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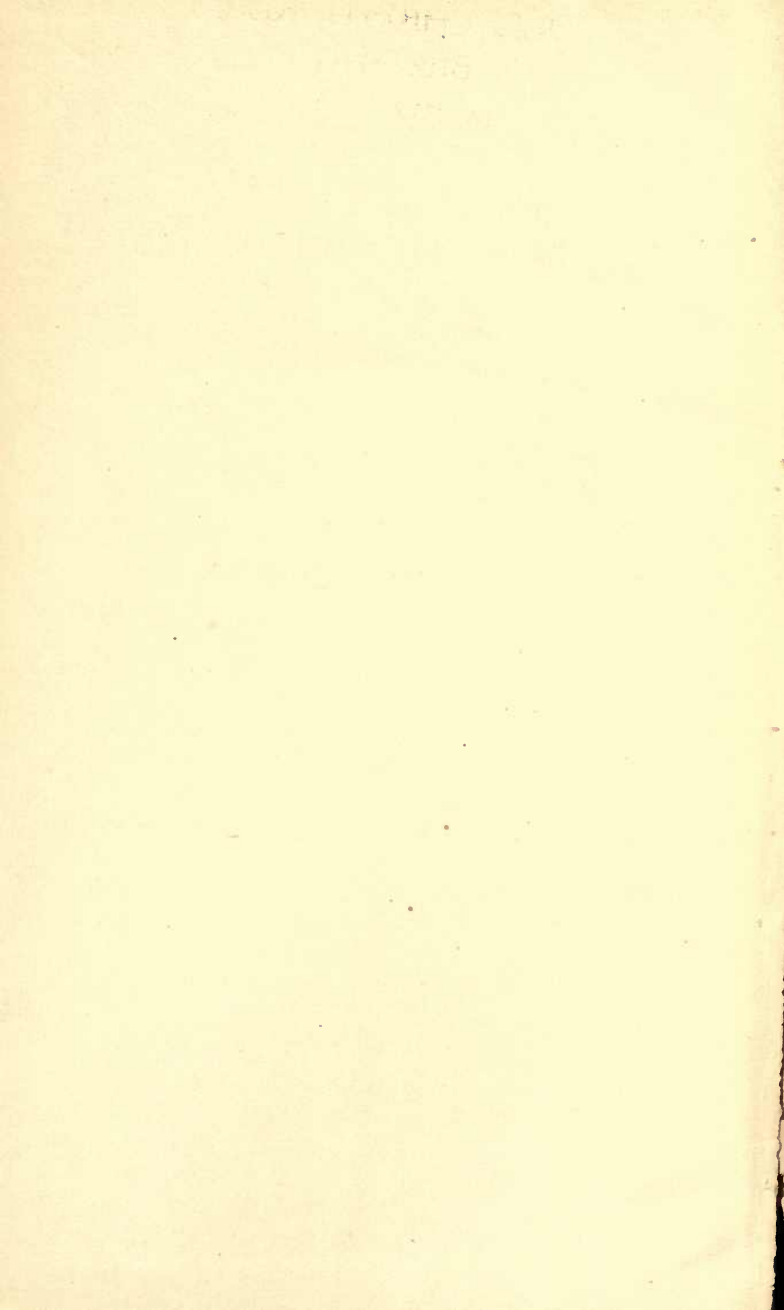
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A TREATISE ON THE VOWS AND VIRTUES

OF THE

RELIGIOUS STATE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

REV. J. B. SAINT-JURE, S.J.

BY

A SISTER OF MERCY

VOLUME II.

“Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.—*St. Matt. ch. 5, v. 28.* —

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LORETTO BENEVIKOR CONVENT

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THE NECESSARY QUALITIES FOR LIVING
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CHAPTER I.

THE ADVANTAGES OF COMMUNITY LIFE, SUPERIOR TO
THAT OF THE SOLITARY LIFE.

THE Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, in drawing a parallel between these two lives, says that the solitary life is better suited to the perfect, and that community life is most useful to such as tend to perfection. He proves it thus: Solitude, he says, is not the essence of perfection any more than poverty, it is but the means. It is evident that solitude is not conducive to action, but to contemplation, according to what God said by Osee: "I will lead the soul into solitude and there speak to her heart;" I will converse freely with her. Whence it comes that solitude is good in religion only, where the life is contemplative, and not where profession is made of an active life, unless it be only for a time, after the example of our Lord, of whom

St. Luke says: He retired alone to a mountain, there passing the night in prayer.

Let it be remarked that the solitary should be sufficient for himself, and not have need of others; he should consequently be perfect; for we deem a thing perfect when nothing is wanting to it—and hence, solitude suits a contemplative, on the supposition that he is perfect. Now, this perfection may be attained in two ways: either by extraordinary grace of God, which quickly raises a man to perfection, as in the case of St. John the Baptist—who also, from his childhood, dwelt in the desert—or by the exercise of the virtues, in which a man is powerfully aided by the company of others; either by the instructions he receives from them, thereby learning the manner of contemplation, or by the good examples and the remonstrances given him for moderating his passions, correcting his faults, and destroying all his vices. Thus it is that community life is necessary to exercise the virtues and to acquire perfection; whereas, the solitary life, to be solitary, can suit only the perfect; for as that which is perfect is more excellent than that which is not, but which strives to become so, so the solitary life, when embraced with suitable and requisite dispositions, is preferable to the common life, as being nobler; but if a person enters it without deliberation and a well-disposed mind, it is most dangerous, unless God, in His goodness, should supply whatever is wanting. This is the remark of St. Thomas, who adds, in the reply to the fifth argument—in order to explain this famous sentence

of Aristotle: "*Man is a sociable animal that loves company,*"—Hence, when he retires from company, to live alone, he must be either a beast or a god—that is, a *heavenly man*. He then continues: he is a beast, when he is of a disposition so morose, so fierce, and so unsocial, that he cannot live with others; he is a *divine man*, when in order to give himself entirely to the contemplation of God, he withdraws altogether from commerce with men.

St. Basil had previously treated this subject still more amply. He asks if it is better for a man, who wishes to leave the world, and to occupy himself solely with his salvation; to live separately from others, or in a well-regulated monastery? and he unhesitatingly replies that it is more advantageous for him to live in a monastery; and for this he advances several reasons. For myself, he says, I find it much more beneficial to live in company than in solitude. 1st. We cannot, by ourselves, provide for all our corporal necessities, having need of the help of others; as the foot can aid for the conservation of the body, but cannot do all—not being strong enough to maintain the whole, of which it is but a part, nor even to support itself without the assistance of the accompanying members; so, in the solitary life, what we have is often useless to us while we cannot have that which we may need. For instance: if a hermit is eloquent, is capable of consoling and of giving good counsel, such qualities are useless to him, and are as so many buried talents; and if he himself has need of consolation in sadness, of help in trial, or of

counsel in doubt, who is to give all this to him, since he is alone? We have need of one another. God has disposed this mutual necessity by way of uniting and binding us together; and hence, one of the greatest obligations of Christianity is *charity*, which, according to St. Paul “seeks not its own.” Now, is not this charity violated, in some measure, by him who abandons the converse of others, to withdraw to a desert, there to think of nothing but his own salvation?

Another reason in favor of the social life is, that good example both stimulates us to virtue and prevents our committing faults, or when we have the misfortune to fail, we have the happiness likewise of having some one near, to console, to assist, and to correct us. Thus, we do not fall—or if we do, a hand is ready to help us up. In the desert, on the contrary, you fall without knowing it, and you cannot rise, for there is no one to apprise you of your fall—the fault you have committed *self-love* conceals from you. This was the principal reason that impelled St. William of Poitou to leave his hermitage; his historian says: He sought more communication with men, after having lived in solitude a long time, and weighed well the words of the Wise Man: “It is better to be with companions than alone, as company brings profit with it, inasmuch as there is some one ready to assist those who fall. Thus, unfortunate is he who is alone,” etc. He held some conversation with men, and he committed no evil, for the evil that is not seen is not corrected; and where there is no fear of being

reproved and blamed, the demon tempts us more boldly, and sin is committed with more license.

A third reason, says St. Basil, is, that those who live together can at the same time accomplish many works and satisfy divers obligations: one visits the sick, another receives strangers, a third sings the praises of God; whereas the solitary can acquit himself but of one of these duties at a time. Thence follows the inconvenience so hurtful to that charity for the neighbor so much recommended by our Lord, as most necessary for our salvation, and that cannot be well exercised in the desert; for there we cannot feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and perform other charitable acts. Then, such being the case, who would prefer a sterile life to one that is fruitful, and in conformity with the commands of our Lord?

Moreover, if as Christians we compose but one body, whose head is Jesus Christ, it is absolutely necessary that we be united together as His members for mutual aid; but how could we render this interchange of charitable offices, if we are separated? How could I rejoice at the happiness, or compassionate the miseries of a person I did not know? The members of a body can give mutual aid only by their union and by their presence. One man cannot possess all qualities and all virtues; God distributes His gifts with an admirable and profound wisdom, giving this to one, and that to another, for, as says St. Paul, to one is given wisdom, to another science, to another faith, to another the gift of prophecy, to another the cure

of maladies. In solitude you have only the gifts God has dispensed to you—in the monastery you have your own gifts, while you share those of others, so as to derive profit from them.

It is this advantage of the solitary life which has caused St. Bernard to say : What can there be more dangerous than to combat singly with the demon, that ceaseless and cunning enemy of our salvation, by whom we are seen, though he remains invisible to us? Who is there, that in his weakness, can with confidence hope for success in such a combat? But in the company of many good soldiers, expert in such warfare, victory is certain.

It is well known how great was the service of companions to St. Anthony, for acquiring virtues, and causing him thereby to be as resplendent as the sun, amidst all the Religious of his time. As the prudent and industrious bee flies from flower to flower to draw from them the substance to form its honey, so to arrive at the perfection to which he aspired, this Saint studied each and every one—imitating whatever was best and most admirable in his companions : the humility of one, the patience of another ; in a third one, assiduity in prayer ; in another, fasting and austerities ; in another still, sweetness of temper and a pleasing affability—and from all, something to contribute to his advancement.

However, should a Religious not pay as strict attention as St. Anthony to the virtues of those with whom he lives—though he should not take as great care to profit by them—he would, nevertheless,

unconsciously draw good from such intercourse: for, says Seneca, whoever exposes himself to the sun must become tanned, though such was not his intention, and if one is for a time detained in a perfumer's shop he will inevitably bear away with him the odor of the perfumes; so also, those who frequent the company of the wise, must, in due time, and without thinking thereof, participate in their wisdom and grow better.

St. Basil says: Community life is exempt from the dangers to which solitary life is exposed, the first and greatest of which is vanity and self-complacency: it being easy for a man who is alone—who has neither accuser nor witness, nor visible judge of his actions, to think they are good, and to flatter himself in the opinion he forms of his fasts, his silence, and his other virtues. It is not difficult, says St. Jerome, for pride to insinuate itself—to glide into the mind of the solitary, and induce him to think, after a continued fast and a strict seclusion, that he is superior to others. Thus, vanity finding the door open in solitude, most of the virtues are thence banished. How can humility be practised, when there is no one under whom you may be humbled, and from whom you have to suffer contempt? How can obedience be exercised, where you have no superior? How practise patience, since there is no one to annoy you, nor to resist your will? How bestow compassion on the miseries of others, since you see none of the miserable? Then, we must conclude with St. Basil, that the social life is much better

calculated than that of the solitary to prevent falls, to acquire virtues, and to execute the commandments of God.

Furthermore, community life is much more conformable to the nature of man, there it is much easier to live without receiving injury; and to dwell in solitude, a man must necessarily be solidly established in virtue. "Those who live without human succor are stronger than we," remarked the Religious of the Monastery of Hermopoli to St. Omulpher, before he separated from them, to retire to a hermitage. "Here we are assisted in our wants, both spiritual and corporal, but in solitude, when one is afflicted, who will console him? When tempted, who will counsel him? When hungry and thirsty, who will supply him with bread and water? Therefore, can there be a doubt as to the extreme rigor and danger attending the solitary life, where all necessary things are wanting?"

All these forcible reasons obliged the Abbot John, after living twenty years in solitude, to return to his monastery, and there to enjoy the great benefits found in community life, not only for avoiding much sin, but also for practising virtue the better.

It must be acknowledged that going into the desert, man, with all his evil propensities, must, without a particular and extraordinary divine assistance, fall more readily, and also find more difficulty there in correcting himself and in attaining his perfection.

Ruffinus relates, in the "Lives of the Fathers,"

that a Religious, who was of a quick, choleric temper, perceiving himself so often transported with passion, said: I will go into the desert, where I shall have no one to trouble me and to excite my anger, and perhaps then it will leave me in repose. He accordingly went forthwith to live alone in a cavern; but one day, having filled his jug with water, he overturned it when setting it down, and on replenishing it a second and third time the accident was repeated, so that he was not able to restrain his anger, which he revenged on the jug, by dashing it to the ground and shattering it into fragments. On regaining his composure, he readily felt that the demon of anger had deceived him, and thus, he said: Although alone, I still yield to passion, and since everywhere there is something to combat, and everywhere we have need of patience and the assistance of God, I will return at once to my monastery.

Hence, all those who are called to live in community, should greatly esteem and love such a life, as being a most necessary means for their salvation—they should endeavor to taste the sweets thereof, and gather thence the fruits of perfection—by profiting one from the other: learning from one, humility; from another, patience; from others, the other virtues,—noticing in each whatever good he has for imitation. As those who travel in good company have much the advantage over those who journey alone; being more sure of the route, better prepared for emergencies, more secure from dangers, and proceed with greater contentment and joy—

thus, their road seems easier and shorter. The like happens to him who makes the voyage of his salvation, or takes the road to Heaven, in a well-regulated community, accompanied by many others, who have the same design and who tend to a common goal.

CHAPTER II.

DIFFICULTIES OF COMMUNITY LIFE—AND THE SPIRITS BEST SUITED THERETO.

ALTHOUGH community life, well considered in the light in which we have just depicted it, is easier and more pleasant than the solitary life, it nevertheless has its difficulties and trials. Nor are these difficulties few and light, for of all practical sciences, one, not the least onerous, is to live virtuously and perfectly in community.

In some certain points the solitary life is not as difficult nor as trying as the social life: for man, by nature, has much self-love: he readily bears with his own imperfections—often even, not being conscious of them, or sees them in less magnitude—nay, sometimes making them pass for perfections; but it is not thus with the faults of his neighbor. The second precept of charity is here violated—the neighbor's vices are more visible, more sensibly felt, and supported with more difficulty, and therefore, as it is painful to bear with him, it is not easy to act towards him with all the prudence and charity that his position demands and that is requisite for one's own perfection.

All who are called to a community life should strive to acquire this spirit of peace, and hereby to

offend no one ; to patiently support the defects of others, after the example of Samuel, of whom it is said : “ *The child Samuel advanced and grew on, and pleased both the Lord and men.*” Also, may be given for examples, Saints Zachery and Elizabeth—parents of St. John the Baptist—of whom St. Luke gives testimony as follows : “ *And they were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame.*” The example of our Lord is still more excellent : St. Luke relates of Him : “ *And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.*” His great imitator and true disciple, St. Paul, says of himself, to our purpose : “ I endeavor to live in such a manner, before God and men, that no one can reasonably take offence.” And in writing to the Corinthians, says : “ Live without reproach in the midst of pagans, Jews, and the faithful, seeing how I have done ; I endeavor to make myself *all to all.*” St. Jerome explains this passage in these terms : “ I conduct myself in such a manner as to become agreeable to all for their salvation, and in all things as give not offence to God. Therefore, if any one will bear hatred towards me, it is without good reason. I am not the cause.” To the Romans, St. Paul again says : “ *Providing good things, not only in the sight of God, but also, in the sight of all men.*”—that they may be satisfied with you, and much edified by your virtues. He says also to the Philippians : “ *Do ye all things without murmurings and hesitations, that you may be blameless*

and sincere children of God, without reproof;”—acting with every one in such a manner that there will be nothing reprehensible in you. Behold the effects of that *science* we have mentioned, but all this can be made more evident by experience, which clearly proves, that in all communities of both sexes there are ever some spirits who reduce this theory to practice with much greater facility and more effectively than others. These two sorts of spirits have been likened to the twin-brothers, Esau and Jacob; the latter was of a mild and gentle disposition, accommodating himself to every one; while Esau was rude, harsh, and fractious; and it was predicted of him by Isaac, his father, that he would pass his whole life in disquietude—ever having dissensions with some one. But his uncle Ismael, in a more lively manner, represented these unsocial spirits to whom we now refer. The angel said to his mother previous to the birth of Ismael: “*He shall be a wild man; his hand will be against all men, and all men’s hands against him; and he shall pitch his tents over against all his brethren.*” That is, he will be ever opposed to others—will go contrary to all—never agreeing with any one. Persons answering to this description are to be found in many religious orders, though these communities should be what they are styled—viz.: the “Paradise of the earth.”

However, these troublesome spirits in religion do not experience this truth, but find it to be rather the opposite. These are the souls which are agitated by the winds and beaten about by the tempest,

not in the midst of the ocean, but in port. They live with the sword unsheathed, not in the camp or on the field of battle, but in an abode of peace—in a place situated in the highest regions of the air, and there are ever anticipating evil—meeting tempest and storms half-way. Whence comes this? and what the cause of such an evil? It is simply to be attributed to the unsuitableness of such spirits to community life, where all has to be regulated and set in motion by the spring of charity. Now, the best spirits to live in community are those who are so well disposed that they can have it said of them, “They are made expressly for religion, and the religious life for them.” We read this truth of St. Bonaventure, and also of St. Celestin, Pope; and before him of Peter de Moron, who, as a prediction of this characteristic, was at his birth clothed in the religious habit. The dispositions best adapted to a social life are: 1. Those who are naturally well-ordered and regular. 2. Such as are gentle, peaceable, gracious, and amiable. 3. The respectful, deferential, civil, and candid or honest. 4. The condescending and courteous, who do not readily take offence, who complain not, who pass over the weaknesses inseparable to mankind, or know how to dissemble them prudently. 5. Those who are charitable and obliging, and who love to give pleasure. Father Anthony Quadrius, S. J., distinguished for his solid virtue and profound erudition, and who had, in quality of Provincial, governed for thirty years in the East Indies, where he sustained and greatly

advanced the service of God, said that ordinarily there was a vast difference between a good man and a good Religious, thus, in religion, one may be a good man, without, however, meriting to be styled a good Religious : because the fear of God, with some virtue, suffices to constitute a man *virtuous*, and to gain for him, in truth, the name of a *good man* ; but there needs something more to make a *good Religious*. In addition to the qualities to constitute a good man, he should possess, as the last seal, a tractable and punctual spirit ; he should be one who will practise virtue in accordance with his institute ; who will permit himself to be governed by his Superiors without resistance, and who accommodates himself with benignity simplicity, and patience to the humors and conduct of those with whom he lives.

If these spirits are best suited to a social life, persons having contrary qualities are not. For instance : Those who are selfish and fault-finding, over-nice, formal, bold, contemptuous, rude, surly, ironical, or uncongenial to others ; also, those who domineer, who are ready to contradict all, if not exactly to their taste and in keeping with their private views ; all such dispositions are foreign to a religious life—they cannot exist therein, except with great annoyance to themselves and others.

There are four humors that compose our physical constitution, that is: blood, phlegm, bile, and choler, one of which always predominates in us, and thus holds the ascendancy over the others, making us either sanguine, phlegmatic, bilious, or melancholy—

or of such a nature, according as either the blood or the phlegm abounds in us, and to rise above the other humors; then these four humors have each their respective strength and weakness, their good and their bad effects—and according to this good or this bad are we rendered more or less capable of living in community. The sanguine—by the particular disposition of their humors—are amiable, tractable, courageous, active, and liberal: this is the good; but behold now, the bad: they are noisy, fond of laughing and of their pleasures, and are attached to creatures. The phlegmatic are gentle, benign, peaceable, easily led, and noiseless in a house; but they are also cowardly, inconstant, lazy, and without depth or vigor. The bilious are courageous, enterprising, and kind-hearted; but also they are impulsive, impatient, blunt, quarrelsome, arrogant, and proud. The choleric are considerate, discreet, and constant; but, on the other hand, they yield to sadness, are difficult to please, suspicious, gloomy, stubborn, and attached to their views. All these dispositions (or humors) are good in religion, provided good use is made of that which is good and correction applied to all that is defective, but if this be not done, the worst dispositions by far are the choleric and the bilious. But let not persons of these last-named temperaments be discouraged; for each one should wish to have, to love, and to esteem the humor that is his, since it is given him by God, that he may with it serve and honor his Creator, and work out his own salvation, as also to acquire per-

fection. This each might and will do, if he give himself generously to the labor,—God having promised the requisite graces to enable him to succeed therein, not wishing any failure in the designs of His works. The misfortune is, that so few will do themselves violence in order to restrain their passions: for example, do we not too often see in communities, persons endowed with fine qualities and good talents, with which they could greatly advance the service and glory of God, while rendering themselves most useful to their order and to their neighbor; but instead of this, their talents lie buried, and their good dispositions are deprived of proper energy, for want of a little painstaking, and an unwillingness to correct an imperfection, to watch over self, and to practise more forbearance. As in a watch, if but one small part be disordered, one little spring breaks, it suffices to prevent the balance from working, and the watch is rendered useless; so, a single defect that you do not carefully guard against, or a passion you do not try to subdue, or an ill humor to which you are subject, but which you care not to mortify, is sufficient to arrest, to destroy the good you possess, and to cause your talents to be vain. Do we not see that Nature's products are not all intended for the ready use of man: as for instance, wood, stone, and the various metals; but that the toil and industry of art are requisite to perfect that which is but rudely begun? In the same manner we must apply our labor to the dispositions given us by God, in order to fashion and polish them—removing whatever

is rough and offensive, and perfecting all that is good. Without these precautions our natural endowments will serve not their design, whereas, with care and industry, they will become productive of much good to ourselves and others

CHAPTER III.

FIRST PRINCIPLE FOR LIVING WELL IN COMMUNITY.

WE will advance three or four principles of this great and important science of the social life, of which we now treat. All that is relative to this kind of life may be reduced to these principles, of which we will give the first, and St. Bernard will furnish the other three.

The first principle is to know and to have deeply impressed on the mind this truth: that in a community, in order to have contentment ourselves, we must first give it to others. In all moral causes, these two points are correlative—having a bearing one on the other, and also, a reciprocal union as in natural things: the father and the son are two things correlative, one not existing nor receiving existence without the other. If in the house in which you live you give satisfaction, you will certainly have it in return; if you do not give it, neither can you possess it; and this is most just: you should be paid in the same coin you pay to others—be treated as you treat them.

Now, in order that the justice of this proceeding may be made evident by reason, recall to mind the law of retaliation, almost as old as the world, and which, as it is explained by St. Isidore, bears the obligation of a like suffering. Nature and the law

have established this order, that he who does evil must suffer evil: that he who offends shall be offended, and suffer an equal chastisement. God said to Noah, directly after the deluge: "*Whoever will have spilt human blood, shall have his own shed.*" Moses enacted this law in three different places. In Exodus he says: "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life," etc. . . . So if you pluck out the eye of your neighbor it must be that you are resolved to give him yours; and if you do him an injury, you shall be obliged to suffer a similar one: this is retaliation, and from this the law derived its name. In Leviticus he says: "Thou shalt require life for life, eye for eye," etc. . . . "*that others, having fear, may not dare to do such things:*" and again in Deuteronomy he repeats the same.

However, says St. Augustine, this law was not instituted to foster vengeance and anger, but to keep these passions within reasonable bounds. Reason and justice demand, says Rhadamants in Aristotle, that he who does evil to his neighbor unjustly can have a like evil returned him in *justice*; and for this reason, the law of retaliation was instituted, in hopes, says Tertullian, that the fear of a similar return of evil would arrest the blow and restrain the arm of him who would strike. This law was very wisely instituted,—elsewhere says this same Tertullian,—as the harbinger of evil, and so to turn aside wickedness, by the fear of meeting blow for blow: thus, this apprehension of a second injury which is permitted, and which

ought to follow, prevents the first from being inflicted, and which is not permitted, and so, the first evil being kept in check by this fear, there is no cause for the second to act, and by this means all live in peace. Then, as the law of retaliation is at once a natural, a divine, and a human law, and was instituted or sanctioned among the Jews by God, for wise reasons, therefore, in proportion as you desire to enjoy contentment in religion, you must necessarily give content; you must do unto others as you wish them to do unto you. God may permit you to suffer in repayment for sufferings you occasioned, and when it so happens, you will have received only what you merited; but when you do not meet this just retribution, receive it as a special mark of goodness that your imperfections have been tolerated.

Thus our Lord says: "*All things, therefore, whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them; for this is the law and the prophets.*" Elsewhere, explaining the same subject still more fully, He says: "*And as you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner. Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you; for with the same measure that you shall mete with all, shall be measured to you again,*"—and you shall be treated as you have treated others. Thus, Nadab and Abin, sons of Aaron, for having offered to

God sacrifice lighted with strange fire, were consumed by the fire. Also, the king Adonibezec, taken in war by the children of Israel, had his toes and fingers cut off, for having, as he confessed in his punishment, treated in like manner seventy kings. Goliath was decapitated with the same sword that he used against the Israelites. Aman was hung on the gibbet that he had prepared for Mordochai. The two infamous old men were killed by the same stones that, through their calumny, had been prepared for the chaste Susanna. And the Babylonians who were enemies of Daniel had him cast into the lions' den—but he came out unhurt; when they themselves were thrown into this same den, they were devoured instantly. "They fell into the pit prepared for another—they were caught in their own snare; and the evil plotted against their neighbor has fallen upon their own heads."

This is not to say that you should suppose others to have such evil intentions; for, as revenge is forbidden to Christians by the new law, and the least resentment likewise prohibited to Religious by the profession they make to aspire to perfection, it would be a grievous sin to rashly judge your brothers—to suppose them to be so imperfect, or so little disposed to suffer your imperfections, or that they failed to practise the teaching of St. Paul: "*Bear ye one another's burdens; and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ,*" which is the law of charity. As another precept, he says: "*And if a man be overtaken in any fault, you who are*

spiritual instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted ;” but all this instruction implies that you look to your own demerit and not at your brother’s want of virtue.

A like misfortune will befall you if God does you justice, and is is what you would have experienced if others were not better than you : as Saul confessed to David—“Thou art better than I am, for you saved my life, and I have not ceased to persecute you.” As St. Francis de Sales says (with all his wonted sweetness and patience) : “Pray tell me, under what obligation are they to suffer your vexations and insults ? How can you prove that they are obliged to endure the pricks of your sarcasm, the coldness of your looks, the severity of your words, the indiscretion of your warnings, and the harshness or injustice of your actions ? Who has invested you with such authority, and from whence take you the power, to exercise such ascendancy over them ? Are you their Superior ? You will find, if you would but take the trouble, that it is your little virtue, your ill humor, your harsh spirit, your unruly passions, as well as your want of good breeding, that cause you to assume these liberties and to behave in this unbecoming manner.” Therefore, when you cause discontent and suffering to others, remember that you render yourself liable to receive the same. Listen to the warning of Isaias : “ *Woe to thee that spoilest ; shalt not thou thyself also be spoiled ? and you that despisest, shalt not thyself also be despised ?*”

Think you not that you will be met with according to your own deserts, and that you will be spared in what belongs to you?

If then, for a second reason, the persons to whom you give pain wish, from wise and virtuous motives, to endure you,—are unwilling to retaliate—the Superior is obliged in duty—in his authority of father and judge—to discontinue this disorder, and to defend those who are unjustly attacked and oppressed. He is constrained to this, for your correction, and for the preservation of the peace and repose of others. As he holds the place of our Lord, he should endeavor to imitate Him, of whom Isaias said: “*He shall judge the poor with justice, and shall reprove with equity for the meek of the earth:*”—that is, reprehending with severe justice those who molest the humble and the virtuous, who, to avoid contention and to preserve peace, love better to remain silent, and not to speak in their own defence.

Moses has declared, in most express terms, this order of justice in Deuteronomy, where he says: “*His judges and his superiors shall render to him as he meant to do to his brother; and thou shalt take away the evil out of the midst of thee.*” “*Thou shalt not pity him; but shalt require life for life, eye for eye,*” etc.

To conclude this first principle of the social life, it is well to remark that the Religious in his community reaps what he has sown—the fruit corresponding to the seed: if he sows peace and contentment for others, he will enjoy similar fruits for him-

self; but if he casts in trouble and thorns, he must expect to reap nothing but sharp and cruel thorns, that will prick him: "*For they shall sow the wind,*" says the Prophet Osee, "*and reap the whirlwind.*"

CHAPTER IV.

SECOND PRINCIPLE FOR LIVING WELL IN COMMUNITY.

ST. BERNARD, wishing to teach his Religious the principles of the science of which we treat, and the means to be taken in order to live well in community, said: "I think that you who live in community live well, if you live therein in an orderly, social, and an humble spirit: an orderly spirit as regards yourself—a social spirit in regard to your neighbor—an humble spirit in regard to God." Behold the necessary principles to be reduced to practice! Let us commence with the first named, it will throw light on the other two, and even on the entire subject.

