by itself ; to speak of them all now is more than our time permits. I will only speak of one or two at present.

Saint Ignatius, supposing that good thoughts and holy desires may come from a bad spirit as well as from a good one—from the Devil as well as from God, he warns us to be very cautious on these occasions, and to examine well our thoughts and desires before we receive them as inspirations coming from God. We are to examine diligently not only the beginning of them, but how they affected us afterwards. But we are particularly to observe well the end at which they aim ; for, as the Saint very prudently and wisely remarks, when these three circumstances are right, it is a convincing argument that all is well,—that the good thoughts you had, and the holy desires you conceived, came from God.

The illusions of the Devil are chiefly discovered by the snake’s tail—that is, the end at which our thoughts aim. All inspirations coming from God aim at perfect charity, or the pure love of God ; for in this the height of all virtue and perfection consists. I say, they all aim at perfect charity, either imme-

diately, or they dispose to it—that is, to the performance and exercise of other virtues, which serve as so many steps of a ladder, to climb up by degrees to the top of perfection, and this, as the foregoing Rule informs us, “according to the measure of grace imparted to us.”

Charity, or our love of God, requires of us an exact compliance with our religious duties, and, in the first place, a most faithful observance of our Rule ; for our sanctification consists in this. It being the state of life to which divine goodness has called us, it is most certainly his blessed will that we should be exact and faithful in complying with it. All the supernatural helps and graces which his divine majesty has most graciously and mercifully prepared, to help us to our sanctification here and salvation hereafter, are all given us to perform effectually and easily his holy will. They were intended and given us by God for no other reason than to enable us the better to keep our Rules.

Whatever thoughts or desires lead us to devotions or practices inconsistent with the observance of our Rules, cannot be inspirations coming from God, but manifest illusions of the enemy, let them be ever so holy or virtuous in appearance.

Thus our Rules require of us a perfect submission to our superiors and spiritual directors, in all our spiritual concerns, devotions, and penances. We are to have our conscience open to them ; we must not conceal from them our temptations and passions : all our devotions and penances are to be regulated by them. Saint Ignatius not only declares and ordains this in the Rules ; but, in his admirable Letter of Obedience, says, with Cassian, that, by no other vice does the Devil draw a religious sooner to death, than by persuading him to neglect the counsel of the elders, and to trust in his own judgment.

When our good thoughts make us withdraw from the counsel of superiors, to follow our own fancy, it is evident the end at which they aim is bad ; consequently, they come not from God, but the Devil.

The most general remedy against all illusions is, to be sincere and candid with our spiritual fathers, to be distrustful of ourselves, and submissive to him. Without the simplicity and humility of little children, we shall never enter the kingdom of heaven.



A child does not pretend to guide itself, but lets itself be guided by its parents. God requires that all religious should have the same humility to let themselves be ruled and guided by their superiors, not only in external things, but in all their spiritual matters belonging to their consciences.

This agrees with what Saint Anthony saw in the vision I just now mentioned. It was only the humble who could creep under, and so avoid being caught in the Devil's nets.

Let us, then, endeavour to be truly humble and submissive in all things to the directions of our superioress and ghostly father. Make yourselves saints according to the spirit of the Institute: that is the way God has chalked out for us; we can arrive at perfection by no other way. Though your thoughts and desires be ever so holy in appearance, if they lead you from this way, they are illusions of the Devil, and lead to perdition.

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### EXHORTATION ON THE TWENTY-THIRD RULE.

FROM the twenty-third, our Rules treat of the vows. You are to observe, that the right understanding of such Rules as regard our vows is of the greatest consequence. All divines agree that the vows contain the very substance or essence of a religious state.

I will only speak of vows in general to-day.

A vow is a promise made to God. We must not promise any thing to God that is imperfect, much less what is sinful or criminal in itself. The thing we vow must always be good or according to virtue. Divines require yet more, namely, that the promise we make to God be a greater good.

By vows we consecrate and dedicate ourselves to the service of God, which, being an eminent act of religion, surpasses and

is incomparably more perfect than the acts of other moral virtues—as of justice, temperance, modesty, and the like.