1. Whoever lives in community should know and understand that he is a member of a body and part of a whole; that the community is this body and this whole; and that he and the others with whom he lives in the same house and in religion are the members and the parts that compose this body, and that consequently he should have the conditions of a member and of a part relating to the whole, by performing its works; for otherwise he can be neither member nor part.

The whole secret of the social life consists in this principle being well understood and practised.

First, The perfection of a body consists in the well-ordered assemblage, and in the mutual and perfect union of all its members: this body being nothing else in its essential and main point than that of all these members being well joined and strictly united. The same may be said of the whole in relation to its parts. Thus, the better ordered their assemblage, the more strict their ties—the more intimate their union, the more perfect also will be the body and its integrity. On the contrary, if you disturb this order, if you interrupt this union, you take away their beauty from them and you render them defective. It is for this reason, says St. Gregory Nazianzen, that the whole universe is established upon order: that thereby it is preserved and strengthened, that it receives its beauty and attractions.

Secondly, The member is made for the body, and the part for the whole: one relating to the other by order, and by the inclination of their nature, as well in all that they possess, as in all that they do:—the member for the good of the body, and the part for the good of the whole. Accordingly, if they first look to themselves, and aim but at their private benefit, they will be neither members nor parts; for the *particular good*, as defined by Aristotle's doctrine, and as given us by St. Thomas, always regards the *universal good* as its end, tending thereto by contributing its *all*. Each integral part is made to compose a whole, as all the separate beings in nature are made to form this vast universe.

Wherefore it is, that God has imprinted in them so strong an inclination to preserve the good and to prevent the evil of this whole, that we see them doing, even to their own prejudice, some wonderful things. What efforts are not made by all the parts of the universe to prevent a void? They all conspire, rise against, and confront it for combat; not permitting it any entrance into the world, knowing in some manner that, even if ever so little of it enters, it will make a terrible havoc, destroy the union and the harmony established, and that all this beautiful, admirable work of creation would fall into confusion and ruin. Thence it comes that when danger threatens, each thing comes in haste to the rescue, and to drive it back: heavy, ponderous bodies forget their weight—become light, and go off on air; light things borrow, for so urgent a necessity, a strange gravity, and precipitate themselves by a violent movement from on high, contrary to their natural inclination, if you regard them separately, but not when considered as parts of the universe, for which they must labor, to preserve it intact, and apply themselves to its good, even against their natural bent. Besides, to act thus, is no material evil to them, for the preservation of the whole is also the preservation of the parts. But for an evidence of this axiom, we need not go beyond ourselves; for do we not see that by a sudden and natural movement we expose the hand and arm to danger to cover the head, when it is threatened by a blow, and thus receive in its stead the injury; for the loss of the entire body will necessarily

follow upon the loss of the head, and not upon that of the hand and arm.

All this is just as it should be ; for the good of the whole, says Aristotle, it is easily perceived, is more excellent than that of its part, and consequently to be preferred. In truth, must not the whole be better than its part, since it contains it, and something else besides, viz.: the other parts. Thence comes what the same philosopher teaches, that each part has the same relation to the whole that matter has to form ; and that, as syllables are composed of letters and mixed bodies of elements, so the whole is formed of parts, assembled and combined. For this reason Aristotle calls them “ the matter of their all ;” and St. Thomas, after him, that in regard to the whole they retain the place of a material cause, and that the *whole*, as a thing finished, merits the name and the glory of the formal cause, which the parts look upon and desire, in the manner with which defective things regard those that are perfect. After having imparted this necessary information to knowing the nature, the qualities, and the obligations of a member towards its body, and of one part’s relation to its whole, we say that the Religious, being a member of a mystical body, and a part of a *moral whole*—which is his religious order—he should carefully try to act towards it with the spirit and the perfection of a member and of a part ; and for this end, conduct himself with a well-ordered mind, as St. Bernard terms it, and which he explains as follows : “ You should keep so strict a

guard over yourself that your whole conduct be regulated with order, both before God and your neighbor, watching so as not to offend God, and not to disedify nor scandalize your neighbor." To conduct ourselves in this manner, we should take as models our members, which strictly observe order; there not being one that is not in its natural place, that has not its function and its employment, and that does not labor, by the direction of that which conducts the whole work, for the good of the body, which by this means grows and increases.

The Religious, who is a member of his order, ought to conduct himself after the same manner. First, he should keep the place and occupation assigned him, and not usurp that of another, which he does not merit. What pain does not a dislocated member—one out of its natural place—give to the body? In the same way, what trouble does it not occasion in a house for a Religious to take himself out of his rank, or assume an authority not his own. Things which in our body are good and useful, so long as they remain where nature placed them, become bad and hurtful when they pass this limit. The bile, for instance, is quiet and profitable in its little dwelling and vesicle, but becomes most deleterious to the body when it diffuses itself. The blood, too, which nourishes and strengthens us, become corrupt so soon as it is out of its proper channels—causing pain and trouble. Is there anything more beautiful or charming than the human eye, provided it is where it should be

set in the head—in its right place—but draw it thence and place it in the hand, it would be horrible to behold. Then keep your duty and your rank in religion ; you will there serve it usefully, according to your capacities ; for each and every thing in its own sphere is always of service : all, when faithfully observing their rank, contribute to the gracefulness of this order. It was a pleasing sight, in the time of King Josias, to behold the chanters and the janitors of the temple, as mentioned in Sacred Scripture : “The chanters performed well their several parts, while the janitors were attentive in guarding the doors—so that nothing was wanting to these duties.” And what is not said, on the same subject, respecting the house of Solomon ? The Queen of Seba was in an ecstasy of delight, on beholding in the temple such universal order, and the arrangements and symmetry of all things therein. When the Monastery of Clairvaux was governed by St. Bernard, his historian relates that the Religious who had the happiness to dwell in it at that time were most admirable for their order. He remarks : “The beautiful order that well-directed charity produced in this valley filled with men made it for each one a solitude : for, as a disorderly person becomes, by his disorder, a multitude to himself, although he may be *alone* ; in like manner, a multitude of well-regulated men may, each one of them, have a solitude, by a union of spirit and by silence : *order* making *solitaries* of all of them—placing them in an *interior* desert.” Thence it must be concluded that order is essential to all communities to ensure their success.

Secondly, the Religious should never be idle. It is necessary that he labor and be employed—as we observe, all our members labor, not one being indolent or inactive ; but each is employed at whatever has been assigned by nature. St. Ignatius directs in our rule that, so long as health permits, all should have some useful occupation, either in things spiritual or in some exterior pursuit, so that idleness, the source of all evil, may find no place in our Society. St. Francis also says in his rule : “The brothers shall work and employ themselves in whatever they know, provided it be nothing contrary to their salvation, or out of keeping with their position : for the Prophet says : ‘*Thou shalt eat the labor of thy hands* : blessed art thou, and all things shall go well with thee.’ And the Apostle : ‘*If any one wishes not to work, he is not worthy to eat.*’ ”

But as this passage puts to the test all idle Religious, and does away with all the *lazy*, the subject in question requires to be treated in detail. Hear what is said by St. Paul : “And we charge you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from those who walk disorderly and not according to the tradition which they have received of us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us : for we were not disorderly among you. Neither did we eat any man’s bread for nothing ; but in labor and in toil—working night and day lest we should be burdensome to any of you. Not as if we had not authority ; but that we might give ourselves a pattern to you, to imitate us : know that if any man will not work,

neither let him eat. For we have heard that there are some among you who walk disorderly, working not at all, but curiously meddling. Now, we charge them that are such, and beseech them, by the Lord Jesus Christ, *that working with silence they would eat their own bread.*”

The lazy and sluggish are a great burden to and most odious in a community, and for good reasons ; “they are like trees without fruit”—thus called by an aged Father of the desert—“though planted in good soil and nothing is lacking to make them fruitful.” They contribute nothing to the common labor, and instead of assisting others, but add to their trials: they are nourished by their fatigue, and fattened by their sweat, which is a crying injustice. Participating in the public good, enjoying, as well as others, the commodities of the house, is it not just and reasonable that they give thereto their care and industry,—thus to add something of their own? But if they prefer to live in indolence, do they not merit to be kept in privation and punishment? In the republic of the bees, there are some imperfect ones, called drones, who do not work to make their own honey, but rob from the industrious bees, who with indignation drive these drones from the hive, and if they return kill them. For this reason St. Francis calls the idle Religious “*brother spy* ;” and one day, finding one of this kind roving through the monastery, amusing himself, looking here and there, without any employment, he drove him from the community with these words : “Go, brother spy, and promenade, for you

do not wish to work, but are content to enjoy the labor of your brothers, and to eat of their toils, as a wicked drone, that eats the honey it has not made." Often in communities there are found some drones, who, after having uselessly passed the day in which others have been well employed—each one either in his office, or in such duties as are profitable to the house—come in the evening to the refectory to eat the bread and meat that others have earned with the "sweat of their brow"—and besides these are the first to find fault with what is given them, to criticise and blame those who have been working, and but for whom they would be left in need. Have not all a right to condemn the lazy man (or sluggard), says St. John Chrysostom, and does he not merit to be contemned by those with whom he lives? Who may not justly complain of him, and say: Of what good is this man? He is a useless charge, a burden, who is here in vain; not however *in vain*, since he is an injury to the house, to himself and to others. But not content to feed on the toil of others, he even prevents them from laboring by his bad example; for a life of idleness is not without its attractions, its promises of ease and repose: or by his gossips, his envy, his secret menaces and persecutions; or again, by his importunities. Any man, whoever he may be, who has such persons around him, will experience difficulty in fulfilling perfectly his duties.

It is not possible for the idle Religious not to render himself odious in a community, and he cannot but become vicious, as in keeping with an

old adage and a true one: "That idleness is the mother of all evil." "Idleness," says the Holy Spirit, "has taught much evil." And St. Bernard says: "She is the mother of frivolity, jest, and foolishness--and a cruel mother to all virtues."

Then a man who does nothing must do evil, for in the first place, it is a species of evil to do no good, and idleness, being of itself bad, must open the door to all vices. An idle man is like arable land left uncultivated, and which, not producing good grain, must bring forth noxious weeds and thistles. A shallow and unoccupied mind is capable of all evil, to which it is naturally inclined, so that the demon finds it an easy conquest. "When a man is idle," say the monks of Egypt—as related by Cassian—"then it is he is attacked and tempted by an innumerable crowd of demons; but when he is at work, he will be tempted but by one at a time, and against which it will be easy to close the entrance, according to St. Jerome, who, writing to the monk Rusticus, says: 'Be always doing something, in order that the demon, finding you occupied, will have no opening to your dwelling.'" Hence these Religious were exceedingly careful to fly idleness, and never to be without some employment: for, says Cassian, it was not permitted that the monks throughout the extent of Egypt should be idle in any wise; for after the time allotted to prayer, lecture, and other devotional exercises, they performed ceaseless manual labor, thereby gaining, not alone what was sufficient for their own support, but the wherewith to receive

pilgrims, to entertain visitors, and even something to bestow in charity on the poor of Syria, and the prisoners of the towns. St. Jerome, speaking of them, also says: "The monasteries of Egypt observe the custom, not to receive any one who will not work; not so much by way of providing for their corporal necessities, as to advance their salvation, and lest their minds be occupied with evil thoughts." Then, for these reasons, a Religious, in order to live as he should in his community, must never be idle, but always usefully employed in something.

Continuation of the Same Subject.

We may now add, that the Religious should not only be employed, but should make his labor tend to the good of the community, as to its final cause—the part being made, not for itself, but for its whole. We see that all our members occupy themselves after this manner, directing their respective occupations to the general good of the body, and finally to its own good, because the good of the whole is, by a natural tie and a necessary consequence, the good of the part. Thus the eyes conduct the body, the feet carry it, the bones sustain it, the blood waters and nourishes it: there are some things to warm it, others to refresh it, and others again to render various services, without one being either idle or useless. As they all participate in the support of the common good, so also are they all employed for the good of the

whole body ; and whenever there is anything that may be hurtful, or that is good for nothing, such as excretions, they are driven off.

The eye, says St. Peter Chrysologus, is of great value, and most useful to all the members, for their direction, but provided it remains in its proper place ; for if it comes out, it is no longer of any use, either for the body or for itself : being equally blind for one and the other. As it is true that all the members are indebted to it for light, so also it is from the body that it holds the glory of its brilliancy.

Hence it follows that every Religious should be employed, according to his capacity and strength, for the good of the community in which he lives, and he should understand that the more cares he takes to sustain the common good, and the more advantageously he procures it, the more worthy also will he bear the name and the quality of a member of this body ; as we perceive in ourselves, where the heart, the liver, and the brain hold the first rank of excellence among the other members of our body, and are hence styled the *noble parts*, from their services being the most advantageously bestowed.

It is very just to give your services to religion, by whom you are fed, clothed, and lodged, as well as furnished with all the necessaries, which keeps you from occasions of sin, and gives you those of virtue, and places you in the way of working out your salvation sweetly and securely. Since religion takes so great care of you, it is most reasonable that you

return this solicitude, and that you make its interests preferable and paramount to your own. But herein many Religious constantly fail: they are very sensitive as to what touches them in particular, but care not as to what relates to the general interest: troubling themselves very little as to what manner the whole proceeds, provided that their own petty interest remains undisturbed. They are so attached to their own actions,—so fastidious and punctilious as to their own conduct,—so vigilant of their conveniences, that they are perfectly regardless of the public good, and they wish to have at the time, in the place, and in the manner, everything that is best suited to their comfort. It is with difficulty that they consent to be thwarted ever so little,—to give one quarter of an hour towards accommodating themselves to the order of the house. From this it is to judge, that besides the passionate love they bear themselves, and which so disorders their will, there is also a great blindness of mind; for they do not see that the *part*, as we have hitherto said, is made for the good of the *whole*; that the general good is more excellent and more important than the *particular*, and thus is preferable to it: that the inconvenience they *think* they have experienced by waiting a little, by relinquishing something, or by exchanging it for another, is often but imaginary, or so trifling as not to merit being mentioned. In truth, a fervent Religious—one who appreciates the excellence of his position as a member—would pay no account to such trifling inconveniences—but doing all as required, without notice. Even

supposing, as may happen, that this inconvenience is real and great, should you not patiently bear with it for the common good? Does not the arm place itself before the head to save it at its own expense? Do not the elements move contrary to their inclination, and support the most terrible violence, to procure the good of the universe, and thus prevent its injury, which is a chaos? Behold your models for imitation, and hence to learn your duty as to what is requisite for living in community—to be a part of the whole. When seeking to this excess your private interest, you injure the general good of the community; you are playing at hazard, and in the loss, you lose yourself with it. The same disorder happens when, in our body, some member or part draws, to the prejudice of the others, more nourishment than it requires: while the other parts, not being sufficiently well nourished, become much weakened, and consequently the whole body suffers—it perishes; and all owing to the fault of one single part, which was too much absorbed in *self-interest*, of having too great care of its particular good or well-being.

Another serious fault herein committed is, that too often there are members who excel in some particular work or employment for the good of the community, yet are indifferent as to applying themselves thereto, or do so unwillingly: being ever more ready to do what is not so necessary, which they are not asked to do, and for which they have no talent, only because they find these things more agreeable, and more in accordance with their taste.

What a strange perversion of the human mind! a perversion in its fullest sense, even to a total blindness:—that when you are competent to execute one thing well—something in which you are certain to succeed; for which you have the capacity, and which is desired of you; for which you are solicited; of which the house has need, and from which it would receive great profit,—nevertheless, you do not wish to do it, or you do it only with constraint—after much demur, and in a careless manner; while you will undertake something else with joy—execute it carefully—though, after all, it is not done well, excepting in the opinion of your own *blind judgment*, and which, alas! can bring you no recompense, present or future.

Then, since you compose a part of a whole, and you are a member of a body, learn how you should employ for the general good all the strength and capacity with which you are gifted, as you possess these qualities but for the good of the whole. If you fail herein, the other members can justly complain of you in the same way that the members of our body would complain of the eye, if it would not conduct them; of the tongue, if it would not speak for them, and make known their wants; of the hand, if it refused to take what was given it for the soothing of an afflicted member, the dressing to the wound; and so on with the other members, if they badly acquitted themselves of their separate duties, for which God gave them the particular disposition and talent, with the sole view of the common good of the body, and of the particular good of each member.

All this is most true, some one will say, and therefore it is my misfortune not to be able to accomplish anything for the house; to be useless, as my age and many infirmities do not permit me to hold any office. Behold me! I am always sick and require to be waited upon, and hence I am much trouble to myself and to others. In reply let it be said: that a Religious should never be disturbed or saddened as to the disposition God makes of him, for in his infirmities he can still do much, and he does much if he but fulfils the Divine Will. Moreover, though it is true that a Religious, by his old age or by his infirmities, is no longer useful to the house, it should be remembered he was not so in his youth, and so long as his strength permitted him that he used and employed both in its service. But again, it is not true that Religious, when infirm or disabled by age or sickness, cannot be useful to the community in which they live; for when unfitted for physical labor, they can still employ their mental powers, and be exceedingly useful by their virtue and good example, always being humble, patient, benign, obedient, charitable, and by praying for the rest of the Religious.

The following truth should be well considered: that in religion the most virtuous are ever the most useful; for by their strict observance of the rule, they maintain the institute in its first state and in its lustre, and thus draw down God's special blessing upon the house. Therefore, no one in religion needs apprehend becoming useless, as he can always

be of great service, if he but advance in virtue and perfection.

After having clearly proved that a Religious should employ himself for the community and labor much more for the common good than for his own, we say, moreover, that this is not yet sufficient. He should undertake this employment and perform this labor, not of his own accord, but in compliance with the will and order of his Superior. Thus, in our body, the hand and the foot move not of themselves, nor by their own inclination, but by the command of reason and of the will. Wherefore, the occupations of Religious, before they can be truly profitable to the house, must be chosen and appointed by the Superior, who knows better the necessities of the house, and by the obligation of his charge he must ever keep in view the common good. Should a sailor on duty of his own accord take upon himself any office that pleased him, he would do great wrong to himself and others by his unfitness for the assumed post, and would most likely place the vessel in danger of being wrecked; so, to avoid such peril, he should receive his charge from the master pilot. In an army, the soldier does not place himself where he likes, but waits for his captain to give him his proper position, to which he has to be faithful. To make good music and an agreeable harmony, the musicians must be directed by a master leader, receiving from him their separate parts. So in religion, it is for the Superior to portion out the duties and distribute the offices for the good of the community, and it is

not for the inferiors to make their own selection, or even to prevail on the Superior, either by solicitation or artifice, to grant them any office or charge in particular, or as in keeping with one's own inclination.

SECTION II.

Manner of Well Executing a Charge.

In accordance with what has just been said, a Religious should take whatever office has been appointed him by his Superior, after which his sole thought should be to perform it with all possible perfection. But you may ask, what is necessary in order to render our actions or duties so perfect? In reply: First, to love your office, for if you have no affection for it, it will be very difficult for you to do it well, at least not for a long time. Anything when done by force, with resistance and regret, cannot be of long duration; while on the contrary, the means for performing perfect actions, or to learn anything well, is to take pleasure in them and to love them. Thus, you should keep such great ascendancy over your mind and heart as will cause you to love your office, and even esteem it by regarding it as a disposition that God has made of you, and by which He wishes to be served, glorified, and loved; the means He designs you to use to work out your salvation, and to attain the beatitude He has prepared for you.

St. John Climachus relates that the cook of the Monastery near Alexandria, where he was for some

time, was a Religious of great virtue. He then says : As I saw him continually employed in his duty, yet always recollected and with tears in his eyes, I besought him to tell me by what means he had obtained so great a grace. Not being able to resist my earnest entreaty, he replied : “I never think that I am rendering this service to man, but to God ; thus the esteem I have for it gives me no time for rest, and the fire I have ever before me causes me to recall that which endures for all eternity.” Then the surest means by which you are to learn to love your office is to persuade yourself, as did this good Religious, that it is for God *alone* you are performing your duty.

In saying one must love his office does not mean that he must have an attachment to it, as is but too frequently the case. Besides, it is much to the prejudice of the person thus attached ; for in performing a duty with will and affection, he thinks it to be well done and to merit much, without considering that such cannot be the case where nature feels pleasure and in which it finds its reward, and so all the profit that might otherwise have been drawn from the duty is destroyed. The holy man Gregory Lopez has on this subject given a good and important instruction to the writer of his Life, who lived in the same house with him. Francis Losa, a wise and virtuous priest, having been employed some months in retreat and in the exercise of mental prayer, wherein he suffered many trials and combats, had occasion to go to the country to perform some work of charity, and whilst on his

road he felt so great a joy, so sweet a peace, and such facility for prayer, that he seemed to be in paradise. After returning home, he related to Gregory what had happened to him, and said his soul had been much dilated. Gregory, more enlightened, replied: "Father Losa, nature is dilated on finding its attraction and meeting with its food." I believed him, added Losa, though not altogether understanding him at the time, but with the grace of God, and the help of this saintly man's prayers, I recognized, some time after, the truth. I perceived that this joy, this peace, and this facility of prayer arose from the custom I had contracted several years previously in Mexico, where I had resided for more than twenty years—curate of the great church—performing the exterior works of charity. Now, these works, of themselves good, have nevertheless the wherewith to sooth and dilate nature, which is attracted and pleased, with no small mixture of self-love. This cannot happen in pure recollection and mental prayer, where nature finds itself a captive and in a state of weariness; for on one side it is in a strange country, and on the other it is severed from exercises to which it has attraction, and which afford it pleasure. Such was the true cause of the change in my disposition; on leaving my retirement to take more liberty and breathe more freely, by returning to the works of charity that I so loved, and by giving relaxation to my senses, to view the country, the valleys, and the mountains, my nature, after suffering restraint by spiritual exercises, resumed its former solace, and the

sweets of its early life and liberty made it rejoice exceedingly. Thus I experienced great content and a sweet repose, not realizing that all this was much mingled with self-love, and was a work not so much of grace as of *nature*, which took satisfaction in a thing to which it had a strong attraction.

We must not then permit the contentment and satisfaction we experience in our duty to regulate our judgment, as to whether we have performed it well or not, but let it be rather by the disposition with which it was done in the sight of God; not by an attachment of nature, but by the correspondence to grace. It is not the inclination one has for a duty that can be either bad or hurtful; on the contrary, it is good and can contribute greatly to one's acquitting himself worthily of it, provided it is well purified by grace, elevated by pure intentions, and free from all self-seeking; for thus it becomes an excellent preparation for doing easily or facilitating a duty, and of performing one's charge constantly well.

Attachment for an office brings still another and a greater evil, causing grief when one has to leave it, and fears and apprehensions as to losing it. If mention is made of removing us, we seek the influence of others, we make use of many pretexts in order to retain this duty; and when we have absolutely to give it up when the Superior so commands it, we complain and murmur; we become melancholy and dejected, we conceive a disgust for the new office given us, causing us to fulfil it negligently and with a certain tepidity, that often

degenerates into disobedience; thus, however desirous the Superior may be to change such a Religious in office, he is constrained to leave him; and while fearing to give discontent to one, he gives it to many, and the whole house judges it expedient, for various reasons, to remove this person from his charge and give it to another. The consequences arising from these attachments are sometimes most baneful, because of the jealousies and animosities to which they give birth.

To understand these pernicious consequences, we have but to remember the envy of Cain against his brother Abel, on seeing him more favored by God than himself; or again the aversion of the children of Jacob for their brother Joseph, who, they thought, was more beloved than they, and was destined to rule over them. One killed his brother, the others sold theirs. From these examples we can learn the extent of crime and misery produced by these jealousies of preference when there are several who have a like attachment.

It is only necessary to recall to mind the punishment that God exercised towards Cora, Dathan, and Abiron for assuming the office of the priesthood contrary to the order of God and of Moses, and also upon the unfortunate Saul, for having wished to retain the empire when God had resolved it to pass to David, whom He had elected (or appointed) in his stead.

What hatred and discontent, what sacrileges, murders, and massacres were produced by these ambitions for offices and prerogatives, that God

neither wills to arise nor to be dwelt upon! On beholding such terrible examples, who would not fear the evil consequences of ambitions for employments and charges, small or great! This should certainly cause us to mortify our passions, to entertain much fear and great indifference to all employments or duties, with an entire abandonment of ourselves to the care of our Superiors.

The second obligation necessary to the fulfilment of one's office, is to do it in the manner that would promote the common good in religion; that is to say, in the spirit of one's institute and for its end, and you should know, among us this end is our own salvation and that of our neighbors, the whole being for the "greater glory of God;" it is also to do it in the manner prescribed. Moreover, it should be done with an *interior* spirit, with purity of intention, as for the love of God, His honor, and for the same designs in which He will concur and co-operate with you; thus, you must unite your actions and intentions with those of our Lord, and before commencing your actions sweetly elevate your heart to Him to direct your intention and to implore the assistance of His grace, and during the course of the action often repeat the same offering. Without this interior spirit you can be a *good officer* in religion, but you cannot be a *good Religious*. In keeping with this truth was the reply and admonition of St. Dorotheus to his dear disciple Dositheus, who, in his charge of infirmarian, made the beds of the sick so well and neatly that he was attacked by thoughts of self-complacency, which said to him:

“Dositheus, it would not be easy for another to make the beds better.” St. Dorotheus, to whom he made known this thought, with much sincerity, replied: I admit, Dositheus, that you make the beds well, you have become a good valet, and hence, in this capacity, you could serve in the chamber of some grandee; but for all this you are *not* a good Religious. Where this interior spirit is wanting there is little difference, as to the goodness and merit of the action, between the Religious who thus acquit themselves of their duty and secular artisans, waiters, and servants. How necessary it is then that Religious should be more vigilant, in order to act more nobly and with the perfection that their state demands.

The third requisite to acquit one's self well of his office is to apply himself thereto entirely and not by halves. 1. Because religion has given it to you, charged you with it, and confided it to your care. Then, if you fail therein, it will suffer loss and trouble, as the good order of the house, domestic discipline, and regular observance depend in a measure on it; 2. Also because those with whom you live look to you for this office, and have a right to exact it of you, since religion confided it to you for their utility, and if you fail, through negligence, to do justice to it they can complain of you as one who causes them to suffer, who does not render to them their dues, and that another who would have the same office would be more faithful in providing for their necessities; 3. Because God desires this duty of you, commands it, and places in the perfect

execution of this office both His glory and your salvation, with immense treasures of merit of which He will demand an account on the day of judgment. We think, says St. Ambrose, that the word *office* comes from "*efficiendo*" (to make), and is pronounced *office*, as the beauty of the language did not tolerate the "O" they changed its first letter; or else it is thus said to teach you that in your office or charge you should do all things so *exactly* as to trouble no one, and to render them profitable to all. Therefore, be resolved to perform well your office, applying thereto all your strength and capacity. "Consider," says St. Paul, "the charge you have in the service of God our Lord, in order to acquit yourself of it worthily," adding. "*Do well your duty* that nothing be wanted, watching over yourself with great diligence that you may become a workman worthy to meet the approval of God, a faithful officer without reproach." "*Working in silence*," not tormenting yourself with the affairs of others, nor meddling in their occupations or employments. "*I beg of you, my brethren*," says the same Apostle, "*be not weary in well-doing*," apply yourself peaceably and constantly to the occupation given you, thinking only to acquit yourself of it well, sweetly, and without noise.

However, in religion we see spirits opposed to such conduct, either from too great activity, from an impulsive curiosity, an indiscreet charity, or from a good opinion of their own capacity, and they fail to give all the requisite care to their office, whilst they meddle inconsiderately with that of

others, and take upon themselves their employments. Our rule is explicit on this point. "*Let no one,*" it says, "*meddle in the duty of another, nor enter the place appropriated to his office, without permission of the Superior; or in case of necessity, not without the assent of the one in charge of such department.*" The reason for this express regulation being: 1. That the Superior has not appointed you to this office; then, why interfere in what does not concern you—of which you have not the charge, and for which you are not responsible? "*Do not combat for that,*" says the Wise Man, "*in which you have no concern.*" The meaning, according to the Greek version: "Do not busy yourself in a matter which does not concern you, and in which you have no interest." 2. This taking upon yourself the office of another is equivalent to condemning him, and saying he is incompetent for his duty: you put yourself forward as understanding it better; the first of these inferences is nothing less than a blow at charity; and the second, a mark of vanity—of the good opinion that you entertain of self. 3. You have an office, and you are in conscience bound to bestow upon it your time and strength, if you desire to acquit yourself well of it, so as to render it pleasing both to God and men. Nothing more than this is asked of you; then apply yourself entirely thereto—doing it as they desire. It is related in the "*Lives of the Fathers,*" that several of the monks who dwelt in the solitude of Scete assembled to decide among themselves a question as to the priesthood of Melchisedech, and

after having advanced some opinions, they perceived that Abbot Coprez had not been summoned, and they accordingly sent for him, begging him to come immediately. Having arrived and understanding of what there was question, he was asked for his sentiments; he struck his mouth three times with his finger, saying: “Woe to you, Coprez, for having left the things commanded you by God, to think of other things that He will not ask of you an account.” These words so touched all the solitaries, that, leaving the proposed question undecided, they returned each to his own cell.