Vows were always looked upon, both in the Old and New Law, as actions very acceptable to God, and proper both to move him to mercy and to incline him to bestow his favours on us, both temporal and spiritual. Therefore, they have been used upon divers occasions by holy people, to obtain extraordinary favours or blessings of God.

Holy writ affords many examples of this kind. The holy patriarch Jacob, by a vow he made to erect an altar and to offer up sacrifice, came home safe from his expedition into Mesopotamia. Barren Anna became fruitful, and brought forth the Prophet Samuel, upon her vow of consecrating to God's service the child that should be born.

It is also a common practice amongst devout Christians in time of great distress,—in sickness, for example, or in tempest,—to offer vows to God for their preservation: which plainly shows that vows are looked upon to be of great power and value with God, consequently, very acceptable, and of great merit.

We cannot have a better proof of this than the example of our blessed Lady, who, as all the fathers teach, consecrated herself to the service of God in the Temple by a vow of perpetual virginity.

The pious and learned Suarez is of opinion, that our blessed Saviour did not only become man to suffer and die for us, but to give us an example of perfect obedience; therefore he would bind and consecrate himself to his heavenly Father, to undergo his bitter passion and death for the salvation of man.

Saint Bonaventure, Saint Thomas, and most divines say, that a good action or work done freely, without a vow, is not by far so meritorious as the same work done by obligation of a vow. Many reasons may be given for it: 1. Because a vow is an eminent act of religion, by far surpassing the acts of other moral virtues; 2. By a vow we show far greater love and much stronger affection for God, than we do by any good action or work without the obligation of a vow; for it is a much harder thing, therefore a far more meritorious action and a greater sacrifice, to bind oneself perpetually under an obligation of doing a thing that is pleasing to God, than to do the same, but still retain the liberty of not doing it when we please;

for those who do a good work by obligation of vow, do not only give to God the work, but the very power and free will of the work, consequently, make a double offering.

Saint Anselm says, they not only make a present of the fruit, but also of the tree. Saint Bonaventure makes use of another similitude, and says, they not only give the use of a thing, but the property or dominion of it. Thus it is far more to give and make one master of a house, than only to permit one to live in it.

A third reason may be, that, as a better tree proceeds from a better root, and better fruit from a better tree, so better works proceed from a better disposed will. You shall know them by their fruits, says our blessed Saviour, speaking of the Pharisees.

Amongst all the qualifications of a good will, firmness and constancy in good is most esteemed, and gives greater lustre and perfection to its acts ; for, as an obstinate, perverse will in evil makes acts more malicious, wicked, and sinful, so a firm resolution and settled will in good renders our actions incomparably more pleasing to God and perfect. This firmness and steadiness in good is procured by means of a vow, which is as a stay to our corrupt nature — that is, to our natural weakness, inconstancy, and frailty. It hinders the will from falling back and relenting in its good purposes, and, by the addition of a new obligation, binds it firmly to the service of God, restrains it from what is bad — in fine, gives it strength and vigour to resist all temptations of the enemy.

We must all allow that no virtue can be secure, solid, and perfect, without firmness, steadiness, and constancy. Without these, either exterior temptations or interior suggestions, or our natural fickleness, will at least shake it, and probably destroy it.

Abraham going to offer to God the heroic sacrifice of his favourite son Isaac, carried in his hands the fire and sword. But this was not enough : before he could perform the act of sacrifice, Isaac was first to be bound fast, and then laid on the altar. It was necessary he should be bound, lest otherwise, against his father's will, he might make resistance, and avoid the blow. Though Isaac had voluntarily and freely submitted himself to his father to be bound, and then laid upon the altar,

perhaps he would not have had courage and resolution enough to bear the blow, had he kept free and unbound. Thus he would have hindered his father from completing his sacrifice.