At the same time let us distinguish between appropriating another's office, and *aiding* him in it. This can be easily understood by the comparison of the members of our body, that aid one another, and lend mutual help in their necessities, without annoying or preventing them: for instance, the hand turns away from the eye anything that impedes its sight, or it brings a light to aid it to see; the foot conveys the body (or person) nearer an immovable object, to be better seen, without, however, either the hand or the foot or any other member taking upon itself the office of the eye, nor having any desire to disturb or trouble its action, but on the contrary they all aid it when necessary to perform its function with greater facility, more peaceably, perfectly, and more quickly.

So to *aid* any one in his office, is to afford him assistance, when there is need of it, when he asks it of you, and then to serve him as an assistant, and *not* as a master. On the contrary, it is to take upon

yourself the office, when without necessity you intrude yourself on one who has no need of you—who has not solicited you, when frequently you are more of a hindrance than an *aid*, particularly when, through presumption, without order or authority, you find faults with what he does, and control him in his work. In this class of persons must also be included those Religious who neglect their office from a certain want of uprightness or principle—from a prying curiosity, most prejudicial to their salvation, as well as very importunate to others: who inform themselves of everything,—desirous to know all, both general and particular, that transpires in the house. These curious and uneasy spirits make use of a thousand artifices to seek out what they desire, thinking only by what means they may discover the secrets and inform themselves of the affairs of others, while they remain blind to and ignorant of their own; resembling those fabulous women of antiquity who when within their neighbor's house were very clear-sighted, but when in their own *saw nothing at all*. This vice of curiosity, says St. Gregory, is very hurtful, since it opens a man's eyes to behold the exterior life of his neighbor, and closes them for considering interiorly his own; so that, becoming wise in the affairs of others, he remains ignorant as to his own concerns; and the greater his knowledge in the one, the more blinded he becomes in the other. Wherefore the Wise Man gives a good warning in saying: "*In unnecessary matters be not over-curious, and in many of his works thou shalt not be inquisi-*

tive.” According to St. Ambrose, “*Do not be curious.*” and, as another version of the text, “*Do not torment yourself by wishing to learn things that do not concern you ; but the things that God hath commanded thee, think on them always—in other works be not curious.*”

But of the fault of which we are treating, and which consists in taking upon one’s self the office of another, it should be remarked that, in this there is still another fault—viz. : that there are some spirits so nice and punctilious in their office, and so jealous of their little authority and the power that the office gives them, that, however little they are interfered with or are trespassed upon (as they think), become moody, offended, and formal ; not wishing, on any consideration, that another should take a part in their *special* charge ; and are even silly enough, sometimes, to take it ill, if the Superior deems it proper to give some trivial assistance, or makes the slightest change in arrangements unknown to these *punctilious officers*. By so acting they evince too great attachment to their office, and a strange blindness in wishing to prevent the Superior from using his authority, wherein he has full power. It is true that the Superior should give to a subject all reasonable liberty to act in the jurisdiction of his appointed office, and when he is sufficiently competent for his charge ; but at the same time the Superior retains the power to make whatever disposition of it he deems proper ; for he cannot divest himself of this power so long as he is Superior since it is a quality inseparable from his

office, and by the right his superiority gives (or invests) him, he ever holds the principal place in all the offices of the house: that is to say, he watches, and should watch, over these various duties and those who perform them, in order that they be executed well, and gives to or takes from them, as he may find expedient for the good of all. It is even advisable that he should do this sometimes, without other necessity than to sustain the authority of his charge, and to keep the inferior officers in subjection.

It may be further remarked, as to this delicacy and sensibility in offices, that when two Religious exercise the same duty, but not with equal power—one being subordinate to the other—the first in duty usurps sometimes more authority than he should—looks for too much deference, and keeps his assistant in too great subjection; wishing nothing to be done without his approval, and exacting an account of everything. The subordinate in duty should be humble, both in receiving and following the directions of the one in charge: yet this one should be humble also, and not act or speak with arrogance: both one and the other should evince much fraternal charity and perfect good feeling, in order to mutually understand and aid each other: otherwise they will not alone cause suffering to themselves, but the office will be badly performed.

SECTION

Conclusion of the Subject.

The Religious who wishes to live well in community should endeavor to acquit himself properly of his office—to be occupied always in something useful to the community, and never to be idle; and to have an exceeding horror of *indolence*, a vice that should be banished from all kingdoms and republics. If the laws of the ancients declared the idle to be infamous, if the Athenians even condemned them to death, surely such a vice should not be countenanced in religious houses, where the inmates are fed and sustained at the cost of God, for whose service, consequently, it is just and honorable to toil, and where profession is made of combating all vices and practising every virtue:—the recompense for the labor, if great in this life, is infinitely greater in the life to come. Worldlings teach us in this a lesson; they occupy themselves incessantly day and night toiling for earthly things, which are both vain and transient—things that often they do not acquire, or when possessed in no manner content them, or that frequently, greatly endanger their salvation.

Theodoret relates that the celebrated Abbot, St. Theodosius, in order to animate his Religious to labor, would say to them: Would it not be ridiculous to see seculars toiling incessantly, not only for their own support, but even to meet the imposts to

give the tithes, and also to assist the poor, according to their means, while we would refuse to labor to earn that which is necessary for our support—to content ourselves with sitting with our arms folded, willing to enjoy the fatigue of others? By such words he never failed to excite them to shun idleness, and to employ every leisure moment, after performing their spiritual exercises—thus they united manual with mental labor, each according to his obligations and strength.

Ruffinus cites an amusing incident of a Religious, who was visiting Abbot Sylvain of the Monastery of Sinai, and when he saw all the Religious occupied with some work, said: "Why labor thus for perishable food? Magdalen chose the better part." The Saint, on hearing this, said to Zachary, his disciple: "Give a book to this brother for his entertainment, and place him in cell where he will not be served with food." At the hour of noon, the stranger solitary awaited to see if the Abbot would not have him called to the refectory with the community, but when this hour had passed, he went to find the good Abbot, saying to him: "Father, do you not eat here? Have not the brothers been to the refectory to-day?" "Yes," replied the holy man. "Then, whence comes it, you forget me, or did not have me called?" "Because," responded the Saint, "you are altogether a *spiritual man*, who has no need of material food; but for us who are gross and corporeal, we cannot do without that sustenance, for which we are obliged to toil. You have made choice of the *better part*, and therefore

you should be content." These words opened the eyes of the solitary, making him see how he had deceived himself. Filled with regret for his fault, he said to the holy Abbot: "Pardon me, Father, for now I see that I was wrong." Then the Saint remarked: "I am much pleased that you know from experience, that Mary Magdalen could not dispense with the services of Martha, while Martha, by her entreaties and her labor, caused Mary to be esteemed and praised the more." It was necessary for Martha to labor—to be much employed in exterior works—yet Mary was not idle—for by her love of prayer and contemplation, she was no less serviceable to Martha—and these two sisters were necessary one to another. Something similar is directed in one of our rules—viz.: That it is not expedient that any one should be so charged with manual labor that the mind should be oppressed, but it is also very necessary for all to have some physical exercise, as one aids the other: such as are occupied with spiritual duties should have them interrupted by exterior works, and these should not be continued or undertaken beyond the measure of discretion.

To banish idleness and sloth, consider that there is nothing more despicable than an idle, lazy person. A noble soul is always in action, and cannot exist without some employment. In truth, *action* and the *act* hold the place of perfection in the one who possesses them, and their cessation is a defect. Wherefore, the first Being, which is God, infinitely perfect and perfection itself, is a pure act, that is to

say, all an act and ever acting. Thus, our Lord said: "*My Father worketh until now, and I work.*" After the first Being those who are the most perfect, and who possess the highest rank of excellence, as the angels, are never idle, but are constantly employed. When God created man He placed him in a garden of delights to cultivate and keep it. Adam had no wants that obliged him to labor, and he enjoyed all things in abundance, yet he did not remain inactive, but worked with cheerfulness. Otherwise, the place wherein he dwelt would not have merited the name of a "place of pleasure," or "Paradise," and his condition would not have been happy.

There still remains to be remarked on this subject that God made all other creatures by His word, saying: "Let there be light," let there be a firmament, etc., but in creating man he formed him not by His word but with His hands, which are the principal instruments of labor and "*the tool of tools,*" as Aristotle says. "It is your hands that made me," says David, "and that formed me such as I am." Job had previously said in similar terms: "*A little while ago,*" he is thus speaking to God, "*Your hands made and formed me; shall it be well for you to cast me off; I who am the work of your hands?*" All this serves to instruct us that God created us and placed us in the world to labor, which the same Job clearly says: "Man born to labor." If in a place of delights and in a state of felicity wherein he had no wants man did not remain idle, for how much greater reason should

he shun idleness in this vale of tears, this place of misery, where everything is wanted, or not had but by skill and industry, everything must cost him labor. Moreover, idleness is injurious to the health of the body as well as that of the soul; whereas, exercise and occupation are very beneficial to both.

St. Chrysostom, in order to give a clear solution to this question, asks: Which horse do you consider the more useful? the one you keep in the stable on a litter, or that one you can ride or employ as you like? Which vessel do you think more serviceable? the one in dock at rest, or that one under sail in quest of the precious merchandise of the Indies? Which water is preferable? that which is stagnant and only fit to engender serpents and toads, or that which is sparkling and flowing? Which sword is deemed the better? the one in the scabbard eaten with rust, or the one which is bright and shining and that the soldier wields to defeat an enemy? Judge hereby of the difference between a sluggish and an active soul, of the evils caused by idleness in comparison with the good produced by action.

But action, to be good and profitable, should be wise, moderate, and justly tempered; for when it is said, work is necessary, it is not to be understood that we should over-burthen or injure ourselves by labor; and this we are made to understand by our rule. A Religious always works enough as long as he does not love to be inactive, when he does not remain idle and works according to his strength and capacity, and in keeping with obedience.

More should not be undertaken than can be accomplished, and the Superior should watch closely over this just distribution of occupations and labors. The body should not suffer and be overwhelmed by the excess, nor the soul cast down under the weight of the charge, or when subjected to a multitude of things to fail in one's exercises of piety; thus the spirit of devotion is extinguished, greatly to the prejudice of the over-charged Religious, who, by this means, becomes indevout, sad, annoyed, difficult to control, disobedient, and acquits himself of his office with a dissipated, exterior, *secular spirit*. Therefore, great care should be taken that each one has leisure to perform his devotions of obligation, to attend, when possible, the regular community exercises of prayer, lecture, examen, and whatever else relates to the *interior*, in order that the soul being nourished and fortified, he will be enabled afterwards to occupy himself more usefully in exterior actions.

Thence, it is necessary to banish from religion all tendency to indolence, that each member be employed usefully, and that he encourages himself thereto by the reasons deduced.

“Do all that you can,” says the Wise Man, “work cheerfully during life—whilst you have time and strength.” Then for so doing he gives the reason: “For after death, to which you run and advance rapidly, there will be no more time for labor—no place to form designs nor to employ your industry, your science, your wisdom—then you can no longer merit.” Accordingly, consider that by

working, you can every minute gain immense treasures of merit—a higher degree of glory—the enjoyment of God in eternal beatitude—whereas idleness and sloth will rob you of all these inestimable goods. Ruffinus relates in perfect keeping with this, what was very wisely said, by the Abbot Achilles, to a Religious who asked his advice to combat laziness, and also to discover the cause of its being most troublesome to him when in his cell: My brother, if you wish to know the reason, it is that you have not yet well applied your mind to consider the recompense prepared for us in heaven, nor the torments that menace us in hell. If you thought thereon attentively, your sloth would soon disappear; and when your cell would be filled to suffocation with *worms*, you would no longer feel any ennui.

Now, if asked how to surmount sloth and never to be idle, I would reply: this is easily learned—for it is simply to have always something to do, and to be well occupied, without, however, surpassing the bounds of a wise discretion, and to mingle therein an agreeable diversity, not so much as to increase the labor, as to prevent weariness or disgust. Vicissitude and change serve greatly to sustain the spirits. An angel taught this secret to St. Anthony, one day in his cell, when tempted by sloth and idleness. An angel appeared in human form, seated and occupied in work, from which after a time he rose up to pray; then again he resumed his work; and so alternating from one to the other. After some time conducting himself in this manner,

he said to St. Anthony: "Follow my example." It is thus, one must always work, and diversify his labor, without giving access to idleness. But I hear some say: I am constrained to be idle, for I have nothing given me to do, being left without an office—and this inactivity wearies me: I ask for nothing better than to have some regular occupation. Such complaint is made sometimes in religious communities, but *unreasonably*; for every one can be well occupied there, if he wishes. You have no office—and why? because you did not wish the one appointed you by your Superior. It did not suit your taste or capacity, or you feared the trouble it would be to you. You wish for a more honorable office—one that would gain you esteem—would flatter your pride. Behold the reasons why you are not occupied! A Religious of good will, who is indifferent as to his employments, need never be at a loss for occupation, as there is always much to be done in every house. When he is wanting in capacity for a high office, he has sufficient for a lower one: if he is not competent to preach in great pulpits and before an illustrious audience, he can at least instruct in towns and villages—besides there are always wanting persons to visit and console the poor, the sick, and the lonely prisoner. Wherever there is charity, zeal, and fervor, there is always employment, and more than can be done by *any one* community. Then the mind must be divested of the false, deceitful, and hurtful opinion that employments are unequally distributed, and endeavor to become persuaded that there is nothing so

high or so illustrious, that is not rendered worthless, if undertaken without purity of intention. When St. Radegonda, princess of the blood royal of France, had renounced all the grandeur of her condition, to embrace the religious life at Poitiers, in the Abbey of Holy Cross, that she had built : she, like the rest of the Religieuses, had her week for domestic employments ; she served in the kitchen, swept the house, carried wood for the furnace, lighted the fires—moreover, she delighted in performing the most menial and disagreeable labor of the convent. In the history of her life, it is related : she esteemed herself ennobled by these humble services she rendered religion, because the love of God greatly exalted them, even to shed on them rays of glory—thus her actions, seemingly abject and contemptible, appeared to her brilliantly beautiful.

Again, say not, that your want of strength prevents your working and that your infirmities deprive you not of will, but of power. Rather say, that they leave you power sufficient to do something, but that your *laziness* and *sloth* take from you your will. As it is known that you do not possess a great amount of physical strength, you are not required to perform laborious work, such as suitable only for a person of vigorous health ; but you are not so weakly, nor reduced to such a degree of inability, as to be constrained to remain the whole day idle—strolling about the house—or that you could not, if you wished, do something.

To such Religious is applicable the same reproach as is made to worldlings who have wealth

enough to lavish on vain and useless things, yet complain of having nothing to bestow on the poor and works of charity. This people say: The time has not yet come when we can give; we are not rich enough, or sufficiently well established, to think of rebuilding the house of the Lord. "And what!" says God by the prophet Aggeus: "the time has come—you are rich enough to dwell beneath gilded domes, and my house remains deserted." Is there not in such conduct a shameful injustice and a crying evil, that merits to be punished by God and detested by men? As much can be sometimes said of those sluggish, idle Religious above mentioned; you have sufficient health and strength where there is a question of doing your own will, but when required to act for the good of the community and which is not in accordance with your inclination or your judgment, you then directly assert you are infirm—have no strength; that you did not enter religion to give yourself to corporal exercises, but to prayer and recollection, to which this exterior occupation and labor are opposed. Believe me, it is not strength that is wanting to you, but *virtue*; that the evil is not in the body, but in the soul, being all the more dangerous for being interior.

St. Leo has said: Charity is never wanting in power to do good; something can always be found to give, where there is a will to give. In like manner, one has sufficient strength to act in obedience and in charity, when he has courage enough to vanquish laziness and sloth. This slothfulness

persuades many that they are sick when in good health, or that they are altogether unable to work, because they feel some inconvenience in the act—thus, their self-love causes the phantoms of their imagination to be mistaken for realities. Religion does not demand of you the impossible, and does not over-burthen you, as did the officers of Pharaoh the Israelites in Egypt. If you are not capable of great toils, there are lesser ones, in keeping with your strength. By overcoming laziness, you will have accomplished what religion requires of you, and the providence of God will supply the balance. To encourage us to labor and never to be idle, we should recall the great esteem in which toil was held by the ancient Religious, and the assiduity with which they applied themselves thereto.

St. Jerome, writing to Rusticus, assured him, that no one was received in the monasteries of Egypt who was not disposed to labor. Cassian says also : The Fathers of Egypt will, on no account, suffer the Religious—more especially the young—to be idle : but oblige them to be continually occupied.

Palladius relates of a monastery, in the town of Pane, where there were three hundred Religious, who all worked according to their strength, in all kinds of manual labor employments and trades. They arose very early : each in turn cooked, set and served the tables—while the others plowed, gardened, worked in the bakery, and in the mill : some were employed at the forge, at fulling cloth, tanning leather, making shoes, and others in writing, copying books, and making mats and baskets

of various sizes—thus all had some useful occupation suited to his strength and capacity—and while they had their hands employed, their mind was not left to idle, for they committed to memory passages of Holy Scripture, during the time of their labor. A like routine of labor was pursued in the Monastery of Clairvaux, in the time of St. Bernard ; for the Abbot of St. Thierry says : “ In this valley filled with men, no one was permitted to remain idle : so that, when all were busily working and occupied in some duty, strangers who visited the place were surprised to find the silence so profound that they heard no more noise at noon than at midnight, unless it was in the use of the tools handled, or in the singing of the divine praises in the church.”

Cassian gives the same reasons for this assiduous toil that others have advanced, viz. : First, that the Religious is obliged to toil, in order to gain by the work of his hands, as recommended by the Apostle, a livelihood for himself, and to give hospitality to strangers, as also, to obliterate the remembrance of the pleasures and renown of a past life, if he were a person of any position in the world, and to learn humility by lowly acts. Another reason was their *effective* poverty ; for they had neither possessions nor revenue, having renounced all worldly goods previous to entering religion, and again, that they were so numerous they could not have alms sufficient for their maintenance ; consequently, they were forced to work to gain a subsistence. Another and paramount reason given by Cassian is, that by low and

mechanical actions they may forget the vanities of life, and acquire the true basis for salvation, the virtue of *humility*, to mortify their senses and to subject their bodies to the law of God, to fly idleness, and to close the entrance to all evil thoughts by thinking but of sanctifying their labor and of working well. Besides, they had no means for exercising charity, of giving alms, without their labor. The following account, given by Rufinus and confirmed by Sozomen in his life, says: that in the Province of Arsinoe, in Egypt, a priest named Serapion was the Superior of several monasteries, having under his government about ten thousand Religious, all supported by their labor, and principally what they gained in harvest time, of which they placed the greater part in the hands of their Superior to give succor to the poor, it being a custom of these Religious, and among nearly all of them in Egypt, to hire themselves during harvest time to cut the grain. Their wages consisted of many measures of grain, the greater part of which they gave in alms. Thus, not only the poor in the immediate vicinity were fed, but vessels were laden with this grain to be carried to Alexandria, and there distributed to the prisoners and to all who were found to be needy. Thus, the abundance of these alms and the charities distributed by these Religious were so great, that there were not in Egypt enough poor to consume these alms. Behold the reasons that excited the ancient Religious to labor with such affection and assiduity; a labor all the more agreeable to God

as it was united to an interior spirit which was the soul of all they did, performing their actions with intentions always pure and holy. Hence, St. Epiphanius compares them to *bees*, saying: with their hands they make the wax of their work, and in their mouths they carry the honeycomb, in praising and blessing God. They applied themselves without relaxation, says Cassian; but in such a manner, that whilst laboring with their hand, in their cells, they never omitted to meditate some passage of Scripture. Among all the versicles they kept, both in their hearts and on their lips, the one most preferred was: "O God, come to my assistance: Lord, make haste to help me;" and which is so esteemed by the Church that it is placed at the commencement of all the canonical Hours to obtain grace to recite them well. Cassiodorus, in explaining this celebrated versicle, gives the opinion of Cassian and says: that these Religious commenced nothing without having beforehand thrice repeated this versicle. Palladius relates of the holy priest Philomorus, who, while providing by means of constant labor for all his own wants, and for those of many others unable to support themselves, never forgot the presence of God. "I do not recollect," he remarks, "of ever whilst at work, having withdrawn my mind from thinking of God."

Should not all these examples cause us to love and esteem labor, and the disposition made of us by our Superiors? Those in communities who are employed in domestic offices and in manual labor

should remember to bestow, in imitation of these excellent Religious, great affection, care, and assiduity on their employments, thereby to acquit themselves, not as secular artisans and servants, but as children of God, and true Religious: that is—with an interior spirit, and holy intentions—directing to God their work, asking His assistance, by reciting some versicle of the Psalms, and in meditating upon some words of Scripture. Thus, they will imitate more closely St. Joseph, our Blessed Lady, and still better, our Lord, in their exterior actions—uniting with them, in their toils, by pious affections and holy aspirations: blending their actions and intentions, particularly with those of our Lord, in order that they may receive by such a union a greater grace and sanctity—a something of divine perfection.

CHAPTER V.

THIRD PRINCIPLE—THE SPIRIT OF ACCOMMODATION.

ST. BERNARD assures us that to live well in community, besides a well-ordered spirit, which is so essential, there should be also a social spirit, explaining himself thereon as follows: Try to love your brothers, and in order to merit their love be gentle and affable towards them, bearing not only with patience, but cheerfully, their infirmities and defects both of mind and body. Though these qualities are necessary for the exercise of a social spirit, yet there are still some others to be added.

In the first place, to live in a community socially one should understand how to be accommodating, to conform oneself, and to be condescending to others. Let us return to our comparison of the members. As in the body we have many members, but not all of them having the same functions; so we being many, compose one body in Christ, and each one members one of the other. Then, if the members wished to be all of equal size and shape they could never, most assuredly, be adjusted together, neither for mutual aid, nor for the performance of their respective offices, nor for the good and the support of the body. Therefore, it is expedient that one of these be thick, another

slender ; one large, another small ; some straight and others oblique ; some with a head ; while others have the concavity to receive it ; for otherwise, they could not be fitted and encased, one within the other, and by this admirable accommodation and this wise condescension universally adhered to, one will bend and another hold itself firm ; some will lower themselves, while others will rise up ; one advances, and another recedes ; thus our body walks, runs, sits, stands or lies down, and performs all other necessary functions for the conservation of life. We are members one of the other in a community ; without this spirit of adaptation, of mutual condescension, in knowing how to bend, to yield some individual rights, give up some convenience, to accommodate oneself to the humor and manners of others, we cannot be *true* members. The reason of this is evident. In communities, there are a variety of spirits, a diversity of humors, and for which there must be suitable offices and employments ; now, if each in this diversity wished to hold himself firm, without relaxing anything of his own ; if he wished to possess all, without giving in return ; to obtain all, and to grant nothing, there never could be union, and consequently nothing could be accomplished. If the melancholic and the jovial, the bilious and the phlegmatic, as having something to interchange, wished better to proceed according to natural inclination, without any deference to their several parts, there never could be harmony. It is well known that kings and rulers, in order to conclude

a treaty of peace, must always yield up something.

The Holy Spirit wills, that even in things themselves just, one should not be so exact and formal as to testify rigor towards others ; and according to Symmachus and others : “ *Be not too just.*” There are some individuals like wearing apparel ; for instance, a garment too closely fitting, and which binds one, is not comfortable ; or when a glove cannot be drawn over the fingers, it is as good as useless, and it will rip and tear rather than yield ; and to be of use it should be pliable, or a little too large. In like manner, when spirits are so exact as to yield in nothing to human infirmity, will not occasionally condescend beyond what may be exacted, they are no longer fitted to hold useful converse with men. St. Jerome speaks on this subject as follows : When you see a person severe and rigorous towards the faults of others to such an extent that, if a brother lets fall a misplaced word in conversation, or is tardy in attending some common exercise—being of a heavy and slow temperament, and that this is not to be pardoned him—then know, that this person is more *just* than *wise*.

Regarding this subject, Ferrand, deacon of Carthage, in the fifth century, exclaims : O, how much is there that should be dissembled ! How much to be tolerated ! how much to be lightly passed over ! and how much to be attributed to the intercession and prayers of priests ! All this will be accomplished by him, who hearkens attentively to the following words of the Wise Man : “ *Be not too just.*” When it is deemed necessary to punish

some fault, may piety whisper these words to the interior ears of the judge: "*Be not too just;*" do not pass the bounds of that mild justice which has compassion on the infirmities of men: be just in correcting the turbulent who disturb others; but be not too much so, in order to console the timid; remembering to bear up patiently with all. Therefore, one should not be too just in demanding even lawful things with great severity; a mingling of wisdom and charity is necessary; and one should have a disposition to yield to and accommodate all humors.

St. Paul practised admirably this important advice, for he wrote to the Corinthians: "I became all to all" —accommodating myself to all, in order to gain them to Christ, and to save them. A little after he says: "*Be without offence to the Jews and to the Gentiles, and to the Church of God: As I also in all things please all men, not seeking that which is profitable to myself, but to many; that they may be saved.*" And again: "*Wherefore, if meat scandalize my brother, I will never eat flesh, lest I should scandalize him.*" "*To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak.*"

Our Lord did still more: for during the three years of His public life, He ever acted with an external charity, a charming sweetness, and great condescension, not only toward His apostles—coarse and rude men—that the Holy Spirit had not yet instructed, but even towards the greater part of all with whom He conversed; so that, it can be said, that His whole career was but a life of accommoda-

tion to our weakness. Wherefore, the Greek Fathers call the mystery of the incarnation by a beautiful name, which signifies *condescension*—because in all His actions, His words, and in all He endured for us, He rendered Himself condescending to our poverty and misery. The Lord of the Universe, says St. Athanasius, has come upon earth and lived among men, lowering and accommodating Himself to their infirmities—taking them upon Himself in order to deliver us from human weakness. And St. Augustine remarks: Our Lord, to give death to *death*, invested Himself with it; for death could not die but in life, no more than bitterness that can perish only in sweetness, and cold only in heat; thus, death could not die but in life, which is our Saviour. Then, upon this principle, are we not obliged to be condescending, since ill-humor cannot be changed or ameliorated, except by that which is good and accommodating: for such is the teaching of our Lord.

In truth, throughout the whole course of the admirable economy of the mysteries of our Lord's life and death, He yielded much to ensure our salvation. We should then concede our rights after His example and for love of Him, as He made concession for love of us; wherefore, those persons fail greatly who refuse to yield anything, but insist upon having all they consider to be their due. Such perverse spirits as these are unfortunately to be found in most communities; persons who have great difficulty in accommodating themselves to those with whom they live, being always in a state

of contradiction and manifesting a cross-grained disposition in their intercourse with others: condemning what others approve and approving whatever they condemn, so as never to have reciprocal sentiments with them: domineering and absolute spirits who, without authority and without respect, wish to rule over all, exacting condescension towards themselves, and that nothing be done to thwart them; constituting themselves the judges and arbiters of all that is proposed or done, assuming that their opinion should pass for a sovereign decree exempt from challenge; who follow naturally, and foolishly, in all things the impetuosity of their disposition, always acting from caprice, and never with reason and composure.

Such spirits are thus disposed from not having corrected in good time their natural inclinations, and to which they find themselves afterwards enslaved with scarcely the power to release themselves. They, also, sometimes thus act from interest, and again by interest and humor conjointly; however, they finish by becoming (or rendering themselves) a source of great trouble and vexation to a community, and are unfitted to a social life, where there must exist concord and mutual agreement. As in music, though all the tones are different, yet they accord to make a harmony whose melody charms the ear; likewise in a community, where there must necessarily be found a diversity of spirits, would it be asking too much to require of them a perfect uniformity, and which is accomplished when each one, in their diversity, so adapts himself as to readily form an

agreeable harmony betwixt these varied humors. It is in this sense that Euriphame, the Pythagorean, said in Stobee, "that the lives of men should be like a harp."

Therefore, whoever wishes to live as he should in community must well understand the secret of accommodating himself to the humors and manners of others, and with a condescending spirit endeavor to know, according to occurrences and need, how to yield and adapt himself to his neighbor, not alone in two or three things, but in *all things*, as St. Paul teaches. This should, however, be understood, in all such things as do not include sin, and where there is question only of contenting a brother, of affording him pleasure, and of granting him what he asks. It is wisdom, prudence, and virtue to do this, and any one who is well-bred and suited to the commerce of men will not act differently; but where there is question of sin and of offending God, there should be no medium; for, under such circumstances, all condescension of whatever kind is forbidden and is bad; all complaisancy vicious. It is in this sense that St. Paul, who evinced such care to please all in order to gain them to Jesus Christ, would say on seeing offence given to God: "*Do I seek to please men? If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Jesus Chrest;*" meaning, he could no longer experience any complaisancy in them now that God is offended, though in all other things he had and would continue to give himself to all who desired it.

There are many spirits in communities who are

too yielding; theirs is a weak complaisancy, not knowing how to refuse or resist when solicited for sinful motives: when a rule would be broken and a vow infringed upon, or when it is to partake of an intrigue; allowing themselves to be swayed by human respect when called upon to sustain the innocence of one whom they know to be unjustly blamed, and to listen to complaints and murmurs against Superiors rather than not to hold to the sentiments of personal friends. Let all learn how to be complaisant to men without displeasing God, after the example of the blessed Jourdain, second General of the Order of St. Dominic, who, in his Life, says of himself: "If I had as carefully studied any science and employed as much time to learn it as I have these words of St. Paul: '*I make myself all to all,*' I would be a great master, a consummate doctor, for all my life I have wished and tried to accommodate myself to others: thus I became a soldier with the soldier; a gentleman with the gentleman; a citizen with the citizen, and so conformed myself to all to gain all to God; but watching, however, that in gaining *them*, I did not *lose myself*."