The same generally happens in all difficult and heroic acts of virtue. It is not enough to carry in one hand the fire of present fervour, and in the other the sword of mortification. This is not sufficient to kill the will, nor to set it on fire with the love of God, much less to consume it. It is necessary that the will itself be tied fast and bound by vow to perfect and complete the sacrifice, that it may not flinch and fly back, frightened at the sight of unexpected and unforeseen difficulties.

In the opinion of Brother Giles, companion of Saint Francis, it is better or safer to have a less degree of virtue in a religious state, than a greater in a secular life ; because, in religion, virtue is so strongly fenced and guarded by rules and vows, that one may easily persevere in it : whereas, for want of these helps in the world, seculars are exposed to continual dangers of falling. The comparison he uses to prove this is very proper. He compares a small portion of virtue in a religious state to a small estate situated in the middle of a country remote from any enemy ; and a greater portion of virtue in seculars to a greater estate on the frontier, consequently always exposed to the incursions of the enemy and to the danger of being wasted.

We must consider that the stricter we tie ourselves to God, the faster we bind him to us ; the more liberal we are to him, the more liberal will he also be to us.

As we are far more liberal to God when we oblige ourselves by vow, than when we do the same thing without any obligation, so God is incomparably more pleased with us, and more inclined to bestow his blessings on us, when we do any thing for his divine service by obligation of vow, than when we do it without any such tie.

Of all vows, the three religious vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, are the most noble, perfect, and most meritorious ; consequently, they are the most agreeable to God, and the most profitable and beneficial to ourselves.

Some compare these three vows to the three measures of meal of the woman in the Gospel, because religious hide in them the leaven of evangelical perfection. They are called by others, a triple cord binding us so strongly to God, that it is hard ever



to break the tie. They may also very fitly be compared to the three nails of our Saviour's cross, because it is by them we crucify the old man, with all his concupiscences and vicious habits: in imitation, we are ourselves fastened to the cross with our crucified Master. In fine, others compare them, and very justly, to the offerings of the Kings; for, by the vow of poverty, we make an offering to our blessed Lord of our gold; by chastity, of our myrrh; by obedience, of our frankincense. These three vows are not only highly pleasing to God, but of vast use and benefit to us; because, as Saint Thomas very well observes, by these three vows the three chief causes of evil and sin are removed from us.

All evil, says Saint John, proceeds from concupiscence or pride. By concupiscence of the flesh is meant an inordinate desire of pleasure; by concupiscence of the eyes, an inordinate desire of wealth; by pride of life, ambition, or a thirsting after honour, superiority, or command.

Pride prevailed over and damned the angels; pleasure cast Adam out of Paradise; and avarice was the ruin of Judas.

Against these three evils, or contagious diseases, religion affords us, by the vows, three sovereign remedies or antidotes; for the vow of poverty cures avarice, or the immoderate desire of wealth; chastity quells the concupiscence of the flesh; and obedience, by making us subject to the will of another, defeats all the attempts of pride and ambition.

All masters of spirit allow that the cares of this world are great hinderances to virtue and perfection. They fill the heart with continual solicitude, the mind with innumerable distractions, and, as our blessed Saviour tells us in the parable of the good seed, choke up the word of God, and stifle the most holy inspirations. The cares of worldly persons are generally about one of these three things, — their riches and goods, their wives, children, and families, or about disposing of themselves. These cares are cut off by the vows. Poverty cuts off all solicitude about riches; chastity, about husband and children; and obedience, about disposing of oneself.

In fine, by these three vows, a religious makes a complete and perfect holocaust of herself and all she has in this world to God; for, by poverty she offers to God all exterior goods she has or may have in the world; by chastity she consecrates her body

to him ; by obedience, her soul, with all its powers of memory, understanding, and will. So that, whether it be to remove all evil from us, or to advance in good, it is very plain that these vows are great helps or efficacious means to attain perfection.

These three vows make religion a state of life, and are so essentially required, that, without them, there can be no religious state. Hence they are called by divines, the essence or substance of a religious state.