SECTION I.

Of the Common Life.

Another signification of the word of St. Bernard is, *of the common life*, in order that each one in religion to be as he should must do like others: he should be treated, lodged, accommodated, clothed,

fed in the same manner as others, without exception or singularity. *Singularities*, as expressed by the word itself, are diametrically opposed to *social* and community life; for, to go *alone* is not to go with others. Let us enter into the subject of which the knowledge and the practice are both so necessary to persons living together.

We then say: that every Religious should take all possible care, and use his best efforts to accommodate himself in all things to the ordinary manner of others, and to follow the community, so as to avoid singularities and misplaced exceptions. St. Bernard, speaking (*or alluding*) to the three watches observed by the shepherds over their flocks, when the angel appeared to announce to them the birth of our Lord, says: "We should pass the night of this life in watching"—we should continually guard the flocks of our thoughts and actions, so that whether our Lord come at the first, second, or third watch, He may find us vigilant over our flock. Then, the first of your watches is over the exactness of your works, trying to conform all your actions to the rule you have embraced, and not to surpass the limits that your Founders and Predecessors have marked out for you; without turning from your exercises by one step, either to the right or the left, but to walk always in the great road trodden by others.

This is the good and perfect manner of acting in religion. The best and surest perfection of a Religious, says St. Bonaventure, is to do perfectly the common and ordinary actions of the house.

The first reason for this being : that the Religious is in community only to live in common—to do as others, and to shun exceptions. Singularity should be disagreeable to him : for says St. Augustine, every part that is not fitted to the whole is hideous and deformed. In fact, the nature of a part is to make a whole, conjointly with others ; when not concurring in this design, it is wanting in one of its *essentials*, it departs from its principle, it goes contrary to its nature, it misses its end, and consequently it cannot be without deformity and unsightliness. It must therefore unite with the other parts, so as to contribute to the general good of the whole.

Moreover, singularities should be much feared in communities, as being the ruin of all regularity, the food of self-love, the effects of self-will. It may be justly said, that communities wherein singularities reign are approaching their decline and total ruin, and this alone should be sufficient reason to cause us studiously to avoid them. The Religious, says St. Bonaventure, who does not subject himself to the observances of religion wounds it, and consequently causes it to fall. We know well that the vows are the principal parts of the edifice—but if to-day, by your singularities, you draw out one stone, and to-morrow another, the principal parts—the vows themselves—are shaken, totter and fall.

St. Bernard, speaking of the procession made on the feast of “Our Lady of Candlemas,” says : It is to make us esteem and love fraternal charity, that our Lord sent His disciples two by two :

then, he who in a procession wishes to go alone, disturbs it and throws it into disorder; he not only injures himself, but gives vexation to others. Such are those who in a community, by going aside, separate themselves from others—partake of the nature of the *animal*, of the *wild* animal—having none of the Spirit of God, whose essence is *unity*, infinitely simple; but in whom however is found a Trinity of persons. This same Saint understands in a like sense these words of David, when he speaks of our Lord's vineyard: "*The boar out of the wood hath laid it waste; and a singular wild beast hath devoured it.*"

Rufinus relates, that the Fathers of the desert, taking their refection together, on some great feast-day, there was one among them who, to the brother serving, said: I beg you, my brother, to have me brought a little salt, for I eat nothing cooked. The blessed Theodore, hearing this untimely request, replied to this solitary: My brother know that it would be much better for you to have eaten meat in your cell, than to have spoken these words in presence of the brothers, to whom they may be an injury, and still more hurtful to yourself on account of your singularity.

The third reason for avoiding singularities, is that they are generally prejudicial to the one using them. St. Bonaventure expresses himself on this subject as follows: Let those who make profession of the religious life embrace with all their hearts the common life, as most holy and evangelical; and let them attach themselves thereto with

constancy and devotion—not departing from it save with regret and from compulsion, but to follow the community in whatever relates to the divine office, food and rest. God imparts such efficacy to all that is done in common that the good become better, and the imperfect and slothful thereby obtain pardon for their faults. They receive much grace who are present at the common exercises and are likewise deprived of much by their absence. Saul obtained the gift of prophecy while in the company of the prophets, and when no longer with them he lost this grace, and became perverted. St. Thomas not being among the disciples—though we may suppose his absence was for some legitimate reason—participated not in their happiness in beholding and *believing* our Lord truly risen. It was upon the *assembled* disciples, and not upon them *separately*, that the Holy Ghost descended on the Day of Pentecost. Our Lord dwells and reposes in the midst of those who assemble in His name, to shed on them the abundance of His benedictions.

The demon watches the occasion and seizes his time for tempting and vanquishing us; and this he achieves mostly when we are alone. He made use of this stratagem in tempting Eve; for he did not attack her so long as she was with Adam, but only when he saw her alone; then, he daringly approached and readily deceived her. He made use of the same ruse towards our Lord to tempt Him; only attacking Him when He was alone in the desert. When the fig-tree was cursed, it withered,

nevermore bore fruit ; and this serves to confirm our instruction ; for the Evangelists, in speaking of it, say these two things : First, that it was planted by the roadside. This is not mentioned without some mystical meaning, as it is not customary to plant fruit-trees on the public road, to be seen by every one passing. Secondly, that it was cursed by our Lord for not having figs, although, as St. Mark notices, it was not yet the season for this fruit. By this we are given to understand that the Religious is like a fruit-tree, but when outside the way of the common observances is doomed to be ever dry and sterile, and not to produce the fruits of good works. St. Francis, arriving at one of his monasteries, where there was a Religious who was highly esteemed for sanctity by his brethren, but who was, nevertheless, very singular in his manner of living : he prayed constantly and observed so profound a silence, that he expressed himself only by signs, not wishing even to make his confession otherwise. All in the house greatly praised the eminent virtue of this brother to St. Francis, but this holy man, more enlightened, said to them : My brothers, be not so ready in praising that which should be blamed. I assure you that the whole conduct of this brother, whom you so much esteem, is all an illusion—a deceit of the demon, and this you might easily perceive, for in the sacrament of penance oral confession is essential. However, these Religious, inflated with their opinion regarding this brother, became dissatisfied with St. Francis that he should speak ill of one of such rare and

assured virtue. Well! said the Saint, have patience and you will see and admit that I am not deceived. In fact, a little while after, this Religious threw off the habit and apostatized; living in the world disreputably, and dying impenitent: thus proving that all he did was through pride and hypocrisy. It is but too frequently, that singularities spring from or give to the spirit of the proud Pharisee—asserting, “*I am not as others.*” Aristotle, in his *Morals*, says; “All excess, be it either too much or too little, is the action of a proud man, who seeks to vaunt himself, and to acquire reputation.” The most illustrious of his disciples—Alexander the Great—said: that there was as much pomp in the poor tub of Diogenes, as in the rich and brilliant purple of Antipater. It is in this sense that Elien wrote that the torn and tattered clothing of the Lacedemonians were a testimony of their haughty and pompous spirit.

Therefore, be careful to shun all singularity; live like others, as much as possible, and perform the common actions, not exactly *commonly* done, but in a simple and perfect manner.

I beg and conjure you, my brothers, said St. Bernard to his Religious, to fly the very wicked and pernicious vice of singularity, even though you should thereby suffer something, and your life be much shortened; for a short life, when good and regular, is worth more than a longer and more irregular life. A wise man would choose rather to live two years in liberty than ten years in tyranny. The history of our Order gives hereupon these

remarkable words of Father Everard, fourth General: "He took care that the novices were made to love only the common life, and to prefer it, although shorter, to another that might be longer; that ordinary things were those upon which God shed His benedictions, and, in consequence, they were more valuable; therefore, apply yourself to do them well, rather than to execute others, that are not in the Order."

Therefore, follow the community, though it should cost you something; though you have authority in the house, even should you be the Superior. Were you not elected to office by them and for them? "*Be not lifted up,*" says the Holy Spirit, "*be among them as one of them.*" Do not make your authority accrue to yourself, causing you exemptions and privileges for your own convenience, but be and live as one of the community. When St. Francis was preaching at Pérouse one of his auditors became deeply touched by his words, and resolved to quit the world. Whilst pondering as to what order he should embrace, our Lord appeared to him and said: "If you wish to accomplish your design and to save yourself, follow Me in the Order of Francis of Assisi; it is there that I call you." But when there, asked this person, what do you wish me to do so as to please you more? Our Lord replied: "Follow the common life, form no particular and intimate ties with any one, do not examine or judge the faults of others." After the instruction he went to St. Francis, who received him and to whom he gave the name of "brother humble," as merited

from his profound humility. Thus this Religious by executing faithfully the advice of our Lord, was signalized by his virtue as well as by his miracles. That which our Lord taught this person in particular as regards the common life, He tells us all by the Royal Prophet, who says: "*Embrace discipline, lest at any time the Lord be angry, and you perish from the just way.*" St. Jerome, by these words, *embrace discipline*, translates from the Hebrew, "Adore purely:" by others, "be subject to domestic discipline," embrace the common life, kiss it with affection and tenderness, and by this means you will lovingly embrace the Son of God, our Lord, who subjected Himself to your miseries for love of you; who, wishing to live like you, made choice of the common and not of the *particular* life, performing His actions—even to the least one—with an excellence and a perfection so great as to serve as a model for us.

St. Bernard, that illustrious imitator of our Lord in this virtue, had often in his mouth and ever in his heart these words opposed to singularities: "The world admires him who does something no one else does." It was this maxim, says the author of his Life, that caused him to have more esteem and affection for the common life; so that in his devotions and in his whole conduct he showed no singularity. For this reason also he left off wearing the hair-shirt which he had worn for so many years unknown to every one, on learning that it was known. At the same time, in common things, he acted *not commonly*, but in a *special* manner; giving to his

ordinary actions, even the smallest, an admirable application of mind, an extraordinary devotion, and all possible purity of intention.

About twenty-five years since one of our Fathers from Spain, and from the house in which Father Louis du Pont lived, a man celebrated alike for his virtue and for the books of piety he wrote, told me two remarkable facts concerning him. The first was that being very infirm—almost always sick and in the infirmary—he never, however, remained idle, but was ceaselessly occupied either in prayer, in reading, or in composing; that it was thus, and in these dispositions, that he composed those beautiful devotional and most useful meditations, as well as his other works. The second was that he attended the ordinary exercises as well as he could; thus he went to the refectory, though his infirmities dispensed him therefrom very justly, and that in order to be in time he had to leave the infirmary some minutes before the bell rung, dragging himself along as well as he could, supporting himself with his hands on the wall, advancing step by step.

All that has hitherto been said against singularities in religion must be understood as regarding those that are given to or taken upon oneself by a natural tendency and without sufficient reason; for there are some exceptions that can be justly required, that should be given, and that cannot be refused without wounding charity, which distributes to each that which is in-keeping with his strength.

When, therefore, in a community, some one is singular and has his oddities, it is no reason that

others should take offence and think evil of him.) According to St. Paul: "*Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and he that eateth not let him not judge him that eateth;*" for one and the other can do what he does with reason and virtue. It is for the Superior to examine the reasons, which, if found legitimate, he is obliged to grant what is asked, and even to anticipate them. It is evident that a sad, melancholy, and disquieted turn of mind, corporal infirmities, or a weakly constitution, often the effects of early education as well as from other causes, require a more tender treatment, which others should not and ought not to exact. Hereupon, we read in the "*Lives of the Fathers,*" that a great Roman lord, who had been in high favor with the Emperor, left the Court and the city of Rome to become a solitary of Scete. He took up his dwelling near the church, with but one servant to provide for his few wants. The priest who had charge of the church, knowing the weakness of the constitution of this solitary, and that he had been reared most tenderly, shared with him what was destined by Divine providence for his own support, or else some of the alms of the church. This person passed twenty-five years in this retreat, pursuing this manner of life, becoming very spiritual, a great contemplative, and very enlightened; thereby acquiring considerable reputation throughout the whole solitude. One of the most renowned solitaries in Egypt came to visit him, in the hope of learning from him some greater corporal austerity than practised among themselves; but, from the

moment he entered, and had saluted his host, and after a little prayer they made sitting, the Egyptian solitary perceived that this solitary, so celebrated for holiness, was clothed in rather fine material, had a pretty good mattress, and besides he slept on a skin and a small pillow, that his feet were perfectly clean and protected by sandals ; so he forthwith took scandal at this, as the custom of those who dwelt in this desert was to be deprived of all these comforts of life, and to live in the greatest austerity. The Roman solitary, who was endowed with the gift of discernment, which enabled him to see what was passing within the heart, knew at once the thoughts of his visitor, so he purposely said to his servant : Treat us well to-day, as this good Father has come to see us. Accordingly they were regaled with some cooked herbs and a little wine, which he had to make use of on account of his own infirmities, At the vesper hour they chanted twelve psalms. then retired to rest. On awaking during the night, they sang twelve other psalms. The Egyptian solitary arose very early in the morning, took leave of his host, after recommending himself to his prayers, and went away not much edified with his visit. He had not proceeded far, however, when the Roman solitary, wishing to cure the turn of mind of his brother solitary, sent his servant after him to beg him to return, and on his doing so was received with a renewed joy. Then the Roman solitary asked him : Father, be so kind as to inform me from what country you are ? I am from Egypt, was replied. And from what town, please ;

and what was your occupation previous to becoming a Religious? I am from no town, nor have I ever lived in one; but I am a native of a small village, and my employment was tending the fields. And where did you sleep? In the fields, and upon which I made my bed; for it is not there that mattresses are to be found. And how were you fed? My ordinary food was dry, coarse bread; with sometimes a little salted provisions, when I could find such, and only water for a drink. That was a rude manner of living, said the Roman solitary: but had you any baths there? My bath, replied the Egyptian, was the river. Then the Roman solitary—for the other's instruction, to prevent his being scandalized in future so readily by the peculiarities he should meet with in his neighbor, and to cause him to examine with more attention the reasons for their actions,—spoke as follows: Father, perhaps you would be pleased now to learn who I am, and from whence I came? I shall with all honesty tell you that, miserable as I am, the city of Rome, the first city in the world, is my birthplace: that I there possessed great influence with the Emperor, having long enjoyed his confidence. At these words the Egyptian seemed much touched, and induced him to give greater attention to what was added: I abandoned Rome for this solitude; I left superb palaces and immense riches to shut myself up in this little cell; I had beds embroidered with gold and magnificent coverings, and in place of all that God has given me this poor mattress and this skin; my clothes were almost priceless, so rich the material

and the make: and behold now what serves for my attire! my table was sumptuously spread, and now I am content to eat a few herbs, and to drink a little wine. I had innumerable servants, and God has inspired this one to render me, in place of all the others, the little services necessary to me; I used deliciously perfumed baths, and now I merely wash my feet and protect them as you see: in lieu of the music that charmed me during my festivities, I chant twelve psalms daily, and as many at night; but with all this change in my former mode of life, my past sins incomparably surpass the little services I render God, and I beseech you, Father, not to be disedified in what you have seen in me, and to which my infirmities reduce me. This discourse making the desired impression on the Egyptian solitary, and opening his eyes, he said: What confusion, Father, should not be mine, and how justly should I humble myself, I who am of such a low, poor, and miserable condition, and who left the world to enter religion only to find comparative pleasure and repose, being there much more comfortable than I had ever been previously, and which I could never have found in the life and occupations to which I was subjected in consequence of my birth! While you, on the contrary, of your own free choice have left all the delights of the world to lead here a painful and mortified life; you have renounced all riches and honors to embrace poverty and humility! Thus, after this discourse, he went his way a wiser and a better man. Hence, make it a rule that when you notice peculiarities in some

one, or an exception in his favor, you think no evil of him; condemn him not: he may have some good reason for his actions of which you are ignorant, and which, if you knew, you would be the first to approve or to say it should be permitted him. Granting that sometimes there may be illusion respecting the infirmities of the body, which are often more imaginary than real, it is, nevertheless, a great evil to possess an imagination filled with fancies, and which stands in need of relief and of some remedy, as much so as when the body is really sick. Never look upon any Religious as advantageously cared for, to whom, by reason of his infirmities, some exceptions and some little pleasures are granted, but rather look at those on whom God bestows the grace and strength to share the common life, and to follow the ordinary routine of the house: again, when you see some one, who receives something *special*, say within yourself: "Blessed are they who have no need of such things."

We have seen what is to be done by those who notice peculiarities, and now we will give some advice to those who use them. In the first place they should humble themselves for not living as others in community; and that, being associated with a company, they are constrained to leave it to go a little aside. It is a great blessing in religion to be able to live like the community, on account of the benedictions God bestows on things done in common, and of which those are deprived that do not perform them; and, therefore, they should humble themselves, believing that God does not esteem them worthy to receive this grace.

The author of the Life of St. Fulgentius relates that this Saint, weighing in the balance of "great wisdom and of charitable discernment," the strength and weakness of his Religious, furnished each one with what was requisite, but cautioned those to whom he had given something in particular, or had distributed to them more than to the others, that they were also obliged to a greater humility than the others; because, said he, they who receive more of the common goods become debtors to those to whom these goods belong, and there is nothing but humility that can cancel this debt.

Secondly, they should make amends by a counterpoise of good works useful to the community: such as their prayers, their patience, and all other virtues practised with great assiduity. Thereby will be prevented the disedification that might arise from these particularities, as also to repair the damage and loss received in consequence by the community; for it is evident that a *fast* kept by *twenty* persons is more profitable and more meritorious than that kept by *ten*. As St. Bernard—says one of his historians—had a most ardent zeal for the common life, but his infirmities or his incapacities not permitting him to perform some of the manual labor like the other Religious, he asked of God grace to be able to cut wheat; but when God thought it not well to grant it to him, he would perform other corporal exercises equally painful—such as hewing wood and carrying it on his shoulder, digging and tilling the ground; or when he had not strength for this, he had recourse to the

most menial duties in order to supply by his humility what he could not furnish by his labor.

SECTION II.

On Fraternal Charity.

St. Bernard, explaining his word *sociable*, says, that it signifies—"to live in community properly, that you should love those with whom you live, and try to make yourself beloved in return; and for that end, you should be kind and affable, supporting, not alone with patience, but with cheerfulness, your brothers' infirmities, both of mind and body."

If many qualities and virtues are necessary for the solitary life, it is certain that the principal and most important is charity for the neighbor. It is recommended by our Lord, both by His words and His actions; and it is also taught us by the Apostles. St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, tells us: "*Before all things, have a constant mutual charity among yourselves.*" St. Paul says also: "*But above all things, have charity, which is the bond of perfection.*" Thus, St. Peter recommends us to practise charity "*before all things,*" and St. Paul "*above all things.*" The reason given for this, and what very well suits our subject, is that *charity is the bond of perfection.* It is a bond, for it *ties*—according to the interpretation of St. Thomas—all the virtues in man, in order to render him perfect; and in the same way, says St. Chrysos-

tom, as in a vessel there must be a great number and variety of pieces, in a wall numerous stones, and in the human body divers members, if there is no bond to unite them together, if there be no nerve, nor muscle, nor tendon to join the members of the body, no mortar to cement the stones in the wall, no nails to fasten the pieces of the vessel—if all these things be wanting, neither the body with its members, the wall with its stones, nor the vessel with its trimmings, could last; but all being unstable, would soon fall to ruin. Charity holds the same place with respect to the virtues, being for them what the soul is to the body—it is the soul and the form of the virtues. The union of our members depends on our soul, which embellishes, strengthens, and perfects our body. It is the soul that gives it life, movement, and beauty, but when deprived of the soul the body dies; in like manner the virtues receive proportionably the same advantages from charity when present—the same detriment if absent. “Charity and love,” continues St. Thomas, “are a bond to unite the loving and the loved.”

“Charity is a bond of perfection,” because it unites, as explained by St. Thomas, man to God, who is his end; and by this union it renders him infallibly perfect—each thing acquiring its perfection and its final beauty by union with its proper end.

The perfection of man, says Cardinal Cajetan, commenting on this same passage, consists in charity, which binds him to God and to his neighbor.

Moreover, charity is a bond of purple and a chain of gold, which binds and unites the faithful among themselves, more strictly, holily, and much more perfectly than can be done by either relationship, alliance, sympathy of disposition or age, or by the same employments and professions, the same dwelling and food, or by the mutual participation of all other things.

1. All these ties are not infallible: there being so many relatives, allies, persons who dwell together, who share in the same employments, who have the like charges, and yet do not love one another, but on the contrary entertain a mutual antipathy. Even when love exists among them, this affection is only natural, or at the most, reasonable; but often—yea, too often—it is inordinate and against reason. It is not thus with love inspired by charity—for this love is ever pure, holy, and perfect; and, therefore, it is justly styled a bond of perfection. As the Father and the Son, in the most holy and adorable Trinity, are united together by the Holy Spirit, which is personal love—consequently, the holiest and most perfect bond that could exist—nor can we be united more perfectly than by the same Holy Spirit—by the love that binds the Eternal Father to the Son, of whom we are the images, because of the charity it pours into our hearts. Then, charity must bind and unite *all* who live in community—it must be the soul to animate the members and the prime cause of all their movements.

The well-beloved Disciple of our Lord says on

this same subject: "My brethren, let us have mutual love." And in all his sermons, his exhortations, and discourses, he had in his mouth continually these words: "My little children, love one another." He repeated so incessantly the same thing that he wearied his audience; and when asked the reason for this he replied by the renowned sentence, so much esteemed and praised by St. Jerome, viz.: "Our Lord has thus commanded it; and it is the commandment He had most at heart—which, if practised, is sufficient, as all the other commandments depend on its execution;" which is confirmed by St. Paul in the following terms: "He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law."

St. Dorotheus relates of himself, that whilst in the monastery of the Abbot Seridon, he had given to him for a time the charge of Abbot John, to see after his little wants; and that every evening, after rendering him the last service required, he would kneel to ask for the good Abbot's blessing—then, to take leave of him. This holy old man, after bestowing his blessing, would always give him some words of instruction, prefaced usually by: May it please God, my son, to preserve charity amongst us! The favorite words of St. Francis of Paul, and which he used on almost all occasions, were these: By charity, by charity! wishing thereby to show the ardent love he entertained for this virtue, and at the same time to recommend it to his Religious—to induce them to esteem, love, and cherish it more perfectly.

When St. Evroux, Abbot, was on his death-bed,

surrounded by his Religious, who, deeply grieved at losing him, said: Alas! Father, how and to whom do you leave us, and what shall we do after your death? The Saint then made them this remarkable reply: "My brothers, love one another; let fraternal charity keep you close united; after this, have no fear—nothing can injure you." How beautifully St. Gregory Nazianzen expresses himself on this subject: "The God of peace, who, from enemies that we were, has made us His friends and His children by the cross that drew together and united those who were near it: this God of peace, I say, this Father of charity—and Charity itself—for He takes pleasure in bearing these names, to establish by these titles the law of mutual charity—has given us in terms precise and significant a new commandment, to love one another as He loves us." Then, should we not in religion, fulfil this command of charity? Behold some reasons for so doing:

The first reason to be advanced should make great impression on reasonable spirits; from this fact, that we are all participants of the same nature, and consequently obliged, even solicited by the inclinations of this nature, to a mutual love. Experience shows us daily that resemblance is one of the great causes of love, and that everything has an attraction and inclination for its counterpart. Each thing naturally loves itself—being nothing more after itself, and that so nearly approaches it as that which resembles it most. Then, necessarily, it has to extend its love for self to that which bears it resemblance.

Some beasts naturally love man—as the horse, and still more, the dog. Athenæus makes mention of an elephant in India that became transported with love for an infant, so as to become sad and refuse to eat when this little child was taken from his sight. When the nurse would place it in its cradle, near the elephant, that would look upon with great satisfaction, and when it would sleep he would drive off the flies with his trunk, with which he also used to rock the cradle to soothe and quiet the infant when it cried.

Now, if senseless animals, without knowledge of what it is that renders man worthy of love, have for him, nevertheless, these feelings, and show violent attachments for him, by the sole instincts of nature with which God endows them, for our preservation, instruction, and confusion, man should doubtless, and with much greater cause, love his fellow-man—his counterpart—of whom he can know the merit and excellence; and when he fails to do this, who can say he is not blameworthy?

St. Augustine makes another remark, to our purpose, on the nature of man. He says that we are all descendants of the one man, Adam—for the first woman was taken from his side; whilst, in the species of all other animals, God has created two, the male and female, God wishing hereby, says this great Doctor, to recommend to man more expressly mutual charity and the bond of concord, since not alone does the same nature bind and unite them, but even the unity of the same stock. Hugh of St. Victor speaks in the same strain—thus: So that

all men, knowing that they have descended from one alone, and having but one and the same nature, will love all as if they were but one.

The second reason to oblige us to love one another, is that, not alone are we men, resembling by nature, but that we are, moreover, Christians, of the one faith, in the participation of the same mysteries, and with a like hope for things to come—for eternal beatitude. This latter resemblance, more excellent and more noble than the preceding one, obliges us strictly to a mutual charity ; it should illumine our hearts with renewed flames of love, so as, according to St. Augustine, to make of all Christians but one soul and one man. “We are all,” says this Saint, “so bound and united together, by the same faith, that all our souls are as but one soul, and that, inasmuch as we are men of faith, believing in Jesus Christ, we make but one man, on account of the unity of the body of Jesus Christ, of which we are the members.”

Moreover, the Christian law recommends this mutual love above all others ; and the Divine Legislator—the Word Incarnate—commands it in terms so formal and so strong, as to constitute it His principal commandment,—the execution of which He had most at heart. Thus, the love of the neighbor is the soul of Christianity, and the mark by which He wishes true Christians to be distinguished from those who are such only in appearance. “It will be known,” says He, “that you are My true disciples, if you love one another.” Fraternal charity, says St. Augustine, is the peculiar and proper badge of

the faithful ; it is that which makes the distinction and the difference with those who are not. St. Chrysostom remarks well on this subject : If we see the king magnificently attired in robes of gold and silver, we will not know him for this ; but let us behold him clothed in royal purple, crowned with his diadem, then we can have no doubt—these ornaments will give an infallible assurance as to his identity. Even so is the diadem of charity sufficient to distinguish a true disciple of Jesus Christ, and to cause him to be recognized, not alone by Christians, but also by infidels. “By this,” says our Lord, “will all know that you are My disciples.” He says *all*, and therefore it is that charity for the neighbor is the most certain mark for indicating the *true* Christian. Let those who bear this title unworthily, work miracles, if you so wish it : for if they have not charity—if they love not one another—if they live not in concord, the pagans themselves will have no esteem for them, will even ridicule them : but if, on the contrary, they love one another, mutually and sincerely—though no miracles be wrought by them—they will, nevertheless, be venerated and esteemed by every one.

In the primitive ages of the Church, the pagans said of them, as related by Tertullian : “Behold how Christians love—and how ready to die for one another.” Therefore, according to St. Augustine, the character of the new law—the law of grace—is *love*, as that of the ancient law was *fear*. For this reason also is the law of grace styled by Moses the

“law of fire,” which element, from its peculiar property of fusing and consuming all, is the symbol of love. From thence comes that this law was given on the Day of Pentecost, by the Holy Spirit, essential and personal love—and under the form of fire. More, this law is—as also appeared that of Moses—in the right hand, which is the hand of friendship, concord, and peace.

The third motive is, that as Religious, living under the same roof, we have an additional resemblance, that obliges us to love one another: this feature being the same institute and the same mode of life. If fraternal charity is the essential and distinctive badge of the Christian, with how much greater reason should it not be of the Religious, who, by the exact accomplishment of the commandments and counsels of which he makes profession, is no other than an *excellent Christian*—one who possesses more abundantly and practises more perfectly the spirit of Christianity.

If all Religious in general, of the various Orders in the Church, are bound to love each other, those—as in our Company—which are consecrated entirely to the salvation of the neighbor, and who go to the extremity of the habitable globe amidst thousands of toils and dangers, to exercise this charity, are more specially called to this mutual love. Truly, would it be an impertinent—a ridiculous thing, if having in our midst and with us those to whom we could so easily exercise charity, on whom, in fact, we are obliged to bestow it, both on the part of God, of religion, and for every other reason, yet we re-

fuse them their just dues, from sentiments of indifference and alienation, while we are ready to bestow it on persons who have not so strong a claim upon us, and who should not be so dear to us.

From all these truths, we ought to conclude, that it is an indispensable obligation for all Religious to love one another; otherwise they are so far from being true Religious, that they are not even perfect Christians. Since God is *charity* (an appellation as given by St. John) it follows that in a house where charity is wanting God cannot be found; and where God is not, it must necessarily be that there the demon is found: thus, the Religious, not being children of *charity*, nor consequently of God, they must have the demon for father. This reasoning is in perfect keeping with the teaching of St. John; for when speaking of this charity he says: "By the possession or the want of fraternal charity, men make themselves to be known as either children of God or of the demon." Thereupon, are made to bear those memorable words, attributed to St. Jerome: "Without charity religious houses are hells, and those who dwell therein are demons." Then, let all Religious, in order not to be demons, or the children of the demon, use their best efforts to have, "before all," and "above all"—a true, fraternal charity: and besides, since they are members of the same body, they should love mutually, as we see is done by our members: as also, each member seeks its preservation, loves its own interest, and which, nevertheless, it cannot obtain, if the body of which it is a part is not preserved; while

the preservation of the body ensures that of its members. Thence, it follows, if each member truly loves its own preservation and interest, it loves, as a necessary consequence, that of all the other members. May this be remembered and acted upon by all who live in community.

SECTION III.

The Effects of Fraternal Charity.

After treating of the nature of the fraternal charity, and the indispensable obligation of all who live in community, to have and exercise it, we now come to its effects.

First, let it be remarked, that this fraternal love, by which is understood *true* Christian charity, is not an universal in-dweller of religious houses, but where, alas! it is sufficiently rare: for too often, the only love that is cherished is founded on natural motives, such as parentage, relationship, the perfections of mind or body, or on some interest; but Christian charity—that which should reign supreme among Religious, as well as among all Christians—closes its eyes to these considerations purely natural, remembering that “all that glitters is not gold”—and, among precious stones, are to be found spurious ones: likewise, fraternal charity may have the appearance only of such, and not the reality.

If you ask by what mark may be known genuine charity, I will answer, it is that as given by our

Lord, when He said: "The commandment of love that I give you is that you love one another, as I have loved you." If we love in any other way it is not Christian love, and not that which He commands. Then, how did our Lord love us? St. John declares it by these words: "Our Lord loved His own who were in the world, and He loved them unto the end." What means this, "*to the end?*" It is to prove first,—He loved them in effect—doing and suffering for us, to the last extremity, all that He could possibly endure, even to embracing the most painful and ignominious of deaths.

Secondly, He loved them for a most *pure end*; for our interest alone, and not for His own: for whatever we give to God, He cannot thereby be made richer nor happier; neither can He have His glory diminished by whatever injury we may offer Him.

Thirdly, He has loved them *to the end*, with firmness and constancy—in all times, places, and conditions, without ever retracting. He ceases not, despite all our faults and imperfections, to love us, even though we should desert Him.

Fourthly, He loves us with the most holy and divine intentions, and not for any natural perfections of either our soul or body—such as a good temper, a correct judgment, intelligence, beauty, nobility, or other exterior advantages, as riches, honors, and charges, but for the glory of God and our salvation—to free us from sin, to stimulate us to virtue, to attract us to perfection and to enable us to attain eternal beatitude. Behold! why and

how our Lord loves us. He wishes that we love each other in the same manner, and that our *mutual* love must take these views, to produce these happy effects.

St. Paul describes this charity excellently well, in two different places of his epistles. In the Epistle to the Colossians, he tells them: Clothe yourselves with fraternal charity, as in a beautiful and precious robe, for so it is befitting those who have the happiness to be the elect, the saints, and the well-beloved of God: having for others the bowels of mercy: also, to be benign, humble, modest, gentle and patient in supporting the defects of your neighbor—pardoning the injuries he has done you, as our Lord has forgiven you for those you have offered to Himself. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, where he describes at length the effects of true charity, he says: “*Charity is patient, is kind: Charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*” . . . Such are the effects of true fraternal charity. All who live in community should well understand and practise them; but as this practice is not without difficulties, every effort should be made to overcome them. To be clearly understood, it should be remarked that the greatest study and the most exact attention that man can bestow on the regulation of his life is in the proper direction of his judgment,

which consists in purifying it of its erroneous opinions, so as not to take error for truth. Of all the faculties of our soul, the most important and most noble is without *contradiction* our understanding: because the opinions and convictions that we entertain of things is that which governs us in all the rest, and is the prime movement of all our actions; it is the source from whence flow our affections, our words, and our works. Why does the miser love and desire riches so passionately? Why does he seek them with such ardor—with so great labor? Why does he expose himself to so many dangers—going to the extremity of the habitable globe to acquire them? Why does he watch over them with such vigilance? Why, when he loses them, is he so afflicted, so inconsolable, as all but to expire with grief? It comes from the opinion he has, that riches hold for him the place of a great good—that they can render him happy, and that without them he must be miserable. The same can be said of the ambitious man in regard to honors: of the luxury-loving man as to pleasures; and of the literary man as to knowledge. Now, in order that this man, so impassioned for riches, is not to love them, to desire them or to seek them any longer—at least; with excess—but for him to become liberal towards the poor, and more patient in supporting a loss, what should he do? He should divest his mind of this false opinion he entertains of the merit of riches, and give to it a true one: for as long as his mind remains imbued with this erroneous opinion—should he live one hundred years—he will always have the same sen-

timents for riches, and consequently take the same pains to acquire them.

Epictetus, asking what should be the first occupation and the principal care of a man who desires to become wise and virtuous, replies: that it is to banish from his mind all false opinions, and to purify it of its errors. "Woe to you," says the Prophet Isaias, "who judge falsely of things. Woe to you that call evil good, and good evil: that put darkness for light, and light for darkness: that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." Woe to you! it is impossible for you not to receive much evil. The Royal Prophet had also said: "Man is often vain, light, vicious. he makes use of false balances to weigh things, and has an unjust opinion of their value." He foretelleth the punishment of the wicked: "Judge right things, ye sons of men, for in your heart you work iniquity; your hands forge injustice in the earth." Wherefore, children of men, be just in your opinions and in your judgment.

Let us return to our subject, which relates to charity for the neighbor, and correct ourselves of the faults we commit opposed to this virtue. But for this we must ascend to the source of the evil: as in sciences, one must investigate the properties of things and reason as to the essence of their nature; or in languages, go to the root of a word,—otherwise, there can be nothing sure and solid in the same way respecting ourselves, in order to possess fraternal charity, at once true, sincere, pure and constant, we must reform the understanding in

whatever regards the neighbor: we must purify it of the false opinions it has conceived, to have them replaced by such as are good and meritorious. For that we should never stop to regard the *exterior*, which is not the *individual*; but consider the *interior*, the precious things therein concealed, and which is, properly speaking, man himself—according to those words of our Lord: “Judge not of things by their exterior, but have a correct judgment.” This He spoke to the Jews who were grossly deceived in their opinion of Himself. They considered alone what appeared exteriorly in Him; for seeing Him poor, born of poor parents, and thinking Him the son of an artisan, they knew He could not have been educated, and thus they made of all these circumstances the basis of their judgment of Him. They rested obstinately on this external evidence, which had nothing brilliant or sublime, without wishing to go beyond—to cast their eyes upon His virtues—the purity of His doctrine—His miracles, nor on the Sacred Scripture, wherein He is mentioned. They mistook our Lord for a common man and for an impostor, who wished to put Himself forward to gain repute, and therefore must they rid themselves of Him. Behold the cause of the Jews’ deceiving themselves, and of their misfortune! Wherefore they merited that our Lord should say: “*Judge not according to the appearances, but judge just judgments.*”

We act in the same manner in respect to the neighbor; he is judged and spoken of merely by his riches or poverty: his sceptre, his crown,

his honors, or by his misery and his low condition—his prosperity or his afflictions ; that is, by everything that is not himself ; by which we do him great wrong—we judge him unjustly.

The imperfections of his mind or body, as well as his exterior faults, serve as ordinary subjects for the opinion conceived of him. Such disorder in our understanding should be reformed, so as not permit ourselves to judge by the exterior, as we are commanded by our Lord : we must place our neighbor in a just balance and form of him correct ideas. In this we should be conducted by faith :—it alone, as a participation of the omniscience of God, and a ray of His light, can give us opinions that are true and absolutely infallible. Then what does faith teach us of our neighbor ? What truths does it unfold ?

Faith teaches that all men, of whatever condition or however low they may be, are worthy of high esteem and great honor : “ You have rendered man little less than the angels,” says David, “ You have crowned him with glory and honor, and You have placed him over the works of your hands.” Then *every man*, though he be but a valet and a slave, is the work of God—the master-piece of His hands.

Secondly, he is, in the judgment of all, God’s image; and this glorious quality cannot be disputed him. This image is fittingly represented in the soul, and is two-fold : one being natural and substantial—inasmuch as the soul is proportionably like to God, a pure spirit, endowed with understanding and a will free in its operations ; the other is

supernatural and accidental : it is commenced and roughly sketched, after a somewhat admirable manner, in this life, by grace ; and finished with a perfection incomparably greater in the other life by glory. Therefore, this title of image and of Divine resemblance renders man worthy of very great honor. If we honor the images of kings, of saints, and of our Lord, which are, however, but of stone, of wood, or of paper, with how much greater reason should we not honor man, who is the living portrait of God (that is, his soul), this portrait (or image) made by His own hands, and consequently much more noble and excellent ! Wherefore, St. Ignatius, writing to the Philippians, says : Love one another as the images of God. We respect and venerate the images of our Lord, not because they are of gold or silver, but solely on account of *Him* whom they represent, and who merits respect and infinite honor : nor do we contemn these images when they are made of paper or wood, and perhaps badly wrought (or designed) : we do not look at the defects we perceive in them, but rather at *Him* whom they represent. Even so should we act towards man, the image of God ; be he poor, ignorant, imperfect, in mind and body, for he, nevertheless, bears the image of God and the traits of His perfections stamped on his soul with an admirable beauty. To consider the extraordinary excellence and the ravishing beauty of the soul, it suffices to say, as has been well remarked by St. Teresa, “that God made it to *His own likeness*”—and because the image of a very beautiful thing cannot be otherwise

than beautiful, without this it could not be His image, since its perfection consists in being a striking representation of its original. Thus it can never be said of a woman in the decrepitude of age that she is the living portrait of a Judith or an Esther.

Thirdly, man (especially in a state of grace) is a son of God, and therefore he may say, as often as he wishes, according to the instruction of our Lord: "Our Father, who art in Heaven." But if all men are sons of God there can be no question of doubt as to his eminent nobility, any more than there would be of the son of the greatest monarch on earth; therefore, he should be considered as worthy of all honor and esteem. This truth has caused the Prophet Malchai to say: "Have we not all the same Father, who is God, and who created us all? Why then, being sons of such a Father, *and consequently noble, should any of us contemn his brother?*"

In the fourth place, we know that God loves man with an infinite love; that He made the universe in consideration of him; that He has destined creatures for His use and service, that He has given him one of His angels—princes of His court—to be always at his side to accompany him everywhere to assist and protect him; we know that He prepares for him an eternal beatitude that He has resolved to give him after death, that he may participate in His goods, His glory, and even in Himself. Do not all these prerogatives elevate man to a most eminent dignity, and do they not merit for him, with-

out contest, a very great esteem and a singular honor

Faith teaches us also, that our Lord is the Redeemer and Saviour of man—that He loved him to such a degree as to become incarnate for him—that He endured the most painful and ignominious of deaths for his salvation. Thence, all men belong to Him by rights, as His purchase, having ransomed them, not by gold or silver, but by thirty-three years of continued toil, and lastly by His precious Blood; thus we are His conquests, His spoils, His palms, and His laurels. Moreover, all men, particularly the just, are the brothers and co-heirs of our Lord, and their souls are His spouses. By an express commandment, as we have already said, He obliges us to love one another—to love our neighbor as ourselves, and again (to make it more impressive), to love others as He loves us—to do and endure for them as he He has given us the example. This Divine command forbids speaking an offensive word against the neighbor—to call him silly and a fool—which epithets, we are assured, will merit death and eternal torments, and that whatever is done to the least of his, He regards as being done to Himself *personally*: “Verily I say to you,”—when speaking of the poor—“that what you have done to the least of My brethren, you have done it unto me.” Remark this word “*brothers*,” to see to what dignity it raises men! Thus it can be said, that men are the attractions and the friendships of the Son of God, who says in Proverbs: “*My delights are to be with the children*

of men.” Therefore it is, that we cannot give Him greater pleasure than to love them for a love of Him. We should behold all men in this spirit—and as so many beautiful crystal vases which should be handled with great care and delicacy, as being filled with the most precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

All the foregoing truths that faith teaches us in regard to our neighbor should be well considered—they should be deeply impressed on our minds, revolved in our memory—so as to make of them frequent acts of lively faith,—thus to dispose the soul to an excellent and perfect Christian charity. As the belief we have that such a man is the king causes us unhesitatingly to evince for him profound respect, to address him in terms of veneration, and to behave towards him in a manner very different from what we should do without this belief: also, when we entertain for our neighbor such opinions as implanted in us by faith and when we enliven this faith by works, it will be easy for us to believe him noble, loaded with precious advantages and crowned with glory, and therefore worthy of reverence and love—so as never to allow ourselves to contemn him or to do him the least injury.

But, you will say, if on the one hand my neighbor merits esteem and love, on the other his imperfections and vices render him deserving of contempt and aversion. I reply, you should not regard or consider the defects of your neighbor any more than you would think to look upon a piece of tapestry on the wrong side. When it happens that

a king is still a little child of two or three years old—scarcely able to articulate—do his subjects and the princes of his court despise him for his infancy, his weakness, or his stammering? On the contrary, when in his presence they stand with heads uncovered—behaving with the greatest decorum—showing to him all the honor due his royalty; for though he is but a little child, he is no less a king, and this fact alone obliges his subjects not to despise him, whatever infirmities they may see he possesses, but to honor and revere him.

In like manner, though your neighbor be imperfect and vicious—and if you wish, full of faults—he is always the work, the master-piece and the image of God; he is a Christian—he is the son of God, the brother and co-heir, the purchase of our Lord; and if *just*, his soul is the spouse of our Lord; all this cannot be denied him; he cannot be deprived of these titles of glory which render him worthy of sincere respect and honor, and a special kindness.

Therefore should Religious ever regard each other in this light of faith—so as to render the practice of fraternal charity sweet, easy, and meritorious; acting towards one another in this spirit, their mutual intercourse can but be gentle and affable as well as respectful.

SECTION IV.

Continuation of the Same Subject.

To better understand the necessity of fraternal charity in communities, and the effects it should produce therein, we will have recourse to our comparison of the members: "As we have in the same body," says St. Paul, "many members that are not all designed for the same use, thus we compose, many as we are, but one body of which Jesus Christ is the head, and we being each the members of one another. Then what are the members for each other? how do they conduct themselves together? What offices and services do they mutually render one another?" This is admirable and should serve as a most efficacious instruction to us, as it is natural and continual. The members of our body love mutually, and as a consequence of this love never injure one another, but on the contrary do all the good they can by aiding, soothing, defending and compassionating one another, and have a wonderful inclination and tenderness one for the other. They agree perfectly; never quarreling, though many, they are in their multitude as but *one* from their perfect understanding.

The members do not injure each other, never doing any evil to one another. Is the right hand ever seen to strike the left? or to flatten the nose with its fist, or strike out the eye? that the arm, if angered, would strike a blow at the side, and that

one foot would trample on the other? Such things are never seen, are not known, except it be among lunatics, in whom nature loses all affection she had for herself, and falls into such disorder as to excite the compassion of the beholder; but wherever it is not altogether irregulated, the members are never their own enemies and never harass one another. It is then on such a model that those who live in community should, as members of the same body, pay great attention not to injure one another, nor bear dislike either in thought or affection, by word or by deed.

Take care, says St. Dorotheus, to do nothing that might give displeasure to your neighbor, nor to offend him, either by word, by affection, by gesture, or by your look or your exterior conduct, or by any other manner whatever. He says also, elsewhere: "You should be careful to do nothing that might cause pain to your neighbor—either by word, action, or look." Wishing to show that fraternal charity is preferable to all else, and should never be wounded, he says: My brothers, whatever affair is on hand, however necessary and good it may be, I desire you not to do it either with inquietude to yourself nor so as to give trouble to others, and against fraternal charity. I repeat, leave to me all that you do, if you cannot do it without disturbing yourself and offending others. It is better for the thing to perish than charity. For this reason, if you see your brother afflicted or troubled in the least, stop there, pass not beyond! I have told you this and I weary not in the repetition, even though I

say it a thousand times, leave all; for it is better to do so than to displease and molest each other. Have you ceased to remember this wise saying of one of the ancient Fathers, that "our life and our death depend on our neighbor"?

Previous to St. Dorotheus, St. Paul said on the same subject: Banish from your midst all bitterness of heart, all ill-feeling and aversion for your neighbor; to show dislike to see him, to be with him, to speak to him and to entertain him. Give no liberty to anger, nor to indignation that seeks revenge, refuse him not a charity when in your power and when it is desired; avoid clamor, contestations, and disputes; close the mouth to threats, to sharp and injurious words, abstain from every action wounding to charity, and return not evil for evil. All these bad effects against our neighbor spring from thoughts of contempt and the disadvantageous opinion formed of him, and which should be corrected with care, for all depends upon it, and instead of these thoughts and opinions that ill-dispose towards our neighbor so as to render him vile and abject, we should acquire such as are good and honorable, and thus cause him to be esteemed and revered by us. For this we must confirm our belief in the undeniable fact of those glorious titles, those eminent perfections of a master-piece, the images and the sons of God, the brothers and co-heirs of our Lord, and the other titles he possesses and of which we have spoken in a preceding paragraph: we should make therefrom acts of firm faith, so as to be perfectly convinced of

it. When some of his imperfections, his vices, or some bad action will strike us and cause us to condemn him, or speak ill of him, let us thrust aside such onsets, which are ever most dangerous and will ruin us if we are not very watchful over ourselves. Be not precipitate with your thoughts or your words, but arrest yourself suddenly, and according to the wise counsel of Epictetus, say to the object that attacks you: "Wait a moment, and before I think, I judge, or speak evil and condemn, allow me to examine, so as to know who you are, from whence you come, what you desire and where you go." Have immediate recourse to the faith of his excellence as to your refuge, and keep your mind illumined with this light, be occupied in considering the magnificent qualities of your neighbor, till the combat ceases to your advantage, and you come off victorious. Allow yourself not to be arrested by his exterior, made vile and contemptible by his defects; but as you do in regard to the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar, where you do not allow yourself to consider either the color or the figure, nor anything that strikes your senses, and where by passing onward, you discover and perceive with the eye of faith, Jesus Christ in person, who is veiled beneath these accidents; thus penetrate to his soul, to there behold the image of God, the brilliant traits of His perfections, the admirable beauty and glory with which it is ornamented, and the treasures it contains. Above all, to prevent you injuring your neighbor—from becoming angry with him—speaking to him sarcastically or revilingly,

you should recall that it is Jesus Christ to whom are addressed your offensive words, and your anger will cease at once.

Let us rejoice, says St. Augustine, and give thanks to God, that He has not only made us Christians, but has made us yet more, that is, "*Jesus Christ.*" My brothers, do you well understand the extent of this grace of God? Do you comprehend your excellency? Admire and rejoice at leisure, that we are "*Jesus Christ,*" for if He is the head of the mystical body, of which we are the members, we compose (both Him and ourselves) this whole body and this man.

The holy Abbot Apollo (or Apollonius), in Thebais, was accustomed to say in this thought, to his Religious, that they should adore the brothers who came to visit them: for, said he, it is not to them, but to God, that your adoration and veneration will be directed; and then added: Have you seen your brother? if so, you have seen your Lord and your God. Returning to our subject, the same St. Augustine tells us: since we are all members of Jesus Christ, and we compose with Him but one body, how is it you offend not Jesus Christ, in offending one of His members? and Jesus Christ will declare it openly before the whole world, on the day of judgment: He will be offended with (or condemn) all those who have not exercised charity towards the neighbor.

St. Dorotheus had well engraved in his heart this noble and most useful sentiment: for when Dositheus, his disciple, had committed some slight fault

in his charge of infirmarian—when he had failed to render some little service to one of the sick, or had allowed some impatient word to escape him—he withdrew, much afflicted, to his cell, there to weep over his fault, not wishing to receive any consolation from the brother who assisted him in the infirmary duty. This brother would then seek St. Dorotheus to beg him to go to Dositheus, whom the Saint would find in his cell, seated on the floor, with his face bathed in tears, and groaning. Well! Dositheus, he would say to him, what is the matter? Why these tears? Ah! Father, would reply this holy disciple, I beg your pardon: I weep over a fault I committed, in feeling angered towards one of my brothers, and for not speaking to him with the sweetness I should. Is it then true, Dositheus, said the Saint, that you were angry and spoke with emotion to your brother? Are you not ashamed to have acted thus towards him? You have afflicted Jesus Christ Himself. To these words Dositheus would make no reply; but filled with confusion, would weep in the bitterness of his heart. Thus forgiven, Dositheus would return to his charge, and when he fell into the same faults, he again hid himself in his cell to weep, when St. Dorotheus would visit him, using the same words, or similar ones: Have you afflicted Jesus Christ again? have you given way to anger and spoken harshly to your brothers? Then it is, in this view of Jesus Christ, in these thoughts of the excellence and dignity of our neighbor, that we can readily correct, stifle, and annihilate any sentiment that

could bear him prejudice, either in his honor or his goods.

SECTION V.

Suspicious and Judgments Contrary to Charity.

Evil suspicions and rash judgments are some of the most violent poisons to fraternal charity. Thus, when we see or hear something to the prejudice of another, and we give to it our conviction; when a malicious interpretation is put upon his actions, or when we think and judge of him as having designs of ambition and interest—making him guilty of a crime of which he had no thought; then it is we act contrary to fraternal charity.

St. Dorotheus, speaking of those who are subject to this vice of rash judgment, and whom he calls “liars in their hearts and in their thoughts,” says: He who is prompt in forming suspicions cannot see two persons speaking together but he concludes at once that they are speaking about him; if they cut short their discourse, saying nothing more at the time, he concludes they are silent on his account. If some one makes thoughtless remarks, by way of pleasantry, he judges directly that they meant to offend him. In fact, nothing can be done or said in his presence that he does not distort and take ill. This same Saint continues, and says of himself: I had been a long time in the monastery, when I came to conceive a great desire to know and judge the *interior* of a person by their exterior

actions and conduct. Thus it was I began to form suspicions, but for which, too, I had a scruple, with much interior pain, so that I forthwith went to confess it to my spiritual father, who was Abbot John, saying to him : Father, if it happens that by the exterior actions of a person, the thought comes to me, in spite of myself, to judge of the interior state of his conscience, what should I do? Abbot John replied : What! my brother, though you should observe the faults of a person, can you not believe he can have grace to correct them! You know very well that such is the case; therefore, you should not from his exterior draw any positive conjecture of what he has within his soul. Be watchful, henceforward, never to allow yourself to entertain such thoughts of your neighbor, nor to rely on your suspicions; for a crooked rule and a false square are always one-sided, and will twist the straightest line. Suspicions are ordinarily false, and cause damage to the soul. This instruction made such an impression on me, that even to this time I mistrust my thoughts so entirely and to such an extent, that if I was told that "the sun is the sun, and that the shadows are shadows," it would be with great difficulty I could believe the fact.

There is nothing more dangerous than suspicions, particularly when they lurk for some time in the mind, for then they make one believe and persuade him effectually that he sees what is *not*, and what cannot be. Behold an example, to the truth of which I can testify: There was amongst us, in the monas-

tery, a brother so inclined to this vice, and so attached to his suspicions and judgments, that when he once took up an idea and formed an opinion, it seemed impossible to divest him of it, and to make him think otherwise. Being thus evilly disposed, and the evil taking fresh growth daily, he allowed himself to be so deceived one day, that on going into the garden (of which he had the care), purposely to discover some evil—for his disposition led him to be ever on the watch—the demon persuaded him that he saw one of the Religious pulling figs by stealth, and then eating them. This occurred on the eve of a communion-day, and at two o'clock in the morning. Believing firmly to have seen this fault, he left the garden quietly, so as not to be perceived by him whom he imagined to be there when *he was not*. At the hour for the Religious to assemble, previous to receiving Holy Communion, he placed himself as spy on the one whom, in his deceived imagination, he had seen eating the figs; when he saw him washing his hands like the rest, as a preparatory act for approaching the altar more worthily, he went in haste to inform the Father Abbot what he considered he knew, and thus to prevent this Religious from receiving. The Abbot had this brother called, to question him, and after a careful investigation he discovered the whole truth. Then he had all the Religious assembled, and made known to them the whole affair: after which he gave Holy Communion to the Religious so unjustly accused, and administered a severe reprimand to the suspicious accuser, whom he deprived

of Communion as a just penance. The Abbot made this occasion serve for three purposes at once; or, as keeping with the adage: "from one stone three blows," viz.: He confounded the demon—instigator of the evil—and blamed him who committed it, who did nothing but suspect one and the other, and to give wrong impressions of his brothers. Secondly, he obtained for this Religious the pardon of his sin and the grace to commit it no more, by the confusion with which it filled him to be thus reprovèd in public. Thirdly, others learned by his example, and at his expense, never to give heed to their suspicions. After saying much on this subject, he concluded by recommending all to watch over their thoughts, never to judge evilly of any one, and to be assured that there was nothing more pernicious, as we were made to see by this example. Although this vice is so atrocious, it is nevertheless very ordinary among men. In truth, there is nothing more common than a good opinion of oneself and disadvantageous sentiments of the neighbor; to judge in one's own favor, and to condemn others; to excuse oneself, and to accuse others. However, this vice should be promptly dealt with and destroyed; but how, and by what means? First, we should consider, that by judging the interior of a person we trespass upon the rights of God, and we make a criminal usurpation of Divine authority. To judge others, says St. John Climachus, is to take boldly from God His sovereign power. In the "Lives of the Fathers," it is related that a solitary, forming a rash judgment of a priest

who came to consecrate a host to communicate him, heard a voice saying: "Men have taken from Me the power of judging," then, in consequence of this judgment, he would not permit the priest to consecrate the host, deeming him unworthy of so holy an action; but this solitary, being ravished in ecstasy, saw a well of gold (or a *golden well*) with a bucket and a chain of gold, the water of this well being most excellent and desirable; a leper was engaged in drawing it and pouring it into a vase, and while burning with thirst, he could not drink of it, because he was leprous. The solitary was made to understand by this, that it regarded himself—so that, thenceforward, he made no further difficulty in allowing the priest, though leprous (or not devoid of faults), to consecrate the sacred species, and also to learn hereby two important instructions: the one, not to consider in the Holy Mysteries the demerits of the priest, whose unworthiness neither diminished their truth nor their excellence; and the other, never to judge of one's neighbor, usurping what belongs to God alone.

Again, let us consider that this liberty of suspecting and judging evil of others is a source from whence flow a great number of sins, such as contempt, distrust, wrath, alienation, hatred, and vengeance towards the neighbor; while it causes us trouble, inquietude, pride, and vanity: all of which, doubtless, is what renders this crime deserving of great punishment.

Abbot Machus, in Cassian, relates that he judged ill of some of his brothers in three things: 1. Be-

cause they cut a skin or ulcer that formed in the mouth, and which was called *uvula*: showing thereby how great was their care not to have anything to annoy them, and how little regard they had for practising mortification ; 2. Because they made use of or wore a kind of cloak in their infirmities as a protection from the cold. 3. Because they blessed and distributed oil to seculars who asked it, as a preservative or a remedy in certain maladies. He was punished by God in these three things : for he was attacked by a sickness that produced this film in his mouth, which so tormented him that he was constrained by the violence of the pain and entreaties of the seniors to have it cut. In this same sickness he was obliged to wear the cloak he had so condemned in others. Finally, that which he most blamed, that is, the blessed oil, as an action he attributed to great vanity and excessive presumption, also occurred to him ; for a concourse of seculars, having one day unexpectedly met him, entreated him to bless it for their use. From that time, added he, I was convinced that a Religious, by a just chastisement of God, falls into the same faults he judges and condemns in others, and in accordance with this decree of our Lord : “ Judge not, so as not to be judged ; for to you will be rendered the same judgment as you render to others.”

In one of St. Francis' travels, his companion said to him, on meeting a poor man clothed in rags : Father, perhaps this man is only feigning poverty. Then the Saint, who entertained quite other sentiments of his neighbor, yielded to a holy indigna-

tion, and commanded this Religious to kneel before this man to ask pardon for such evil suspicions and such indiscreet words, and then to give him his habit. It was thus he penanced him.