The better to comprehend this, you may observe that a religious state implies a fixed, settled, or immovable condition of life, aiming by its profession at perfection, by an entire renunciation of the world, and an entire consecration of oneself to the service of God. All this is done in religion by the vows ; for by them we renounce entirely all the riches of the world, all worldly pleasures, preferments, pomp, and glory, and dedicate ourselves without reserve, in body and soul, to the divine service, and this not by one act of virtue only, which we may practise or omit and reserve, as we please ; but steadily and constantly, with the tie and obligation of vow for life, and which cannot be broken without a horrid sacrilege. By all which it is plain that we are in a state of life by our vows, and by them aim at the highest perfection, or the most perfect imitation of our blessed Saviour ; for, by these three vows, as with three nails, we are in a religious life fastened with our blessed Saviour to the cross, on which we die every day and every moment to the world and to ourselves.

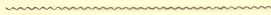
A religious life may well be called a martyrdom ; for as often as, by a punctual and exact observance of our vows, we break our own wills, mortify our inclinations, overcome our passions, —in fine, crucify the old man, with all its concupiscences, so often we may be said to die for Christ.

Saint Bernard, speaking of this martyrdom, and comparing it to that of other martyrs, says, that it appears less frightful and cruel, but is in effect harder and more troublesome, by reason of its long continuance, which is all one's life.

To draw to a conclusion. Out of what has been said we may gather, that the merit, dignity, security, and very soul of a religious life consist in the three vows ; therefore, the observance of them is as necessary, and of as great importance, as is the preserving of the being of a religious ; for there is no being

a religious without these vows. Other ceremonies, customs, and rules are only accidental, yet necessary for the security and preservation of the substance. When one breaks her Rules, it is like making a scar, or disfiguring the face of a religious state, and shows great indisposition and disorder in a religious body ; but, to break one's vows, is to give a mortal wound, and is in effect to destroy the substance and take away the very life of religion.

Endeavour, then, to have a great opinion and value for the vows of religion. Be very exact in keeping them : look upon any breach in matter of the vows as an inlet to the greatest disorders, and the smallest faults to be of very dangerous consequence. Because negligence in the observance of our Rules is a great disposition to neglect our vows, let us be very punctual and careful in keeping the Rules, that, when we come to die, we may not only not fear to appear before Almighty God with our Rules in our hands, but be glad to have them and to die with them, as Brother Berkman did.



## SECOND EXHORTATION ON THE TWENTY-THIRD RULE.

THE holy Evangelist Saint John, in the twenty-first chapter of the Apocalypse, gives us a description of the heavenly Jerusalem ; and after having said much in commendation of it, namely, of its streets, buildings, brightness, beauty, glory, and happiness, he concludes that it was encompassed with a great and high wall, which was of jasper.

Nothing in this inferior world more resembles this heavenly Jerusalem described by Saint John, than a religious state ; for,

first, it is holy by its profession ; second, fair and comely for its regularity ; third, rich in all sorts of virtues, which are its most valuable jewels and precious stones ; fourth, its ways or streets are of pure gold — that is, sincerity, purity of intention, and truth. Its clarity comes immediately from God himself, who continually enlightens it with supernatural lights and illustrations of the mind. Its glory and happiness is in the intimate possession and fruition of God.

As to our present business, I am to speak of the high and strong wall of jasper which encompasses the heavenly Jerusalem.

Holy poverty, as Saint Ignatius teaches, is the wall of a religious state, and when loved and preserved in its purity, is not only a most beautiful and precious ornament of religion, but a strong bulwark and defence. As long as this wall is kept in good repair and is well guarded, we have no reason to fear any foreign enemy : no power from abroad is able to annoy us, or to disturb the interior peace and happiness we enjoy. As long as this wall stands, religion stands and flourishes : if it fall, religion will be buried in its ruins : if we suffer any breaches to be made in it, we consent at the same time to expose this mystical Jerusalem, this heavenly city, to the plunder and pillage of our ghostly enemies.

The declaring of those great truths shall be the subject of the ensuing discourse.