In order to prevent suspicions and rash judgments, consider that there is nothing more common, and that we are deceived in this respect every day, both because we cannot behold the interior of a person, which, however, is necessary to judge him fairly; and also because we suspect and judge ordinarily of things, not by their reality, but according to the disposition of our own mind. St. Dorotheus mentions to this effect, that a man may stop at night on the corner of a street; three persons who happen to pass by see him and form of him different judgments: one thinks him to be a dissolute person awaiting some comrade; another takes him for a robber, who is watching his opportunity for committing crime; while the other consider him to be a pious man, who has assigned this spot for a friend to accompany him to church. Behold here three persons who have noticed the same man, in the same place, and in the same moment; but each one entertaining quite different sentiments respecting him, because each one judges him according to his inclination, and as in keeping with the state of his conscience. As the melancholic change into their humor all that they eat, though it be the best food, and this only because of their natural constitution, an ill-disposed or sickly body produces effects quite the reverse to what it should: altering nature and corrupting the nourishing meats accord-

ing to the bad humor that predominates in it: in like manner an evil-disposed soul turns all to evil, even the best things. On the contrary, a virtuous and well-disposed soul converts all into good, even the worst—as a robust and sound body is not made sick by any food it may take, but converts all into a proper nourishment. Thus the bee and the spider make from the same flower, one its honey, the other its poison; from the bitterest flowers the bee draws sweetness, whilst the spider extracts bitterness from the sweetest flower: each one thereby acting in accordance with its natural qualities, which are quite the reverse. Therefore, man judging ordinarily by the inclinations of his mind, and the affections of his will, is removed often from the truth, as well as is deceived in his judgment. This being demonstrated in the example that follows:

Abbot John Mosch relates in his “Spiritual Meadow,” that the holy old priest Stephen was directed by his physicians to eat meat; his brother, a most virtuous secular, happening at this time to visit him, expressed much surprise and grief on seeing him eating meat. He could not understand how, after so long and such rigorous abstinence, any one could become so relaxed as he deemed his holy brother to be. But, in the midst of these scandal-takings, he was ravished in spirit, when he heard a voice saying: Why art thou scandalized at seeing thy brother eating meat? dost thou not know he does it from necessity and obedience? and if thou wishest to know his merit, turn and look behind thee. On turning, he beheld our Lord crucified,

and his brother, the priest, crucified also. Consider that this vice opens our eyes to behold the actions of others and closes them so as not to allow us to see our own. St. John Climachus says: That those who are curious to observe, and prompt to reprehend the faults of others, fall into the defect of not having a perfect recollection of their own sins, nor the care to correct themselves; while he who considers and attentively examines his own conscience never thinks he has time sufficient to bemoan his sins, though he should live a hundred years, nor enough tears to shed, in compunction, when he will have wept as many as there are drops of water in the River Jordan. I have seen true penitents, but never one in whom I could mark the least trace of slander or judgment disadvantageous to the neighbor. The demon excites us to sin, and when he cannot succeed by other means, he tries to make us judge evilly of others, in order to make us fall into sin by this evil judgment. Like the vine-dresser, who advises that none but the seeds of the ripe grapes should be eaten; so, also, the wise and prudent soul stops but to look at the virtues he sees in his neighbor, without minding his vices. "They seek but iniquities," says David; they torment and kill themselves in this vain research. Therefore, never condemn any one, even when you see them sinning, since our eyes so often deceive us. Now listen to what is said by St. John Climachus: "Think of your own faults, and be not troubled about those of others, for which you are not responsible; but keep to that which is solidly useful to

you." Why amuse yourself uselessly—nay, detrimentally, and against the prohibitions of the Gospel—in sifting the actions of others? Should you not rather, as in keeping with your obligation and advantage, watch over your own actions? The sins of others, that do not concern you, you discover promptly by the attention you give them; while your own, of which you should accuse yourself, and for which you shall be punished—if you do not amend—by your negligence you will come to ignore them! Rufinus relates that the Fathers of the Desert Scete, having one day assembled to deliberate on what course to pursue with a brother who had committed a serious fault, each giving his opinion till it came to Abbot Pior's turn, who arose and silently withdrew. He then procured a large and a small bag, both of which he filled with sand, taking the larger one on his shoulders, while the small one he carried before him; and thus equipped, he returned to the assembly, much to the astonishment of the Fathers, who hereupon asked for an explanation, and he made them this wise reply: The large bag filled with gravel that I bear on my shoulders are my own sins which are most numerous, yet I throw them behind me, so as not to see them nor to have any regret for them and not to weep over them. On the contrary, this little bag that I carry before me are the sins of my brother; I keep them in front in order to see them clearly, to judge and to condemn them. It is not, however, in this manner that I should act, but just the reverse: I should keep my own sins ever before me, so as not to forget

them for my greater confusion, and to ask God's pardon; whereas, I should cast my brother's faults behind me, out of my sight, and to give them no attention. All the Fathers hearing these words, said: You have spoken the truth, it is indeed thus we should act. Behold the sure road to salvation!

One of the ancient solitaries had reason for saying: We have sufficient to weep at home, without going to our neighbor to seek for sorrow. And would not a man pass for mad, who, when his own father or mother were lying dead at home, would abandon their corpses to go elsewhere to weep over some one, who had no claims on his affection? When God had all the first-born of the Egyptians put to death, as there was no house without its dead, each one thought to weep for his own, and not for the stranger.

Consider, furthermore, that perhaps you have the same imperfection or vice that you see and condemn in your brother, or with which you judge him to be infected. Search well, says Seneca, perhaps you will find yourself sullied by the vice that you blame in another. You are unjust to feel exasperated against a public crime, and very imprudent to be searching into a fault in which you participate.

St. Paul said with all authority: "*Wherefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest. For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou dost the same things which thou judgest.*"

After all, the best reason and the most powerful remedy against evil suspicions and rash judgment

is charity. St. Paul says of this virtue, "that it thinketh no evil," on the contrary, it has always a good opinion of the neighbor, and it explains well all he does. Thus, one's enemy turns all to evil, converts into poison the best things of a person whom he hates. Indifference, by cause of the malignity of corrupt nature, is easily moved to judge rashly; while the *friend* takes all well, giving a benign and favorable interpretation to everything he sees in *his friend*, as is exemplified in ourselves on account of the love we bear towards ourselves. Charity, says St. Augustine, has a much stronger inclination for judging well of a man than of suspecting evil; it does not torment itself for err'ing, when having a good opinion of the wicked, but says: What loss will I suffer for esteeming him good? The celebrated reply of the blessed Jourdan—second General of the Order of St. Dominic—comes in well here. He was assured that he was being deceived in having a robe given to a poor man of whom he was told, with apparent truth, was only a hypocrite; where upon he said, not wishing to judge ill of an impostor, "I would rather submit to the loss of a robe than to risk the loss of charity."

Christians, said St. Macarius, should be careful not to judge ill of any one, not even of degraded and public sinners; but to regard them all with a simple intention, and with an eye of purity: thereby acquiring so great or ready a disposition of ever judging well, and of contemning *no person*, as for this practice to become eventually natural. One is not obliged, however, to be deceived; for as

prudence conducts all the virtues in their operations, it will give the requisite circumspection.

Therefore, let us endeavor carefully never to suspect nor to judge evil of any one without a most reasonable cause; but rather to interpret all for good, as did the holy Religious mentioned by St. Dorotheus, who, when visiting his brothers and entering a cell all in disorder, would say within himself: Oh! happy is this brother, to pay so little account to the exterior, to thus condemn the things of earth, and to keep his mind fixed on heavenly things! for behold he has no thought, even of arranging or of cleaning his cell! If he saw another's cell very tidy and well arranged, he would again think: Oh! what care this brother has for cleanliness! It can be seen by his cell, where all is so neat, that he loves purity of soul greatly. Thus did he ever judge well of others, never thinking or saying: such a one is untidy and careless; that one too curious and exact; another is vain and too talkative, and similar things. Another Religious is mentioned in the chronicles of the "Brothers Minors," that will serve as a model in this instance. He says of himself: That on coming into religion, God had bestowed on him this grace in particular, of never judging evil of, or murmuring against any one, but to turn all into good; so much so, that if he saw in one of their monasteries a large and handsome church, or better rooms than usual for the use of the Religious, or again, an over-abundance of books and clothing, or anything else that might seem to wound holy poverty as practised

in the Order,—he would think but of thanking God for them—esteeming them good without looking further. But to give a more ancient and authentic example, we have but to quote St. Luke in speaking of the first Christians: “*All they that believed were together, and had all things in common,*” as they had but one heart and one soul, conversing one with another, “*and working out their salvation with gladness and simplicity of heart,*” thinking well of all without any suspicion, and having favor with all the people.

SECTION VI.

Envy.

In communities, envy is also an extremely pernicious vice, it being the poison of charity, which should be the soul of religious life. Charity is essentially the nature of love, which wishes and does good; whereas, envy in place of desiring and pursuing good, prevents it as much as possible: furthermore, its sole aim is to destroy the good it is forced to behold. It ever looks with an eye of suspicion; and from this quality of seeing with regret and displeasure the good of others, it derives its name. “*The eye of the envious,*” says the Wise Man, “*is wicked, and he turneth away his face, and despiseth his own soul;*” like to an eye afflicted with *ophthalmia*, which cannot endure the light, or the sight of things that dazzle. As our day is night for the inhabitants of the opposite hemisphere, so also,

the happiness of a man serves but as a subject of sadness and misery to the envious. In this manner does envy draw its own evil and trouble from the good of others, according to an ancient author.

The brothers of Joseph were grievously afflicted by this vice. "And his brethren," says the Sacred text, "seeing that he was loved by his father more than all his sons, hated him," and could not speak peaceably to him; and that Jacob "had made for him a coat of divers colors;" all this caused their envy and hatred for Joseph, and in consequence of which they plotted against him cruel and unnatural designs.

It is also related of the inhabitants of Palestine, that they were envious and jealous of the prosperity of Isaac—of the great blessings God had bestowed on him—and so they choked up all the wells that his father Abraham had had made, and which he used for watering his flocks. But this act was not to him alone annoying, but likewise to themselves, since they were thereby deprived of water; the convenience of which this holy man had rendered public. Behold the character of envy and its just chastisement; it cannot cause injury to another without first doing the same to itself; and the same blow it deals to others is that which wounds itself. The prosperity of life, sensual pleasures, riches, and all exterior goods are subject of envy for worldlings; but these same subjects are in some degree to be found in religious communities, where sometimes envy and jealousy arise from others being more appreciated, more loved, and better accommo-

dated. It is often believed, but only by a deceived imagination or self-love, that, without reason or merit, some are exalted and others are humbled; that this one is brought forward, and the other one is kept in subjection; that some are praised for their every action, whilst not a word of encouragement is ever offered you; that all that some do is approved, whilst you are found fault with on all occasions. You behold with an evil eye the credit and authority given to another in his employments, which you consider easier and more honorable than your own, and that consequently you desire. From thence arise your ill-humor, your harsh words, your complaints and murmurs, your melancholy discouragements, and many other disorders, without considering that your Superiors and other persons, both prudent and disinterested, do not deem you competent for such an office, and that, moreover, you fail to remember that though you may have the capacity you were admitted into religion but on the consideration of indifference to employments, and a readiness to obey, and to which agreement you acquiesced: for had you expressed a wish to be employed agreeably to your taste or fancy, or in honorable and important offices only, you would never have been received. Therefore, when you are left in a duty longer than agreeable to you, or when you are assigned a menial office, an abject occupation, no wrong is done you. Religion may address to you the words our Lord puts in the mouth of a wise father of a family to an envious person: *“Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree*

with me for a penny? Take what is thine, and go thy way.” There is nothing to find fault with here; you yourself made this law which has rendered the judgment against you: you have been taken by the words of your own mouth. Besides all these things to which envy attaches itself, there is still another source from whence arises food for its spite: namely, the spiritual goods, the gifts of God, and the virtues it beholds in others: seeing that some one has thereby made great progress, that he advances with rapid strides in perfection, and that God pours copious benedictions upon him. This latter species of envy belongs to spiritual persons in particular, as they value only the goods of the soul, and it is for this reason all the more wicked, and more deserving condemnation; it wishes to take to itself the best things, and that without the desire to become more worthy, but merely to deprive others of these goods.

St. Euphrasia, princess, endowed with all manner of perfection, increased wonderfully in virtue and sanctity in a monastery of the Thebais, where she became a Religieuse. One of her companions, a poor girl by birth, named Germania, became so transported with envy as not to be able to look kindly upon the Saint, whom she tormented and persecuted, spoke evilly of, and mocked for her piety, saying all her devotion consisted in grimaces, and her virtue in hypocrisy, secretly hoping to be one day lady abbess; but that in this her ambition should never be gratified. The Saint, in lieu of evincing displeasure at such outrages, or of feeling

wounded at such taunts (or unworthy treatment), humbled herself before this envious Sister, ever speaking to her in terms of respect, and even got on her knees to ask her to pardon her and to pray for her.

Cassian relates a horrible and diabolical envy of a lazy Religious whom he knew. This miserable being could not bear to see others doing better than himself, so he would visit them to keep them from their work; or by complaints and murmurs, by artful words and pernicious counsel, he would endeavor to lessen their fervor, to entice them from their duty, even to persuade them by maliciously devised reasons, that both for their happiness and their salvation they would do much better in another monastery which he named to them, and where he himself had a great desire to go. He finished his intrigue with an over-credulous brother, whom he persuaded to leave by stealth—naming the day and the hour for executing their design—appointing the spot where this brother was first to go to await him, assuring him that he would not fail to meet him at the time agreed upon; but the *deceiver* and *impostor* did not leave the monastery; whereas, this poor brother, mortified and confused by his *sortie*, durst not return. One must have truly a wicked heart to be guilty of such deception; but it proves the powerful sway that envy has over a man who once yields to its influence.

Let us now come to the remedies for so pernicious and detestable a vice. The sovereign and most efficient is charity. “Charity,” says St. Paul, “is not

envious ;” on the contrary, there is nothing more opposed to envy than this beautiful virtue. The second means is to consider this vice as revoltingly hideous, and causing so great evil that it must inspire fear in him who regards it closely. It is one of those covert vices that is not willingly recognized or owned, it being the index to a vile and abject spirit, and is not compatible with a noble and generous soul. Again, it is a vice that inflicts its own punishment ; for, as it cannot behold the prosperity of others without grief, in seeking to injure another it hurts itself, and in wishing to do evil it causes its own suffering : like the basilisk, whose look proves fatal, and if beholding itself in a mirror that may be presented it, is by the reflection of the visual rays killed. It also resembles the pypus, a ravenous animal that eats its own members, or the *malignant* and *vicious viper*.

St. Bernard calls *envy* the moth of the soul, which it gnaws as this insect does a piece of cloth, and as the rust that consumes iron. Thus, is this vice its own executioner ; it draws vengeance upon itself in this life, and eternal punishment hereafter. As charity makes the principal recompense and glory of the blessed in heaven, if it is on earth the badge of Christianity and the *special* virtue of Christians, it is to be inferred that envy, which is its greatest antagonist, must be in hell the most horribly chastised. Behold two examples of envy punished, in order to have a more salutary fear of this vice, and to guard against its attacks :

St. Bennet, as is related by St. Gregory the

Great, having attracted by his sanctity and miracles a multitude of persons, who were inspired to imitate the life he had embraced, his name was pronounced with benedictions throughout Italy. But, as is customary with the wicked to envy the good,—and the virtue they cannot themselves have,—the curate of a neighboring parish, named *Florent*, became jealous of the reputation and sanctity of St. Bennet (or Benedict), was so transported with passion, that he devised means to thwart and persecute him. He spoke evilly of him, decried his conduct, and prevented, as much as he could, persons from seeking him. However, seeing that with all his efforts he did not succeed in his designs; but, on the contrary, the renown of the Saint and the number of his disciples augmented daily, his envy became in consequence all the more inflamed, so that he could no longer endure this glory and fame of St. Bennet, but resolved on his death, and for this end he sent him, as in alms, a loaf of poisoned bread. The Saint received it with thanksgiving, while knowing by Divine light the danger, he commanded a raven, that was accustomed to come from a neighboring forest, at the dinner hour, to receive from his hands its food, to take this loaf to some out-of-the-way place where no one could find it. The raven, discharging its wings, fluttering and croaking around it, seemed to say: I wish to obey, but fear the peril; when the Saint reassured it that no evil would follow, but to take the loaf as he commanded, and to the spot indicated. Then the raven promptly took up the loaf in its beak and carried it away. Three

days afterwards this same bird returned, when the Saint gave it its usual little meal. Thus thwarted, the envious curate did not rest satisfied in his attempt to take the life of St. Bennet's body ; but he now wished to attack that of his soul, as well as the salvation of his disciples, by exposing to their view—in close proximity to their dwelling—such things and persons as were calculared to offend their modesty, or tarnish the purity of their minds. The Saint, on beholding this danger, and fearing for his dear disciples, who were not yet well fortified with solid virtue, judged it wiser to yield to envy by retiring elsewhere, knowing well that he was the principal mark at which it aimed. He thence withdrew with a few of his Religious, leaving the others in possession of the buildings ; but he had not gone four leagues, when Maurice, the disciple in charge, despatched a servant to advise him to return. God had become his visible protector, and had taken vengeance on this curate who so persecuted him ; for he was crushed to death by the ceiling of the room he was in falling suddenly upon him. At this news the Saint was touched with lively sorrow, and shed tears both on account of this poor man dying in enmity with God, and also because his disciple seemed a little rejoiced at this sad occurrence. However, he imposed a penance on his disciple as a means towards expiation.

Now let us come to what should be done to cure the envy borne you. You should regard it as a great evil, and as a mortal malady in your neighbor, for whom you should have pity ; but this alone is not

sufficient: you should pray God to deliver him from it, and you should also desire to do him good in return for the evil he wishes you. By such means, says St. Paul, "*thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head:*" thus to consume his malice, so as afterwards to make him love you. But there are some persons who do just the reverse; they have their vanity excited, and they glory in becoming the object of envy rather than that of *pity*: taking pleasure in showing what it is that wounds the envious, so as to irritate them and to cause them more pain. We have seen how St. Euphrasia acted towards Germania, St. Benedict to his persecutor, and how St. Gregory Nazianzen yielded to the envy of the Eastern Bishops, by leaving the episcopacy of the Church in Constantinople to retire to private life, and thus to give repose to the evil minds who were annoyed by his presence. Ruffinus relates that before Abbot Pastor established himself in Egypt there had been a solitary of much renown and much visited; but when Abbot Pastor came to dwell near him all abandoned him to come to the holy Abbot, who soon acquired great celebrity. This solitary was so vexed at this change, so overcome by envy, as to slander the Abbot, and to discredit him on all occasions. Abbot Pastor having learned this, said to his Religious: What shall we do to make peace? Our presence is offensive to this good old man, who has been a great personage, and those who deserted him to find us have become the innocent cause of putting enmity between us (*or of arousing envy*). Perhaps we can soften his feelings by showing him

hospitality Let us prepare a dinner, and carry it, also some wine to his hermitage ; and thus we may rejoice him : this mark of our affection can but exert some influence over him. They accordingly went with their dinner, and on arriving at his cell door knocked, when one of his disciples appeared and asked their business. The others replied that Abbot Pastor comes to ask the blessing of your master, when this latter responded that he had not leisure to receive them, and he must excuse him. But Abbot Pastor firmly said he would *not* return without receiving this favor he humbly requested. Such humility and such patience touched this solitary, who forthwith opened his door and his heart to his visitors, saluting each with an affectionate embrace. The company then unburthened themselves of the provisions they carried, displaying it all to the astonished solitary, with whom they rejoicingly made their little feast. This solitary then said to the Abbot : I have often heard you spoken of in praise, but I am now convinced that the hundredth part of your goodness and virtue has not been told. Thenceforward these two holy men remained united by the strictest ties of friendship. Thus was envy happily cured !

Cesareas relates of a Religious of his Order that on seeing himself the object of envy, he determined wisely to disabuse this person of his vicious feeling, by taking all occasions to serve him, and for this would make his bed, wash or brush his clothes, or give him any other attention he could, and by such means he soon appeased him, won his heart, and of

the *envious* he made a *friend*. It is thus the just become victorious over their enemies. St. Paul also warns us: "*To no man render evil for evil: providing good things not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men. Bless them that persecute you.*"

SECTION VII.

Of Words Contrary to Charity.

By words contrary to charity, we here understand generally all words that wound this divine virtue—in particular, such as are censorious—that sully the neighbor's reputation and do injury to his honor. This liberty of speaking too often exists in religion, and one of the most ordinary evils resulting therefrom is mentioning the defects of others, or not concealing or dissembling their apparent faults, which serve as topics of conversation in private as well as in public—sometimes with one in secret, then with two more openly, and then with several, without any reserve. So that it is a wonder if in a community there be any one who has escaped all the bitings of slander and of whom something evil has not been said—some complaints made; and it is no less remarkable, when there can be found a single one who has not committed some fault,—great or small—in this respect.

St. Bernard, treating this subject, refers to Religious the names of spouse, sister, etc., as mentioned in the Canticles, for he says: I see placed in all religious communities persons who inspect closely, who

study the actions of others—even of the good and virtuous—not to imitate, but to blame them, not content to speak evilly of them, but ally themselves to others for the same purpose—thereby contracting most pernicious friendships and unions, to create *disunion*. So great is the evil of detraction and of heeding detractors, that minds thus imbued with malignity form to themselves odious assemblies to speak more at liberty of every one. Accordingly, St. Bernard notices two kinds of detractors: the first, such as speak openly and without fear; the second, such as do it with disguise and artifice, previously preparing others to hear more readily and to believe more firmly the evil they wish to speak of some one, by praising his good qualities, or expressing the love they bear him. St. John Climachus compares these two classes equally to a depraved female—the first to one who sins without shame, and the other to one who has no less affection for sin, but who commits it secretly, while still retaining some regard for appearances.

Besides, censure often arises from hatred or envy, sometimes from pride; for the declaration one makes of another's vice or imperfection is a tacit belief that he himself is not sullied with it, and thus you seem to rise above your neighbor as much as you lower him by this knowledge you impart of his imperfections. Then again the vice springs from a certain facility and an inconsiderate eagerness to speak. But from whatever side comes slander—our nature, being corrupt, is more readily moved to speak evil than good—it is always a *want*

of charity. St. John Climachus styles slander a secret, hidden leech which sucks out the blood of charity. "It attacks that queen of virtues," says St. Bernard, "more sharply and more readily than all the other vices." In fact, any one who speaks ill of his brother shows in the first instance that he does not love him, and therefore he is devoid of charity, nor can he pretend to aught else by his slander, than to attract to this person the hatred or contempt of those before whom he defames him. Thus, he wounds charity with his slanderous tongue; he destroys it as much as he can in all those who listen to him, and also in the absent, to whom what he has said can easily be reported. I add, moreover, that detraction offends even substantial charity, which is God,—bearing within it a certain degree of *impiety and blasphemy* when speaking evilly or *facetiously* of the natural defects of a person; for example, to remark his being lame or maimed, that he possesses little mind or wit, or anything else that one finds to condemn in him, though in this the speaker may not commit *positive* sin, yet he nevertheless condemns God in His work—thereby accusing Him either of ignorance, a want of goodness, or inability, without considering that this work had to be after this manner, this man so created in body and mind, and not otherwise, for the designs of God, for His special glory, and so to raise this person to the degree of beatitude to which he was destined.

All the foregoing means should be made use of to banish from communities everything like de-

traction and retrench that unfortunate liberty, therein so common, of speaking of the defects of others. But to render these considerations more practical and constant, we should conceive a great horror for this vice, and to this end should be known the principal things by which it is made despicable: 1. The sin of detraction is, in its nature, mortal and grievous, because it attacks directly the principal of all the virtues, charity, which is the soul of Christianity, and therefore God detests it extremely, and punishes it with untold rigor. "Thy tongue," says David, "is let loose against thy brother, offending one and the other; it has wounded their good name, like a sharp and cutting razor." Thou hast loved to speak evil rather than good, and to recall vices and not virtues. O deceitful tongue! that has been pleased to speak of all at random, without examining what you say! But thinkest thou that thou wilt go unpunished, and that God wilt not take revenge? Behold the punishment He prepares for thee, according to David: "*Thou shalt be consumed by His wrath, and thou shalt be no more.*" As a slanderous tongue is a poisonous arrow to wound its neighbor, and as a fire that blackens and burns his reputation, so it shall be pierced by the penetrating and mortal arrows of God's wrath, and burned in eternal flames. And St. John says: "*God poured out His vial of wrath, and they gnawed their tongues for pain.*" 2. Detraction causes great and numerous evils. Abbot Agathon being asked what he thought of this vice and of a

too great liberty of speaking of the defects of others, compares it, as is related by St. Dorotheus, to a mighty conflagration, that causes all to fly before it, and that destroys the fruit of the trees within its reach. Then he adds: There is nothing more dangerous or more troublesome in a community than this unchecked freedom of speaking evilly of one or the other, it being like a turbid source from whence flow a great quantity of evils and sins.

The vice of slander, said St. Francis to his Religious, is an enemy of charity, and therefore is abominable before God, because it fattens on the blood of the souls that it slays by one blow of its tongue as with the stroke of a sword. The wickedness of the slanderer is much greater than that of a robber, for the Christian law, that commands so strictly a love for the neighbor, has more reference to the soul than to the body—more regard for his salvation than for his temporal well-being. Also, those who speak evilly of their Superiors, of their brothers, or of religion, belong to the race of *Cham*, third son of Noah, who mocked his father, and for which he was cursed by his father; so in like manner will detractors receive the malediction of God, and render themselves odious to all, showing their own corrupted heart.

St. Bernard compares detractors to the “little foxes,” mentioned in the Canticle, that spoil and ruin the vineyard, and that the holy Spouse recommends and urges so strongly, they be hunted, taken and put to death. “The artful and secret de-

tractor," says this Saint, "is a wicked fox, that commits much ravage wherever he is."

The device of the Emperor Charles le Gros answered well for this: "*Os garrulum intricat omnia.*" A gossip, a reporter, and a slanderer embroils all in a community, causing therein great trouble: but the Holy Spirit says in Ecclesiasticus, with much strength and clearness: "A babler, who does nothing but speak of others, is terrible; he is capable by his gossip and his slander to disturb an entire town." And again elsewhere: "The slanderer is one who, in the same breath, blows both heat and cold,"—praising a person in his presence, and blaming or deriding him in his absence. "*The tongue of a third person hath disquieted many; it hath destroyed the strong cities of the rich, and overthrown the houses of great men; it hath undone strong nations, and stricken the courage of a warlike people.*"

It is incredible how great the evils caused by a wicked tongue in the society of men, for it disunites those who are most strictly joined together, and he that hearkens to it shall never have repose. The Wise Man says: "*The stroke of a whip maketh a blue mark, but the stroke of the tongue will break the bones,*" and "*Blessed is he that is defended from a wicked tongue, that hath escaped its fury, and that hath not drawn the yoke thereof, and hath not been bound in its chains, for its yoke is a yoke of iron, and its bands are bands of brass.*" Its ravages are as great as that of a famished lion, when attacking a flock of sheep: or

as a furious leopard, it exercises all its natural cruelty. "*The sons of men,*" says David, "*whose teeth are weapons and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.*" St. Bernard, on recalling these words, says: "The tongue of the slanderer is a triple-edged sword. Such a tongue, is it not a lance? Yes, a most penetrating lance, which by one stroke pierces three persons. It is a viper, assuredly, and a most cruel viper, which by one breath empoisons three souls. Are not its teeth the teeth of the hydra, a famous serpent of antiquity, in the marshes of Lerna, which, being scattered throughout the country of Thebes, produced armored soldiers. '*Detractors,*' says David, '*have sharpened their tongues like a serpent: the venom of asps is under their lips.*'"

In the Apocalypse, St. John represents the vice of slander under another most remarkable figure; he says: The bottomless pits were opened, that is hell, from whence arose a smoke as from a great furnace, and which obscured the sun and air. From out of this thick smoke, came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them as scorpions have power. They had tails like scorpions and stings: and on their heads were crowns like gold, their faces were the faces of men, their hair hanging like that of women, and they had the teeth of lions. Behold in this the slanderer depicted in liveliest colors! Detraction is naught else than a black smoke exhaling from the infernal regions, where it is formed; where, also, blasphemy is ceaseless, and where dwells the demon, the chief of slanderers: for he

was the first to speak evil of God, when he deceived Eve in the terrestrial paradise; and wherefore all slanderers bear justly his name.

Thus St. Paul, writing to his disciple Timothy, recommends that women speak no evil of their neighbor—"The women in like manner chaste, *not slanderers.*"

St. Bernard tells us: Rest assured that the tongue of slander is more cruel than the iron lance that made the gaping wound in our Lord's side: for it wounded not only the body of our Lord, but one of His members—and a member that is still in life, but to which, by its wound, it caused death. It is more painful than the thorns with which the fury of the soldiers pierced His adorable and divine head: more malicious still than the nails that were driven into His most holy hands and feet, by the extreme wickedness of the Jews; for had our Lord not had greater esteem for the life of this (mystical) body and members so wounded and torn by slander—and which belong to Him—than He had for the life of the body and members that He received from the Blessed Virgin, He would never have delivered up this latter to the injuries of death, nor to the outrages of the cross, to save the former.

SECTION VIII.

The Same Subject Continued.

We have seen the evils resulting from slander in general: let us now behold them more in particular,

and in detail. The Holy Spirit—as we have quoted above—calls the tongue of slander, “*a three-cleft tongue,*” and so also is it styled by the Chaldean paraphrase of Proverbs. Why so? Because it is cast between two tongues that speak well of one another, and between two friends who dwell together in perfect harmony, thus to set them at variance. Secondly, because with one stroke it wounds three persons: the person slandered, the one who listens, and still more, the person who utters the slander. It wounds the person slandered, since it takes from him his honor and reputation, which is a wealth more precious than gold or silver. It is a wealth that places us in high esteem with others—rendering us more capable of acting before men with approbation and success, even in the affairs of God; for when one has lost his honor and reputation, of what good is he? in what can he be employed? Then, as honor and reputation are a good of so great importance in the service of God, and for the utility of the neighbor, it should be preserved intact. The Holy Spirit says in Ecclesiasticus: “*Take care of thy reputation,*” and be in good esteem; because, as is said in Proverbs: “*A good name is above riches,*” and is more useful than vast wealth, for accomplishing great things. However, this care must be tempered by Christian prudence and humility of heart, as man is too readily inclined by nature to this *care*, and too jealous of his good name.

Then, the best counsel a person could take in this care and esteem of his reputation, is to leave all to the care of God—seeking in all things but the Di-

vine glory, feeling assured and holding for certain, that by thus acting, God will procure for him as good a reputation with others as will be necessary for advancing His service and for the salvation of the neighbor. Behold the wisest and most efficacious means for executing the advice of the Holy Spirit, touching one's good name!

This truth being admitted, we shall now consider that each Religious has his or her own good name; and though these are poor in temporal goods, they are not for this stripped of their honor. Then, if a Religious is poor by her vow of poverty, this does not cause her to be contemned, but on the contrary, she is all the more to be honored on account of the excellence of her state, and she merits to be more esteemed for having executed so heroic an action, as giving herself so entirely to the service of the King of Kings. Then, so far from not having her honor any longer, she has it *increased*; and as it has become of a more *exquisite* nature, it is also the more easily wounded. Wherefore, all persons, specially those who dwell in the same community with her, should bear great respect towards her, and have exceeding care not to wound, but to defend her reputation. However, the good name of Religious is too often tarnished by mockery, blame, or slander, so as to render them contemptible in a community, and where they are only thought of as being most imperfect, without mind or judgment, though they may and do possess many good qualities which are not mentioned. "*Thou wast,*" says Jeremiah, "*a plentiful olive-tree, fair, fruitful, and beautiful;*"

God endowed her with fine qualities, and imparted to her a plentiful grace for performing many good works, which had placed her, according to her state, in esteem and reputation with those with whom she lived;—but “*At the noise of a word—a slander, a false report, a gibe,—A great fire was kindled in it, and the branches thereof are burnt;*”—has ruined all—has cast this Religieuse into bad repute, has rendered her incapable of succeeding in anything in which previously she met with success.

Such is the direful consequence of speaking too freely of others, without considering that any one is liable to commit faults of frailty or from impetuosity. Then why should such be attributed to malice? and why should it be supposed that if guilty of the fault, it can never be effaced—but that the stain of the sin being there, or in these deceived imaginations, the person slandered is ever looked upon with contempt by all in the house: or if he passes into another community, he is there received by persons who are imbued with a foreknowledge of this fault, and they act towards him in accordance with their evil dispositions and sentiments, whereas had this person’s many virtues been spoken of or considered, a very different and a much more favorable opinion would be entertained for him. Thus, when false opinions are acted upon—when evil suspicions or judgment is pronounced against a person, sooner or later, injury is done him, and so as to prevent him accomplishing much good.

Furthermore, slander wounds him who listens, by preventing him from having the esteem and affec-

tion he might otherwise entertain of his neighbor, and also causes him to receive wrong opinions of him, and even to contemn him. But this vice wounds yet more dangerously the one who slanders: for the same happens to him as to the bee when it stings, doing more injury to itself than to the person it attacks, to whom it imparts pain alone, whereas its sting is mortal to itself.

Slander, by a single stroke of the tongue, like a thrust from an empoisoned poignard, wounds the soul of the slanderer mortally; for the sin of slander is in its nature mortal; but, if the wrong it does is not great, or when it is the result of levity of mind, the sin is less, though it is always *grievously venial*, since it wounds charity, which commands that the faults of the neighbor be hidden and excused as much as possible.

It also offends against justice, since it takes away another's honor, which is a possession most precious, and for which it must afterwards make restitution. But hereupon must be remarked one grave fault, that sometimes occurs in communities; it is that, after having been guilty of slander, of making known or publishing some defect of a person, the remembrance of such knowledge being not readily effaced, a false conscience is formed to oneself, it is imagined that the offence is not great, and consequently, is lightly confessed, and so, without further penance and contrition, this evil speaker will, without scruple, approach the Holy Communion. Thus, such a one is greatly deceived; for he nourishes secret sin and places his salvation in imminent danger.

Therefore, slander is a vice, not alone most pernicious, but even infamous. St. Antiochus styles it an offshoot of folly. Again, slanderers can be likened to public sewers, into which are turned all the filth of a town, and where, if not properly cleaned and purified, are engendered infectious vapors. In like manner, all the imperfections (real or imaginary) of a community are collected in the minds and on the tongues of slanderers, from whence issue uncharitable words, as an offensive odor, that corrupt all in the house. "*Their mouths,*" says David, "*are like open sepulchres,*" from whence exhale *imperfections* insupportable and deadly. Detractors are the *conveyers of pests*, the real corrupters of religious houses, their tongues being most appropriately called by some one, "*the paint brushes of the devil;*" for they serve well to paint ugly and horrid pictures, and St. Bernard says, the demon seats himself on the tongues of detractors, and that they by his instrumentality are set in motion, and made to eject their venom.

A detractor also causes bad opinions to be conceived of himself, and that he be looked upon as a dangerous person. God permits justly that the slanderer be derided; and thus is returned to him what he has meted to others. "*The detractor,*" says the wise son of Sirach, "*shall defile his own soul, and shall be hated by all;*" he robs himself of honor and reputation before men, who fly him wherever he goes. Wherefore is given this warning: "Watch with the greatest care, that you be not taken for one who slanders: it is an evil re-

proach, when it can be said of a man, "he is a slanderer," he has a wicked tongue, *the tongue of a serpent*: hatred, enmity, and opprobrium shall be his lot; for he must necessarily make enemies, and that all fear to converse with him. To give more clearness to the above words of Ecclesiasticus, Rabanus remarks: It is with reason that enmity, hatred, and contempt are joined and attached to *slanderers*, because they are detestable both to God and men. From whence comes it that St. Paul says: "*Detractors are hateful to God*:" and David: "*The man that in private detracted his neighbor, him did I persecute*;" and Solomon: "*The detractor is the abomination of men*." Vatable translates the Hebrew: "Men hold in horror the mocker; he who derides his brother, and who, by word and gesture, mimics him, so as to render him ludicrous."

Let us now come to the remedies for so pernicious a vice. The first is, to conceive so great horror of it as will cause us to fly its very shadow and name.

The second is, to watch vigilantly over oneself when speaking of the neighbor; for there is nothing more slippery than the tongue, which by its natural glibness and our malice is carried on very easily and rapidly to saying something evil of them. One should use his tongue with the same care and circumspection as a surgeon employs his lancet when he bleeds, because he may very easily make a slip; but knowing the importance of the operation he is about performing, he directs his lancet with great precaution and with a wonderful skill.

The third is, to consider your own faults, and that will prevent you from thinking of those of others. You blame a vice in your brother, with which you yourself are sullied—having several others besides; or if you are free from this particular one, God will permit you, in punishment for your slander, that you fall therein.

Ruffinus relates that a Religious asking the holy Abbot Pastor how to prevent speaking disadvantageously of his neighbor, the Abbot replied: You should ever keep before your eyes two portraits, your own and that of your neighbor. If we regard attentively our own, if we consider all its defects, we shall esteem and praise that of our neighbor; whereas, if we close our eyes to our own defects, we will soon contemn our neighbor.

Thus, so as never to speak or *think* evil of others, we have but to look fixedly on our own great imperfections, so as to correct ourselves.

Again, never speak ill of any one because you see he falls into habitual faults, but have compassion for him: fearing that you may come to do the same, and no one is given to slander, who is deeply versed in *self-knowledge*. Our Lord himself addressed detractors thus: “*Seest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye,*” (a small fault he has committed, “*You, who seest not the beam that is in thy own eye?*” (a grievous sin, of which you are guilty). “*Hypocrite! cast out first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see to cast out the mote in thy brother’s eye.*” And to silence the accusers of the woman taken in sin, as men-

tioned in the Gospel, He said to them: "*He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*" These words put them to shame, and they all went out, one after the other, without daring to reply. So, let him who is without sin and who finds no imperfection in himself, speak of his neighbors. The fourth and most certain remedy against slander is charity, which, as St. Paul teaches, "*thinketh no evil,*" and consequently *speaks* no evil, for words are the imagery of thought. On the contrary, if one thinks well, all will be spoken well. God and our Lord love us with our vices and defects; and to prove this to us, they cease not to do us good. But let it not be understood from this forbearance that they approve and encourage them but to give us to know that they suffer them in patience. Behold herein the portrait of true charity, and how we should love men! Let us love them after this divine model, regardless of their defects; for this will assuredly prevent all evil speaking of others, and perfectly cure us of slandering.

We shall now speak of those who listen to slander.

1. Care should be taken to avoid slanderers, as much as possible. The Holy Spirit gives us this counsel in the Book of Proverbs: "Having nothing to do with detractors;" and then follows the reason: "*For their destruction shall rise suddenly: and who knoweth the ruin of both?*" In Ecclesiasticus we are also warned: "*Hedge in thy ears with thorns, and hear not a wicked tongue,*" as it gives out corruption to sully you, and blows a pestiferous breath, that will prove fatal to you.

Whenever St. Pachomius heard some Religious speaking the least evil of any of his brethren, he would turn away, instantly, would fly him, as he would a serpent.

Cassian relates of Abbot Machus, that he had received of God the grace of never sleeping so long as spiritual things were discussed, though it should continue for several days and nights; but so soon as a word was let fall against the neighbor, he was seen to doze. So that, says this author, the poison of this word, far from infecting his mind, came no nearer than to his ear.

2. When we cannot prevent hearing slander, it should not be believed, and thus punish him who speaks it. As it is ever a sin either against truth or justice, and always contrary to charity, it merits to be chastised, condemned on the spot; as it is hurtful to him who listens, as well as to him who is thus spoken of. Moreover, the detractor should be admonished with courage, by telling him he does evil; that he offended God, and his neighbor; that he would not like to have such things to be said of him, though he should even be guilty; that in all probability, God will permit evil to be spoken of him; and that the same treatment he gives to others will be returned to him. Respect not the one who slanders in your presence, says St. John Climachus, and do not endure it in silence, but say to him: Brother, do not speak so, I beg you. Why do you wish me to condemn my neighbor, I, who commit every day much greater faults? By this means you perform two good actions at the same time: one being, you correct your brother

of his fault, and the other, that you preserve yourself from falling therein.

A man of piety was accustomed to say to the slanderer, in order to silence him: It is with the grace of God that we are not like him of whom you speak; but what would we be without this grace? St. Chrysostom, much more brusque, but with his wonted eloquence, says that he should be spoken to thus: Have you any praise to bestow on your neighbor, or any good to say of him? If so, my ears are open to listen to you, and to receive your dulcifluous tones; but if you propose to say aught to his prejudice, I must close them at once, for my ears were not made (or given me) to be the receptacles of your corruption. What will it profit me, I beg you, if I should learn that such a one is wicked, has committed some evil act? go! and say so to him. But, for ourselves, let us think of our own affairs, and how we shall give an account of our life to God; for what excuse can we justly offer, and what pardon merit, if we are so curious in examining the actions of others, and so negligent in considering our own? Doubtless it would be deemed most unseemly for a man, when passing a house to thrust his head in, curiously, to see all that was transpiring within; in like manner is it a blameworthy act, and true impertinence, to seek out, unreasonably and unjustly, the life of another, and to speak thereof. The slanderer richly merits all the above to be said to him!

Some one recounted to Zeno many evil things concerning Antisthenes, adding, that there was

much in him to be displeased with ; when Zeno replied : And have you nothing good to say of him ? has he not some redeeming qualities ? I know not, answered the reviler. Then are you not ashamed, wisely remarked Zeno, to possess mind enough to make these observations, and sufficient memory to retain the defects of Antisthenes, and yet to be so wanting in discernment as not to know what there is good in him ? (*or, not to see his good qualities*). But should the slanderer be your superior in any respect, so that you could not in propriety reprove him directly or openly (by word of mouth), then be sure not to evince the least complaisance, to give any word of approval, nor sign of agreement ; on the contrary, let your silence, as well as passiveness of countenance, and even the coldness of your looks, make him know that want of charity is displeasing to you, or at least, that you consider it unworthy of your attention. “As the north wind,” says Solomon, “scatters the clouds and hinders the rain, so let a forbidding, sad countenance *drive away detractors*.”

A slander should never be repeated, but kept shut up within one's own bosom, under the key of perpetual silence. One of the Fathers of the Desert gave this counsel : If you are told some evil of a brother, do not report to him, for this will only give rise to quarrels, etc. The wise Son of Sirac says excellently well : “Have you heard anything against your neighbor, stifle it within yourself, let it die within your breast, feeling sure that no evil will be done, but on the contrary, its death will cause life. It is

a mark of great wisdom to act thus, for the *fool* has much trouble to withhold a detraction told him in secret.

“*If thou blow the spark,*” says the Wise Man, “*it shall burn as a fire; and if thou spit upon it, it shall be quenched.*” Thus, to repeat to one and the other the slander you may have heard will make great noise, cause much trouble, but by not mentioning it it is stifled. Also, we are admonished, when we cannot prevent hearing some uncharitable words, so as to close up our ears entirely, at least we should close our mouth with a double and triple lock, so as never to mention it.

In a word, the one who unwillingly learns the faults of his neighbor must throw the purple cloak of charity over this fault, in order to conceal and excuse it as much as possible, according to the maxim given by the Prince of the Apostles, when speaking of *fraternal charity*: “*Charity covereth a multitude of sins,*” without being troubled thereby, at least so long as it is not obliged to discover them, in order to reprove and correct. Charity, says St. Chrysostom, dexterously turns aside all knowledge of another’s sin, in truth and effect; while an ill will thinks but to forge, misrepresent, and publish it. Charity ever excuses the intention when it cannot the action, and thus ameliorates and lessens the fault, or attributes to inadvertence, impetuosity, to the violence of temptation, or the weakness and misery of nature, the faults, that it is constrained to behold. The charitable person who thus excuses his neighbor will merit that God and man will

exercise the same goodness towards him. Thus, a solitary, having asked the holy Abbot Pastor, if he should keep concealed the faults of his brothers and never mention them, the Abbot replied: The same instant we make known the faults of our brother, God makes known our own, exposing them openly, that all may see them: but, whenever we keep our neighbor's concealed, God also covers ours. Let us add to this, that we should never relate anything that we might suppose to be wounding in the least degree to charity. For instance, you will be told something to the prejudice of another, a complaint may be made to you of some one, you will be sought out to hear of some displeasure or some contempt received from the Superior, from a father or a brother; but it is not for you to repeat this to the one of whom the complaint is made, but let it die within you, according to the teaching above given. St. Augustine deploras a misfortune, which he says is most common among men, and causes much trouble. The majority of men, says he, do not content themselves with relating to the offended party what has been said of them in anger, by those who bear them hatred, but must even add thereto much that has not been uttered; whereas, any well-raised person, one with ever so little of Christianity, does not think to have acquitted himself of his duty by simply *not* repeating anything that might ruffle tempers, if he does not likewise attempt to soothe and comfort these irritated spirits by speaking well of one to the other.

Previously, this same Saint cited as an example his mother, St. Monica, who, whenever an occasion presented, would work with so much discretion and charity to make peace between persons who wished evil to each other, that, although they each expressed their sentiments of hatred to her, giving vent to sharp and injurious words against their enemy, as they mutually considered her a *personal* friend, she nevertheless related nothing to one or the other, but what had a tendency to effect reconciliation: thus, she did not throw oil into a fire to increase its flame, but water, to extinguish it.

Then, listen with patience and sweetness to such as come to complain to you of another, and endeavor to soothe them. To effect this, first enter apparently a little into their sentiments, for fear of ruffling them yet more, and repulsing them; after which, give them counsel for salvation and perfection, by showing them that God has furnished them with this occasion of merit and of evincing their love for Him, to increase their virtue and to brighten their crown, and all that is required of them is to make profit of so propitious a means to bear in silence this trial, according to the wise counsel He himself gives by Isaias: "*In silence and in hope shall your strength be.*" Also, make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, to complain to our Lord, to unburthen your heart to Him, and most certainly will you retire strengthened. St. Peter Martyr being unjustly accused and penanced by his Superior, bore it in silence for some time, then went to complain before a crucifix in the church, and there,

protested his innocence and the injustice of the accusation. Our crucified Lord spoke to him: "And I, Peter, what have I done to be thus on the cross as you behold Me? Remember, that I suffered this for you." The Saint withdrew, wonderfully consoled and fortified.

It is now to be remarked that, if the one who heard these complaints would labor thus at the cure of the one who makes them, he would not be so readily inclined to listen. Finally, there can be found in Religion ears ever open and minds susceptible, nay greedy even, to hear reports, to receive all the discontent and murmurs of a house. This comes sometimes from the natural bent of one's disposition, as also, from one's own discontent with Superiors and others, and thus they are ever ready to receive what can nourish or foment their ill humor.

Let us now say something to the person slandered, warning them to bear with patience and courage all reviling, which, at most, if taken well, can do no harm to the recipient. In the Isle of Malta (or Melita) the *viper* that fastened on to Paul's hand might have caused his death by its venom, whereas he received no hurt, on account of his virtue and the grace of God; and to rid himself of it he had but to shake it off into the fire from whence it issued.

As all the praises of men cannot render us better than we are, so also their blame cannot make us worse. Wherefore is it, that man should rise above both praise and blame, so as not be too sensitive to the

sweetness of the one nor to the pricks of the other and to render himself invincible to their attacks. Thus, far from becoming inflated by praise or discouraged by blame, we should only strive to acquire or to increase the good for which we are lauded, and to correct the bad for which we are reprehended.

Then, not alone does slander, when taken well, effect no injury, but it serves greatly as a remedy to the evil we have done, or prevents our doing the same, and also obtains for us before God a treasure of merit and a rich crown of glory. When you are spoken of evilly, enter within yourself, examine, and do yourself justice; see if it is not with reason that you are thus censured; if it is not in punishment for having, on a former occasion, spoken ill of some one; or again, if you are truly innocent, reflect how often and how evilly God is spoken of: how the reputation of His divine Son, our Lord, was vilified and calumniated during his whole earthly career. Consider all this attentively: behold herein your models.

In conclusion to this entire subject, we may say with the Wise Man: "*Let detracting lips be far from thee;*" heed not detractors, have no communication with them. Moreover, the Gloss remarks on this passage, that this vice places almost the entire human race in danger of wrecking its salvation.

Also, St. Jerome avers that scarcely one can be found, even among such as make profession of virtue, who is not more or less tintured with this

vice, and who has not been in some manner caught in these meshes of the demon.

Whence it is, that this same Father speaks to us when he addresses Nepotian: "*Take care to have neither itching ears or tongue,*" that is to say, that you yield not to detraction, either by word or by hearing. Restrain thy tongue, that it may not slip against thy neighbor. St. Chrysostom made the same recommendation to the people of Antioch, saying: Avoid, my well beloved, let us all avoid slander, for it is a set snare of the demon; it is one of the great artifices he uses for our perdition; for by causing us to consider the actions of others, and to speak evilly of them, he thus prevents us from thinking of our own malice, and thereby to render us fitting for the greatest punishments. Let us expel from us so pernicious a vice, being well persuaded that, though we should eat only ashes for our food, this great austerity will be of no avail, if we do not abstain from slander.

St. Athanasius relates in the *Life of St. Synclitica*, that this first Abbess in the Church of God, said to to her Religious: Consider slander as a heinous evil, whose poison is most dangerous, though with many persons it passes for sport and an agreeable diversion. May God defend us from such a deception! Let us not permit our ears, given us for a good use, to be employed as receptacles for the vices and imperfections of others, and let us keep our souls pure of all such things, not alone vain, but often perilous, since they cannot

be thus infected without contracting blemishes and deformities that dishonor them.

God said by Moses: "*Thou shalt not be a calumniator nor slanderer among my people.*" You shall hold detraction in horror, as a vice that God hates unto death, and which is ever the pest and ruin of communities. We have remarked that the serpent is the symbol of a slanderer, and it is the only animal cursed by God. We have also shown the horror that St. Pachomius had for such of his Religious who were guilty in the slightest degree of defaming others. St. Francis, hearing once one of his own slandered by another, commanded his vicar to make careful inquiries, to be assured of the fact of which this brother was accused, and then strictly enjoined, if he was found innocent, the accuser should be severely and publicly penanced. He added, that Religion ran great risks of being ruined when slanderers were not promptly humbled, and all entrance closed at once to detraction. He repeats: I wish that all diligence be employed to prevent this pest from spreading. The brother who despoils his brother of his good reputation, should be deprived of his religious habit, and he should not dare to raise his eyes to God till he had made full restitution to the one he has defamed.

Therefore, let us banish from our midst the vice of detraction,—placing such guard over our words, that they wound no one. Be not like the crow, a troublesome bird, and one of ill omen, that Noah sent forth from the ark, and which never returned, stopping to feed on the carcasses in its way. But

be rather like the gentle and amiable dove, that hastened to come back to the ark, bearing in its beak an olive branch, symbol of peace and mercy. Speak always well of your neighbor, excusing his faults as much as charity requires.

SECTION IX.

Works as Opposed to Charity, and Such as it Inspires.

Charity does no evil, but good, to the neighbor. How can it harm him, says St. Chrysostom, since, according to the words of St. Paul, "*it thinketh no evil.*" Then, far from inflicting on him great evils, crying outrages, and serious injuries, it refrains even from doing him the least injustice, or whatever could annoy or vex him in the slightest degree: as a friend does not rest content with not abusing his friend, but he has no thought to hurt him in the least, for love causes the lover to defend and turn aside from the person beloved all manner of evil and to procure for him every kind of good.

St. Bernard, explaining these words of the Cantic, "*The children of my mother have taken up arms against me,*" says: By offending your brother, you offend Jesus Christ, who has said: "*As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren. you did it to me.*" Wherefore he should not be offended in things of lesser moment, any more than in grave things, if anything may be called unimportant or light that you have the bold-

ness to do to your brother to injure or annoy him. You should be persuaded that Jesus Christ resents it, and that from the heart of your brother, where he is, He cries out against you, and says: *Thou hast taken up arms against Me, by using them against thy brother*, and he who eats at my table of the good and delicate viands, has filled me with sadness.

As charity has for its end, to procure for the neighbor the goods of grace and of eternal salvation, and to deliver him from sin and its chastisements, it should take care not to prevent the former, nor to cause the latter. Whence it follows that we should endeavor not to disedify any one, nor give bad example, but on the contrary, to do what St. Paul writes to the Romans: "Render to one another what good edification demands;" "keep the things that are of edification one towards another."

Those who live in community, particularly those in authority, should watch closely over the example they give, for example has ever greater influence than precept; many instructions enter the soul much better through the medium of the sight than by the hearing alone. Besides, we are much more efficaciously persuaded to an observance, when we see it done by some one of a like nature as ourselves, than when we are simply advised to it. Example shows us at once that its practice is feasible, and thus we receive courage to do likewise, and to which words alone would fail to excite us.

Every one knows how contagious is bad example and how easily it communicates its malignity. One spoils and loses mutually, as in time of pestilence; you drag yourself down and cause others to fall with you. That which takes place in great confusion overthrows all, says Seneca, as when a multitude of persons press and push one another, one cannot fall without causing others to do likewise; the fall of the first occasions that of the second, and the second of those who follow, etc. The same may be seen in all conditions and vices; no single one falls alone, but its fault serves as occasion for and causes that of another. This is strikingly exemplified in the members of our body: When one member is sick, it communicates its malady, by its proximity, by its touch, or by sympathy, to another member which is healthy. Therefore, what is above all to be remarked, is that a sick member can more readily impart its malady than its health; so, also, is it much easier for bad example to injure, than for a good one to become profitable. Consequently, the utmost care should be observed so as not to give bad example, and to scandalize one's brother. "You shall not injure nor curse the deaf," says God by Moses, for this would be great inhumanity and an act of injustice; since he cannot, on account of his deafness, either reply to you or defend himself. Also: "You shall place no stumbling block in the way of the blind," to cause him to fall, "but you shall have fear of God your Lord, not to do things wicked and forbidden." Bad example is surely a stum-

bling-block to your brother on his way to salvation, to make him fall.

St. Paul, writing to the Romans, said: "Never give occasion of scandal to your brother;" "for if by cause of thy meat, thy brother be grieved, thou walkest not according to charity." Be not the cause of your brother's loss, "destroy not him by thy meat for whom Christ died." "It is good," and charity directs it, "not to eat flesh and not to drink wine," nor anything "whereby thy brother is offended, or scandalized, or made weak." He wrote in the same spirit to the Corinthians: "Wherefore, if meat scandalize my brother, I will never eat it," etc.

Our Lord has given us a most remarkable example, but of another nature: Those who levied the tribute on the Jews for the Romans, having asked St. Peter if his Master would not pay the drachma as impost, our Lord said to Peter: "But that we may not scandalize them," although I am not subject to the tax, being the Son of God, "go to the sea and cast in a hook, and that fish that shall first come up, take, and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a stater; take that, and give it to them for Me and thee."

Elsewhere, speaking of the chastisement due those who give scandal, and who by their bad example cause the weak to sin, He says: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me," shall be severely punished; "it were better for him that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the

depth of the sea." Also: "Wo to that man by whom the scandal cometh;" to him who disedifies his neighbor, and who hurries him on to his loss!

Great attention should be given to the mutual edification in Religion, where there is such constant communication between the members, and where there is ever such an interchange of sentiments, and dispositions and where evil has so ready an influence. One is obliged in Religion to give good example and to practise virtue, not only for the love of God, but also for the love of those with whom he lives, and whose salvation he should desire and procure as much as possible.

St. Paul tells us: "*Providing good things not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men.*" Again hear Our Lord, who says: "*So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*"

But all this should be done with the purest intention of God's glory and the neighbor's salvation. It is with this intention that the Religious should keep his rules, observe his vows, and exercise good works; and when his infirmity, or other just reason, deprives him of the means to practise some exterior act of virtue or some special devotion, to which others are called, he should not try to prevent them from doing that good, but should aid them, all in his power, to advance in virtue.

Thus it is that true charity acts. Very far from injuring the neighbor, it is ever ready to assist and serve him in every way, after the example of our

members, that render a mutual assistance to one another in all things. You should, says St. Bernard, live with your brothers in a spirit of charity, which will give you patience to endure all, to bear with their defects, and cause you to pray for them, so that it may be said of you, as of the prophet Jeremiah, "Behold how he loves his brethren," and the community in which you dwell.

SECTION X.

Continuation of the Same Subject.

Religious should consider it a conscientious duty to aid the salvation of their brothers, and for this the most effectual means is good example and edifying conversation.

Pelagius, deacon, relates that a Religious in Scete went to see Abbot John the Lesser, to learn of him the means to correct his faults; but when this Religious had returned to his cell, he no longer remembered anything that the holy Abbot had advised him. He went, therefore, a second time to have the instruction repeated, when he again forgot the lesson given him, and so also several times. Subsequently, meeting the holy Abbot, he said: Father, I have repeatedly forgotten all you had in charity told me, and I dare not return to you, for fear of being importunate. This holy man simply replied by bidding him light a lamp, and he lighted it. He then bid him bring other lamps and to light them also. After this, he remarked. The

brightness of this first lamp is not lessened for having served you for lighting the others. No, certainly not, replied the Religious. In like manner, continued the Abbot, I would experience no trouble, by the grace of God, if all the Religious of Scete should come to see me, and nothing can prevent me from acquitting myself of that charity to which I am obliged. Henceforward, make no difficulty in coming to me as often as you wish or have the need. Thus, the patience exercised by one and the other in asking and in not being refused the desired instruction, cured the forgetfulness of the disciple. This praise is due the Religious of Scete, that they spared no labor to encourage those who were tempted, and there was nothing they left undone to aid one another mutually to advance in virtue and to make rapid strides in perfection.

I greatly esteem the ingenious and humble charity that St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, exercised towards a solitary, to deliver him from an error. There was, says the same Pelagius, in Lower Egypt, a solitary of exalted sanctity, and to whom God was pleased to make many revelations, but so simple, that he said Melchisedech was the Son of God. St. Cyril, knowing both the virtue and the great simplicity of this good man, bethought a means to undeceive him, but which a act of charity could only have proceeded from a profound humility in so illustrious and learned a personage. He wrote to this solitary as follows: "Father, it sometimes comes to my mind that Melchisedech was the Son of God, and then again, I think to the con-

trary, and that he was simply a man, the sovereign pontiff of our Lord. The doubt in which I am causes me to apply to you, to beg you to ask of God to reveal to you what should be the infallible belief thereon. The holy old man unhesitatingly replied, in the confidence he had in the Divine Goodness: If you grant me three days' time, I will pray to God, and then make known to you what it may please Him to reveal. Accordingly, he shut himself up in his cell, and after having unremittingly prayed for three days, he went to visit St. Cyril, and said to him: My lord, Melchisedech was only a man. How do you know it, Father? asked the saintly Archbishop. I know it, my lord, replied the solitary, for God caused to pass before me, all the patriarchs from Adam down to Melchisedech, and my good angel said: Do you see that one: it is Melchisedech. Therefore, my lord, do not doubt any longer, please. Thenceforward, the holy solitary proclaimed everywhere, without instigation from any one, that Melchisedech was only a man. Behold, a most admirable trait of charity to aid one's neighbor in his salvation.

If Religious, in quality of Christians, are obliged to exercise charity towards all, they are much more strictly called to evince it towards their brothers. "*Let us work good to all men,*" says St. Paul, "*but especially to those who are of the household of the faith*"—who are of the same profession—who live with us.