Religious poverty is a free renunciation of all temporal goods, both in affection and in effect. This renunciation must be firm and resolute, therefore must be supported and strengthened by a solemn promise or vow. The motive of this renunciation must be holy and supernatural — that is, the pure love of God and desire of perfection.

The vow of poverty requires a free and real or effectual renunciation of all temporal goods: this free renunciation distinguishes religious poverty from that of common beggars ; for their poverty is by force and against their will, and the extreme want they are in often makes them sigh more passionately after riches, than most rich people do. By a real and effectual leaving of all, religious people surpass the ancient patriarchs of the Old Law, and many holy kings and rich men in the New, who, in the enjoyment of kingdoms and great reve-



ness, did not set their hearts upon their riches, but were truly poor in spirit, following therein the counsel of the Royal Prophet: "when riches flow upon you, do not set your hearts upon them." The motive of Religious Poverty, is quite different from that of the ancient Philosophers. Many of these did effectually divest themselves of riches and were in a poor condition, and this of their own accord, without any force or compulsion, but this they did either to gain a reputation in the world, or the better to apply themselves to the study of Philosophy and human Sciences.

Religious in leaving the world, do upon a better, more sublime and perfect motive, for they voluntarily and by vow divested themselves of all they have in this world, purely for the love of God, and ardently to remove all obstacles that might hinder their holy designs, of serving the divine goodness with the greatest purity and perfection; without this renunciation of riches, there is no possibility of attaining perfection, according to these words of our Saviour, "If you will be perfect, go sell all that you have and give it to the poor, and then come and follow me."

Our Blessed Saviour was poor, his conversation was with the poor; therefore to be with Christ, to be admitted into his company, we must be poor also, for who does not renounce all he has in this world, cannot be my disciple. It is as impossible to be a true disciple of Christ, that is, a perfect Religious, without this virtue and vow of Holy Poverty, as it is to build a high tower without money, or to beat a powerful enemy without an army: as to attempt

to do either of these would be thought madness, so to pretend to Evangelical perfection without poverty, is presumptuous folly. The reason is plain, for it is in vain to hope to be a perfect disciple of Christ, unless our lives resemble his, our perfection consists in following his footsteps, because he is the way that leads to perfection and sanctity: if we do not tread in his paths we are not his followers, consequently not his disciples.

Our Blessed Saviour professed poverty all his life, from his birth in Bethlehem, to his death on Mount Calvary. He was not born in a house, but in a stable, and that not his own, as soon as he was born he was laid upon straw in a manger, not a bed. He passed the three years of his preaching without having either house or cover, as he himself testifies: "The foxes have their dens, and the fowls of the air their nests; but the Son of man hath where to lay his head:" as he had no house, so he had no lands nor possessions, but lived either upon alms, or on what his disciples procured for him, with the labour of their hands. Whatever was given him by charitable persons, was put into a common purse, and his Apostles shared it as much, or more than he; sometimes he had no money at all, therefore was obliged to work a miracle to have sufficient to pay tribute to the Roman Emperor, for himself and Saint Peter.

He made choice of a poor virgin for a mother, a poor carpenter for his foster-father, both gained their living with the labour of their hands, with the labour of

their hands ; in fine, as he was born and lived in poverty, he also died naked on the cross, having been before stripped of his clothes : when his sacred corpse was to be buried, he was beholden to the pious charity of St. Joseph of Arimathea, for his winding sheet, How dear a treasure was Holy Poverty to our blessed Redeemer since he cherished it so tenderly all his life, and would even practice it after his death.

This example of Christ was strictly followed by the Apostles and the primitive Christians, for, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, they lived in common — all Apostolical men, ever since the time of the Apostles, have looked upon Holy Poverty as the badge and livery of their vocation, and all holy Founders of Religious Orders, since the institution of them, have placed it as the foundation of a religious state of life.

It seems very reasonable that Holy Poverty should be the first lesson to be learned in Religion ; for, as we came naked into this world, and are to go naked out of it, so it is fitting now that being spiritually dead to the world, and being to begin a new and spiritual life, we should strip ourselves of all worldly cares, concerns and solitudes, which are great hindrances to our progress in virtue whilst we live, and will certainly give great uneasiness and trouble to us at the hour of death, when we shall not have the merit of leaving them, but the confusion of being left by them, as rich worldly people have been. St. Paul says, we brought nothing into this world, so it will not be permitted that we take anything out of it.

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He made choice of a poor virgin for a mother, a poor carpenter for his foster-father, both gained their living with the labour of their hands, with the labour of



their hands ; in fine, as he was born and lived in poverty, he also died naked on the cross, having been before stripped of his clothes : when his sacred corpse was to be buried, he was beholden to the pious charity of St. Joseph of Arimathea, for his winding sheet, How dear a treasure was Holy Poverty to our blessed Redeemer since he cherished it so tenderly all his life, and would even practice it after his death.

This example of Christ was strictly followed by the Apostles and the primitive Christians, for, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, they lived in common — all Apostolical men, ever since the time of the Apostles, have looked upon Holy Poverty as the badge and livery of their vocation, and all holy Founders of Religious Orders, since the institution of them, have placed it as the foundation of a religious state of life.

It seems very reasonable that Holy Poverty should be the first lesson to be learned in Religion ; for, as we came naked into this world, and are to go naked out of it, so it is fitting now that being spiritually dead to the world, and being to begin a new and spiritual life, we should strip ourselves of all worldly cares, concerns and solitudes, which are great hindrances to our progress in virtue whilst we live, and will certainly give great uneasiness and trouble to us at the hour of death, when we shall not have the merit of leaving them, but the confusion of being left by them, as rich worldly people have been. St. Paul says, we brought nothing into this world, so it will not be permitted that we take anything out of it.

St. Ambrose speaking of Holy Poverty, calls it the first virtue, and the parent and source of all, and he gives this reason for it; because it is by the contempt of worldly goods that we deserve everlasting ones, for no one can merit an everlasting kingdom, or ascent to heaven, who is pressed down with covetous cares, that he cannot raise himself above the earth; hence our Blessed Saviour, teaching his disciples the way to attain true felicity, place Holy Poverty as the first step by which we are to ascend to it. "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

Holy Poverty is not only the foundation of a Religious life, it is also its perfection and security - it is the high and strong wall of this heavenly city, religion; as the walls of a tower are its defence against an insulting enemy, and procure to its citizens security and tranquility, so Holy Poverty defends religion from its ghostly enemies, and procures for us a peaceable and undisturbed exercise of all virtues. Our ghostly enemies are the world, the flesh and the devil; Holy Poverty is a most powerful defence against these - it defends us from the world, by cutting off all hopes and prospects of making a fortune in it: it frees the heart from innumerable cares and fears, it sets it at perfect liberty to attend solely to the service of God and its own perfection; it is a great defence against the allurements of pleasure, consequently helps extremely to defeat the concupiscence of the flesh. As riches procure plenty of good cheer, so these are or-

dinarily followed by intemperance, many sinful excesses, sensual pleasures and the like; poverty on the contrary, obliges to great frugality, both in meat and drink, and is accompanied with sobriety, temperance, purity both of mind <sup>of</sup> and body, and innumerable other virtues.

Holy Poverty is the mother of humility and so protects us from the temptations of the devil, all proud and ambitious thoughts. As long as this high and strong wall of Holy Poverty is kept up in good repair, it secures us from all assaults of these ghostly enemies, for no vice can enter this mystical Jerusalem, so long as its walls are defended by us. Holy Poverty makes a religious life a nursery of virtue, a school of perfection, consequently a Paradise on earth, whilst it is preserved in its purity, all virtues will grow up and flourish in it, to the great benefit of religious and no less edification of seculars. One may truly say that poverty is the wall of religion, it separates religious from the world, and distinguishes them from seculars: the moment we pass this wall, we step again into the world; the moment we transgress the vow of poverty we become worldlings in affection, and apostatize from religion for this cause, St. Pachomius, in his rule appoints the same punishment for transgressors against poverty, as he did for apostates. If Holy Poverty be such a great defence and protection to religion, what a misfortune must it be to any Religious Order to have this strong wall come to decay? what can be expected from such an accident,

but terrible disorder, plunder, pillage, and ruin! A city without walls gives no security to its inhabitants, but is a certain pray to an enemy, and the richer and more flourishing it is, the greater danger it is in of being ransacked.

The best established religious Monasteries, and the most flourishing for piety and virtue, will infallibly fall into relaxation of discipline, disorder and ruin, if the vow of poverty is neglected, propriety enters in amongst the religious: how many examples have we of this in the history of the Church? alas! they can hardly be numbered, they are so many. We have innumerable examples of religious houses, once famous for strict observance of religious discipline, and for learning and sanctity, which, by the neglect of Holy Poverty, became as infamous for their scandalous lives, as they were before famous for their religious lives, and at last fell into such excesses, that to remove the scandal, the Church was obliged to dissolve the house, and abolish as much as possible, the very memory of them. It may be applied to them, what the Prophet Isaiah said of the Kingdom of Israel: "The Land was replenished with silver and gold, there was no end of their treasures, and the Land was likewise of course filled with idols, and the vices and abominations of the Gentiles:" For as covetousness is the root all evils, what wonder all wickedness springs forth and grows up, where Holy Poverty is beaten down?

As abundance of wealth was the ruin of Israel:



so it has been a great prejudice and almost ruin of the Christian commonwealth. Saint Jerome gives us an account of this in the life of St. Malachy. He observes that the Christian Religion was born in Poverty, being first taught and preached by poor fishermen, the holy Apostles; in its riper years, it increased by persecution, was crowned by martyrdom, and flourished in virtue; but after princes entered into the Church the Christian commonwealth grew indeed more powerful, but less virtuous. When the Church made profession of Holy Poverty, as it did in the time of the Apostles, its glory was not in having full purses, but power to cure the lame man: "I have neither silver or gold therefore I cannot give you any, but I have power to cure your lameness, wherefore, arise and walk!" How much better and more honourable it is for a Christian to have the power of curing the lame, without any silver or gold, than to have silver or gold without having this power; and <sup>if</sup> it is to be so commendable in a Christian, how much more necessary it is for a Religious to prefer virtue and supernatural gifts, before money and the riches of this world. We read of the children of Israel, that when they were in the desert expecting to receive a new law, being weary of waiting so long for Moses, they made to themselves a golden calf, out of the spoils of the Egyptians, that is, the silver and gold that by the order of God they had taken from the Egyptians. This prosecuting of the Jews appears not only very ungrateful to God, after so many favours received from him both in Egypt

and in the desert, but astonishingly foolish; yet the ingratitude and folly of religious persons is nothing inferior to that of the Jews, when after having been so graciously called by God to a religious life, and received so many graces and favours from him, they make themselves an idol of the spoils of this world, by setting their hearts and affections again upon earthly things, which they had so piously and graciously left before for God's sake, to follow with greater exactness the example of Christ, poor in his birth, poor in his life, poor in his death.

Having now heard how great a defence and sure protection to a religious life this strong and high wall of Holy Poverty is, having seen the advantages we continually receive, by its keeping off our ghostly enemies, and by procuring for us a quiet and peaceable exercise of all sorts of virtues and perfection, in fine, having beheld the unfortunate overthrow and ruin of religious houses, the entire decay of regular discipline and order, the loss of spirit and devotion, the great disorders, abominations, and crimes, that rush in upon religion, when once a breach is made in the wall of Holy Poverty; having heard and seen this, let us endeavour with all diligence, to maintain and preserve this wall of religion in its primitive purity and strength, as we are taught by our holy rule, and are encouraged not only by the example of St. Ignatius, but by the practice and example of our Blessed Saviour himself; that by having truly left the world both in affection and effect, to follow our Sa-

viour in the profession of Poverty, we may be  
worthy to receive in this life the promised hun-  
dred-fold, and the Kingdom of Heaven in the  
next, which God of his infinite goodness grant.  
Amen.

