"*He set in order charity in me,*" says the spouse in the canticles; so that those whom I

love, hold in my affections the just measure I should bear them. Let your virtue appear before men, "as the light, and spread its good odor as a perfume;" for as the oracle St. Paul has it: "We are the good odor of Christ." Then, as a light better illumines such as are near to it, than those who are at a distance, and a perfume is more readily perceived by those who are in the closest proximity to it; thus, we should more strenuously apply our charity and zeal to those with whom we live in preference to others. If we should love these because they are our fellow-mortals, made to the image of God, because they are our neighbors and purchased with the blood of Christ, and because God commands us to it, does he not give us the same mandate for our brothers? Are they not also stamped with the Divine image, ransomed with the blood of Christ, and are they not our neighbors? Nay, they are still more, since they are our brothers, and members with us of the same body.

If, for all these reasons, Religious should have a more special love for their brothers than for strangers, and should render them marked proofs of sincere and cordial charity, we who profess in our Society to have a particular love for the neighbor, and to labor at his salvation, should with much greater reason execute this command. Would it not be a strange delusion—an extravagant folly, to expose ourselves to all peril, both on land and on sea, in order to make conversions,—to lavish upon strangers every kind of Christian charity, while we

leave at home, near by to us, persons who are much dearer to us for every reason, yet refuse them our tenderest affections and our most zealous labors. Verily should such misplaced charity be deserving of surprise and indignation; and Religious merit no reward when, inflamed with zeal for the salvation of strangers, they remain tepid and indifferent towards their fathers and brothers, for whose interest and spiritual welfare they should every day do something in particular, though it be to offer only one prayer to God.

Father Simon Rodriguez, one of the first companions of St. Ignatius, had established in Portugal (where he passed the greater part of his life and died holily), this inviolable rule amongst us: that if any one of us returned from a visit to the city, without having excited some secular to the practice of virtue and contributed in something to his salvation, he had to make this fault known to his Superior, and not to go without permission to the refectory, deeming himself, by his negligence, as unworthy to take his food. Is not such a penance more justly due, if we pass the day without performing at least *one* act of charity to some member of the community, and exercise some degree of zeal towards our brothers.

Religious should also practise charity towards one another in their corporal necessities, such as hunger, thirst, weariness, sickness, and all other needs, and thus to aid their brothers both physically and spiritually.

One of the perfections of the Deity, says St.

Thomas, is to do to His creatures all the good of which they are susceptible, and to bestow this good at every moment, though He readily perceives in them but little disposition to receive His graces with profit ; for instance, when He accords to infidels and heretics so many actual graces, which He knows they will not employ, and when He makes it rain upon rocks and sterile land : but He thus diffuses His gifts to content His noble and generous heart, and to instruct us by His universal charity, how we should communicate ourselves to our neighbor and employ in his behalf every faculty of soul and body.

The author of the *Life of St. Theodosius of Cappadocia*, a very celebrated Abbot, relates that this great personage and this holy man exercised a most exemplary charity and an extraordinary goodness towards all that needed for anything, making himself serve as eye to the blind, foot to the lame ; clothing the naked, giving shelter to the pilgrim and medical aid to the sick ; becoming, in truth, the purveyor and attendant to every one on whom he could possibly bestow his benevolence ; making himself by such universal charity all to all, without contemning any one, however revolting and abject he may be, and even devoting more assiduous care for those who seemingly were the least deserving, not only because they had more need of sympathy and tenderness, but also because they represented more vividly our Lord, in whose livery they were clothed.

— Pelagius, deacon, says that the holy Abbot John,

journeying one day with some of his Religious to a distant part of Scete, the one who was acting as guide lost the way, in the darkness of night, and when one of his brothers said to him : Father, what shall we do ? if we attempt to advance we risk our lives, not knowing where we are. The Saint replied : It is true, but if we say to this good brother that he is leading us astray, we will distress him. Hence, to remedy the matter, I will feign such excessive weariness that I cannot take another step, and thus we will be compelled to rest here till day. This charitable plot was readily consented to and executed, in order not to sadden this brother by showing him the fault he had unintentionally committed.

The same author relates that St. Macarius, visiting a sick solitary, asked him if he had not appetite for something in particular, when the invalid replied that he thought he could eat a little fresh white bread ; then the Saint, aged ninety years, took the stale bread of the monastery, where they baked but once a year, and carried it to Alexandria to exchange it for wheaten bread, very white and quite fresh, with which he returned to the sick brother, but who, through a spirit of mortification, concluded not to eat it, and said : “ I have not the heart to eat bread that has cost one of my brothers so great trouble.” However, after being solicited, he ate it, rather than distress this charitable and saintly old Father who had brought it to him.

SECTION XI.

On Compassion.

The lives of the Saints are fraught with such acts of charity as we should imitate. But to succeed in the best possible manner, let us carefully study the teaching of St. Paul, and try to practise it faithfully. "Put ye on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved," and who have the honor to be animated by His divine majesty, "the bowels of mercy." Thus, a spirit of compassion for the miseries of the neighbor is a great help and an excellent disposition to practise well all the duties of charity.

"Clothe yourself with mercy," says the same Apostle. By these words, he desires that we have interiorly and exteriorly a spirit of pity and compassion for the neighbor. "Clothe yourself," refers to the exterior. It is as if he had said: clothe yourself with mercy and compassion towards your neighbor as with a beautiful robe that you never lay aside, and thereby to be recognized as true Christians, children of God, and so also to be distinguished from infidels, as a Religious is distinguished from a secular by his habit. "The bowels," is for the interior spirit,—"of mercy," according to the Latin text; whereas the Greek version is, "mercies,"—to show the abundance we should have of this perfection, on the model of God, who is called in the Hebrew, "*Rachum*," a

word signifying bowels (plural), as if to say, all compassion. Wherefore, the Royal Prophet speaks of Him thus; "The Lord is sweet, and His mercy endureth forever." Elsewhere, the same Psalmist says: "God is sweet to all, and His mercies are above all His works." Like unto oil, the symbol of sweetness, and which floats on the surface of all other liquids. St. Paul designates God, "The God of comfort and of all consolation," and the "Father of mercies." Behold also the model proposed to us by our Lord, who says: "Be ye merciful, as your Father in heaven is merciful." He expresses much by the word "Father." As the Father imparted His nature to the Son, and made Him like unto Himself: as the nature of God is to be merciful and *mercy itself*, God inspires man (who is His son by excellence and by adoption) with this divine virtue of mercy, above all His other perfections; and if man wishes truly to bear this glorious title of "son of God," he should imitate his Heavenly Father in this perfection, with a more special care than for the other attributes. Also, it is to be remarked that our Lord calls man the son of God only when he speaks of the mercy of God, and not when he mentions His wisdom, His power, or His justice, and that He incites us to the practice of this divine virtue to the model of His Father.

This is verified in a supreme degree of all possible excellence by His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and to whom Job has more reference than to himself, when he says: "From my infancy

grew up with me ;” and we came forth into the world together. “I wept heretofore for him that was afflicted, and my soul had compassion on the poor.” I was as the eye for the blind to lead them, and to the lame the foot to support them, and I became the father to the miserable.

Our Lord, on beholding the multitude who had followed Him three days fasting, said : “I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat. And if I shall send them away fasting, they will faint in the way.” Also, when contemplating the ruins of Jerusalem, the massacre of its citizens, the desolation of its country, etc., all these miseries drew tears from His eyes. “And when He drew near and seeing the city, He wept over it.”

Therefore, the two holy names, “Jesus, Christ,” are at once expressive of His pity and mercy, Jesus signifying Saviour. “For,” said the Angel to Joseph, “He shall save His people,” by delivering them from their sins. “Christ,” meaning the anointed of the Lord ; for His most sacred humanity was first anointed with the balm of the Divinity, and afterwards of that of *mercy*. Wherefore, He is styled by Isaias : “The Son of Oil.” In token of which divine function, there appeared in Rome, at the time of His nativity, a miraculous fountain of oil, which, after running a whole day, precipitated itself into the Tiber, and in testimony of the miracle, Pope Calyxtus had built on the spot the first church that was dedicated to our Blessed Lady. And our Lord ascending to heaven

from the summit of Mount Olivet, was doubtless significant of the same function. Also, the spouse in the Canticles says: "Thy name is an oil poured out," a sovereign balm to heal my wounds. St. Bernard says: "Behold our Lord, who comes with salvation, with healing, and with precious ointments, to serve us with remedies, and in order that He be more fittingly disposed thereto, He willed to take our miseries upon Himself." And according to St. Paul: "It behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God, that He might be a propitiation for the sins of the people," as a pontiff who would not be insensible to our miseries, nor devoid of pity for them, having assumed them all, excepting sin; hence He had to become man, to enable Him to enter into the nature of our evils, and to conceive compassion for them. "To be made like unto His brethren," in order to become merciful. Conformably, is He not represented in the figure of the charitable Samaritan, who had compassion on the poor trader, wounded by robbers and left half-dead by the wayside? He came near to him, staunched his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and took great care of his entire cure. And when He says, "I am not come to call the just, but sinners," does He not plainly mean that His Father had sent Him to exercise mercy and to pardon, and not to condemn and punish? When He taught for the first time in the synagogue of Nazareth, where He was brought up, He had

handed Him, as was customary, the Sacred Scripture, and as He unfolded the book of Isaias, He found the place where it was written: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, wherefore He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the contrite of heart; to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Wherefore, sinners, the poor, and the sick would seek Him, to find in Him the infallible cure of their evils; or when they did not come, He called them by these sweet words, and drew them by this golden chain: "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you," relieve you of your miseries; assuring them that they would receive a welcome: "And him that cometh to Me I will not cast out;" I will not send them away dissatisfied. This universal compassion caused our Lord to pass, in the public opinion, for the friend of publicans and sinners. "Behold Me," He says of Himself, "the friend of publicans and sinners." But the Scribes and Pharisees, by cause of their envy, censured Him for the things which they should have admired, praised, and loved. Thus is our Lord ever merciful and compassionate. "Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy," says the Royal Prophet, "and grant us Thy salvation," the one who shall save us. Speaking of the day when this Saviour was presented in the temple, he also says: "We have received Thy mercy, O God, in the midst of Thy temple." And he still sings in the joy of his heart: "Jesus Christ is my mercy and my refuge,"

my liberator and my Saviour. In this same sentiment, St. Paul calls Him *mercies*, when he addresses God the Father as "The Father of *mercies*, and the God of all consolation." St. Bernard explains this passage as follows: When St. Paul speaks of God as the *Father of mercies*, who does not see that he names the Son? and we should understand of the same, the words that ensue, and that qualify Him as the "God of all consolation."

After our Lord, His most holy Mother, the glorious Virgin Mary, was of all persons the most compassionate and merciful. Wherefore, the Church designates her the "refuge of sinners," the "consolation of the afflicted," and the "mother of mercy." The Holy Spirit compares her, in Ecclesiasticus, to balm, myrrh, and to every precious perfume. He imbues her with the grateful odors of mercy, and puts in her mouth the most pathetic words, to induce all men to have recourse to her with confidence,—assuring them that they will find solace in her, whose spirit is sweeter than honey, and all that is sweet. The Saints, imitating our Lord and His Blessed Mother, possessed hearts of compassion and bowels of mercy. Mercy is even a common and special virtue of Christianity. Our Lord evidently declared it, when Saints James and John asked Him, in the spirit of Elias, permission to command fire to descend from heaven, to consume the rude and unmerciful Samaritans, who would not receive Him in their town; when He rebuked them, saying: "You know not of what

spirit you are:” for My law is a spirit of forgiveness and meekness,—a spirit of mercy that you should follow. To this effect are Christians anointed with holy oil in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and holy orders. Why so much anointing, if not to show the compassion and mercy they should exercise towards the neighbor? Wherefore are they called by Zacharias, “The sons of oil,” and by St. Paul, “vessels of mercy, prepared unto glory.”

Priests, by an ancient law of the Church, which refers to this spirit of mercy, had always to carry a handkerchief at their left side, to receive and wipe away the tears flowing by compassion for the miseries of men. Venerable Bede called it “Mappula,” to which has succeeded the maniple, worn by priests on their left arm while saying Mass. He also styles it the maniple of tears and grief, produced by the afflictions of the neighbor. And does not St. Paul wish that all—priests or not—should “weep with those who weep”?

Let it be remarked that all good men, in all times and places, are ever merciful, and sensitive to the miseries of others. The same word that, in Hebrew, signifies just, good, and holy, also means merciful, tender, and compassionate. True virtue, says St. Gregory, is accompanied by compassion, while false virtue is evinced by harshness and disdain. “The just,” says Solomon, “regardeth the lives of his beasts,”—has pity on them. By “beasts,” Venerable Bede understands coarse and stupid spirits, which the truly just man supports

with benignity, having compassion on them;— whereas, others think that Solomon means irrational animals, to show that the just are not merciful towards men, and such as are gross and largely partake of the nature of brute beasts, but even towards the brutes themselves. The souls of Saints, remarks St. Chrysostom, possess much meekness, a singular suavity, and a truly amiable benignity, that they even extend to brute beasts:— and then he uses the quotation from the Wise Man, as just given. The Greeks have an adage that good men are easily moved to tears of pity in beholding the miseries of their neighbor. Likewise the Latins, who express in verse the same sentiment. The wicked, on the contrary, are harsh, blunt, and devoid of pity. Solomon says: “The heart of the wicked is cruel.” St. Macarius, having alleged that the heart of a Saint is tender and easily excited to pity, added: whilst that of the demon is inflexible, and he has bowels of stone. Hence, Horace calls Pluto, “God of the infernal regions,”—a god of iron, who weeps not nor is moved by the tears of the unfortunate. But the wicked being without pity, is a just punishment; for the Holy Spirit warns us, “A hard heart shall fear evil at the last,” and also: “He who does not show mercy, shall not receive it;”—for his judgment is his own condemnation: 1. In this life, as happened to the wicked servant mentioned in the Gospel, who, not willing to show patience and goodness towards his fellow-servant, his Lord being angry with him, delivered him to

the tortures. Thus, you will be treated as you treat others ; the same measure will be meted to you that you have given to others ; God will close the bowels of His compassion to you, if you harden your heart to the miseries of your neighbor. Timothy, anchorite, being asked by a Superior, what correction should be given to a tepid and relaxed Religious in his community, replied that he should be driven from the monastery. After this, Timothy was grievously tempted and tried by the demon, and in serious danger of succumbing. In his distress he called upon God, and he heard a voice saying : Timothy, God has permitted that you be attacked by the demon, in chastisement for your want of pity for your brother in his temptations. "He that stoppeth his ears against the cry of the poor," and the afflicted, "shall also cry himself and shall not be heard."

A want of pity for and cruelty towards brutes has been condemned, blamed and punished even by the pagans. Thus, a little boy at Athens was whipped by decree of the judges, for taking pleasure in plucking out the eyes of quails, thereby showing a wicked and cruel spirit. A sparrow, having been pursued by a hawk, took refuge in the bosom of an Areopagite, as if to implore his protection, whereas this one, having killed it, was blamed by the Areopagus for the cruel act, and condemned to suffer punishment.

These chastisements of hardened hearts are not only for this life : they extend to the next. To this purport is found something not a little remark-

able in the first chapter of the Life of St. Bernard. It is related that at Clairvaux there was a good and well disciplined Religious, but who was harsh and without compassion for others. After death, he soon appeared to St. Bernard with a sad and mournful visage, thereby giving it to be understood that all was not well with him. Whence, the Saint questioning him as to his future state, he replied that he had been abandoned, in penalty for his harshness, to four serpents that stung him incessantly and caused him the most excruciating torments. But by the Saint's prayers and the intercession of others he was released from his torments.

Let us be touched by such examples and well convinced that we should have pity for our neighbor, and be ever charitable and merciful towards him, in all his spiritual and corporal miseries, to the extent that these demand.

But we should first bestow our tenderest compassion on his spiritual miseries, which are incontestably the greatest and most detrimental to his eternal salvation, and thus to afford him aid, on the model of God and our Lord, who esteem and love our souls incomparably more than our bodies: placing a just estimate on all things, in accordance to the wants of their creatures, and to the degree of excellence of each. Should not a sick king be treated quite otherwise than a wounded horse? But this is strikingly exemplified by the infinite inequality of the remedies for our miseries: thus, for our corporal maladies, God has given us terrestrial and material remedies, while for those of

our soul, we have the merits of the incarnation, the life, and the death of His Son. For the nourishment of our body, He furnishes us with bread, meat, the fruits of the earth, wine, and water ; but for that of the soul, He prepares for us a divine banquet—the Holy Eucharist—at once the most exquisite viand and the most delicious of all drinks, His sacred Body and Blood. Hence, are we not constrained by such a model to be infinitely more solicitous and tender for the miseries of the soul than for those of the body of our neighbor ?

As sin is, of all human miseries, the gravest and most paramount, whether we consider the evil it produces in this world, or the punishment due it in the next ; it should, nevertheless, be the subject of our sincerest compassion, and of our most abundant tears. St. Paulin relates of St. Ambrose, that he was always so touched by the sins of his penitents as to weep, and thus he would also cause the sinner to shed copious tears. Pelagius, deacon, mentions a solitary, who once said to a saintly old man, that when he saw a brother, whom he knew to have committed some fault, he could but feel an interior dislike to him, and could never admit him into his cell : whereas, if a person of virtue presented himself, he would receive him readily and cheerfully. The old man replied : If you are good to those who are good, be twice as much so to those who are not ; because these have the greatest need, in their feeble state, of every assistance.

In conclusion, let us enumerate how we should exercise compassion and mercy. It should be

interiorly and exteriorly, and in every way, by affections of compassion and tenderness, by acts of mercy, in proportion to the misery to be relieved, and by words of consolation, instruction, and counsel.

Job said of himself: "I comforted the heart of the widow, and of them that mourned." And our Lord says by Isaias: "God has given me a learned tongue, that I should know how to uphold by my word him that is weary." The ancient philosophers applied themselves much to this spirit of comforting: wherefore, they had prepared discourses on death, sickness, exile, slavery, the loss of parents, wealth, and all other afflictions to which man is subject. Cicero remarks that each sect of philosophers had its own peculiar mode to impart consolation and to heal the wounded spirit. But better than all is this axiom of Solomon: "The mouth of the just is a vein of life," and "the merciful man doeth good to his own soul."

SECTION XII.

Of Fraternal Correction.

Behold now another effect of charity to the neighbor: the correction of his faults. As his faults, his vices, and sins are, as we have noticed, his greatest evils, it is to bear him a signal act of love, to deliver him therefrom by good and wise correction. A correction quite other from that imparted by legal justice for a fault committed,

and that, as St. Thomas teaches, has for end, not the particular good of the delinquent, but the public good, the good of those who have been offended by this fault. Wherefore, it is properly an effect of vindictive justice that undertakes the defence of the common good and the preservation of rights between parties of a community, and the punishment of him who has disturbed it; but fraternal correction has, on the contrary, for its principal object, the good of him who commits the fault, and the health of soul procured him by it, which withdraws him from the evil into which he had fallen, and attracts him to virtue. Thus is it a true act of charity and a spiritual mercy, as commanded, and of obligation, where there is mortal sin, which renders it the most important duty of Christianity, as regards charity to the neighbor. This commandment is enclosed, say the doctors, in these words of our Lord: "If thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone." And God speaks by Moses: "Bear no secret hatred to thy brother for the wrong he may have done thee, or has done to another, but reprove him in public." Lest by not correcting him, and, consequently, not affording the means for amendment, "thou dost render thyself his accomplice." Ecclesiasticus tells us that God made Himself known to man from the commencement of the world, in giving him two commands, one general, the other particular. The first is, "Beware of all iniquity;" and the second, "He gave to every one of them a commandment concerning his

neighbor," to have care of him. Conformably to this strict commandment given us and which was even incumbent on the Jews, "To love thy neighbor as thyself," arises the universal condemnation to the reply of Cain after his sin of fratricide, and when God said, "Where is thy brother Abel?" and he answered, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"

Sometimes the obligation to give fraternal correction is not so binding, if not including mortal sin: as when, from inconstancy or levity of mind, or if the fault is of too little moment to meet correction, or from tepidity, fear, and the natural dislike for reproving, greatly lessen the guilt, so as to cause the sin to be only venial, and even, in many instances, no sin at all; because there is no obligation where it is not based on the assemblage of the following circumstances, to which authors agree universally: First, if you know certainly, or with strong probability, that your neighbor has committed a fault deserving correction: for you are not held accountable to make a research into his life, nor to study his actions, according to the instruction of the Wise Man: "Lie not in wait nor seek after wickedness in the house of the just, nor spoil his rest."

Second, if he does not repent or amend: for in this case, of what use is correction, and to what end will a means serve, if the evil is already done?

Thirdly, if there are hopes that by the correction he will improve: otherwise, as St. Thomas teaches, he should not be warned, for the reproof will be

useless, and even sometimes hurtful. An ill-timed or misplaced reproof serves but to aggravate and arouse the sinner, to cause him to yield to anger, or to form rash judgments, to conceive hatred to him who gives the correction, or to those who he thinks have informed against him.

Therefore, when correction would produce such baneful effects, charity is not obliged to administer it, but, on the contrary, abstain from all reproof, and to endure in patience, what cannot be reformed. As in our bodies there are certain incurable diseases and natural defects, for which there is no remedy ; so in like manner, we must behold these imperfections in ourselves and in others without chagrin, since they cannot be gotten rid of.

St. Chrysostom wisely remarks that, though we may have decayed limbs, a sightless eye, a withered hand, a paralyzed arm, a finger eaten by cancer or swollen with gout, yet no one wishes to dispense with the same, all useless as they are, and even hurtful to the body, by reason of the mutual tie of sympathy they hold with the other members. Also, there are some *spiritual* evils, that, owing to the inclination and qualities of the person, are seemingly incurable. Wherefore, these persons so unfortunately constituted should be borne with in a spirit of meekness and in all tranquillity, and thus to accomplish this wise maxim, "We must endure what we cannot cure," and when warnings and remonstrances can effect no good, it is better to remain silent. "Where there is no hearing," says the Holy Ghost by Ecclesiasticus, "pour not

out words ;” and by Solomon : “ He that teacheth a scoffer, doeth an injury to himself ;” also, “ Rebuke not a scorner, lest he hate thee,” for the affectionate interest you have shown him.

Moreover, when the person who is to make the correction, is wanting in sweetness—too readily yields to passion,—or there exists some resentment and aversion between the corrector and the delinquent, or any other just reason that might render the correction detrimental, or at least unprofitable ; then the command to give reproof loses its force, and the obligation ceases.

The fourth circumstance is, if there is no one who might give this correction with greater efficacy and more usefully.

The fifth, if no fitting occasion presents, in which to make this reproof, or the time and the place are not suitable.

The sixth, if the fault committed is a *mortal* or a dangerous *venial* sin, having evil tendencies—the obligation has its power, but if not of this malignant nature, and if it is simply a venial sin, of no great consequence, some doctors are of the opinion that there is no obligation to make the correction ; whilst others do not hold to this opinion, and say that *not* to perform this act of charity is a venial sin *against* charity.

Behold the necessary conditions for rendering fraternal correction of duty and obligation ; which it is not, when one *single one* of these conditions is wanting.

But it will be objected : After all these explica-

tions, it will rarely happen that one is obliged to warn his neighbor of his faults, for hardly could all these conditions be met with and be united. I reply that it is true; but though the obligation be not so rigorous and under pain of condemnation, still this great act of charity towards the neighbor should not go unexercised, but one should use all means possible to render his correction useful.

Some may object to this passage of St. Paul: "Reprove in the presence of all who fail, in order that others fear to do the same."

It appears that the Apostle by this passage gave the liberty and even the command not to take in so many considerations and be so circumspect in the reproof of faults. I reply that the Apostle was writing to a Superior and a Bishop, to his disciple Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus. Then this Bishop was compelled by his charge to reprove in the presence of all, the faults of public sinners; whereas we speak here of private correction, "which should be done in secret," says our Lord. See then the order to be observed, to render this correction salutary, to warn and reprove with advantage. It is no small matter to warn a man of his faults; it is a great undertaking, as there are few to be found to be quite docile and to receive well these reprehensions. Self-love causes all men, since the time of Adam, to be delicate on this point, and prompt to cover and excuse their faults. This exceeding delicacy and sensibility necessarily render warnings most difficult. Wherefore, to act well in this respect, great care and address should be

used. St. Bernard teaches us the manner; when speaking of the precious balms and perfumes that Magdalen and her companions brought to anoint the lifeless body of our Lord, he says that the soul seeks aromatics to embalm the *dead* body of our Lord,—that is, sinners—first using compassion towards them: afterwards the zeal of *justice*, followed by discretion. Thus, when seeing one of your brothers transgressing, be ready with compassion for him, bestowing it freely as a sentiment natural to you: using it in warning for his fault, according to these words of St. Paul: “You who make profession of piety, and to act from interior principles, show your brother his fault with a spirit of meekness, considering that you yourself can also be tempted.”

But, continues St. Bernard, as we have had compassion for our brother, shall we not also have justice and virtue to wound him? It is with the zeal of justice that we should burn the sinner, to revenge the contempt had for it, and that he should be touched with pity for his own misfortune. However, compassion should always be uppermost, otherwise we will dash to pieces the vessels of Thrasis, by the violence of the tempest: we shall break entirely the bruised reed, and extinguish the smouldering flax; that is to say, we will cast down feeble souls; we will cause them to lose the little courage and virtue remaining to them.

Then this holy Father concludes: “But when compassion and zeal are united, it is necessary, in order to constitute a just temperament.

that discretion comes forward, to mingle one with the other wisely, as to time, place, and just proportions, without which there will be danger of spoiling all." Then, to explain and support his ideas, this Saint employs a passage from St. Paul, which ought to be of great service to us. Let us now listen to the Apostle saying: "My brethren, if any one among you have fallen into some fault, by surprise or weakness, you, who have more virtue, reprove him in all sweetness, considering in yourself the misery of your nature, for fear lest, not having compassion on him, God, to punish your harshness and your Pharisaical spirit, permit you to be tempted and to be overcome by the assaults of temptation." St. Paul gives a like instruction to his disciple Timothy: "An old man rebuke not: but entreat him as a father," conjure him with words sweet and respectful to return to his duty. "Young men as brethren; old women as mothers, young women as sisters," etc. With what sweetness did not God reprove Adam for his sin! "Adam, where art thou?" And to Cain: "Where is thy brother?" "What hast thou done?" With what sweetness also did not Nathan, on his part, reprove David for his crimes! With what goodness and affability did our Lord speak to the Samaritan woman, and to other sinners! So let us warn, reprove, correct in His spirit, and as St. Paul counsels. "Consider," says the Apostle, "that you are liable to be tempted and to fall, as well as your brother:" in a word, that you reflect upon yourself, and what you might be, before

blaming your brother for what he is. Our Lord taught us this lesson on His way to Calvary, when He said to the pious women who followed Him: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but for yourselves and for your children." St. Bernard remarks: Heed the order of the foregoing words! Our Lord says first: "Weep for yourselves," and then, "Weep for your children," that is, make reflections on your own conduct, so as to learn from yourself, how to exercise compassion towards others—to correct them with goodness; cast your eyes on your own weakness, before condemning that of others, for fear that you too will be tempted in your turn: imitate that good Father of the Desert, who, when learning that one of his brothers had fallen, shed an abundance of tears, not so much for the fall of his brother, as for apprehension of his own weakness; for, said he, as he has fallen to-day, perhaps to-morrow I will fall, and I will most certainly, if God does not support me. Think you that he who shed so many tears for fear of a fault that he might commit, was wanting in pity for the failings of his neighbor?

The Holy Spirit gives by Ecclesiasticus this wholesome advice: "Learn from thyself how thou shouldst act towards thy neighbor, and by the sentiments that thou hast for thyself know those that thou shouldst have for him. The same affection, condescension, and forbearance we entertain for ourselves, should be our rule of conduct in regard to our brother. 1. We should thus act, because we are obliged to love him as ourselves.

2. We should even have much more affection and condescension for him than for ourselves : for is it not reasonable to bear a greater hatred for our *own* sins, since they injure us much more, by rendering us disagreeable to God, and the sins of others cannot so affect us : therefore, we should not be as incensed against the failings of our neighbor as against our own. Take into consideration with what patience you suffer your own imperfections. Do you grow angry with yourself because of them ? Do you punish yourself when you fall ? Do you not rather pass lightly over your own transgressions ? Does it not often happen that you scarcely make a passing reflection upon them, and do not notice them ? Do you not desire that others bear with you, excuse and pardon you with all charity and compassion ? Then do the same towards your neighbor.

After Ecclesiasticus, St. Paul, and St. Bernard, our Lord teaches us still better how we are to correct our neighbor. He tells us we should do it in the Holy Spirit : “ If I go,” He said to His Apostles, “ I will send to you the Holy Spirit ; and when He shall have come, He will reprove the world for its sin.” Then the office and ministry of the Holy Spirit coming on earth was to *reprove sins*, as that of our Lord was to obtain their pardon, to ransom and to instruct us.

We should, therefore, unite ourselves with the Holy Spirit, when we have to administer correction ; so that it be not so much ourselves that reprove, as the Holy Spirit reprovng in us and by us: Thus

would we reprove by the movements of the Holy Spirit, and not by that of passion, impetuosity, eagerness, or anger : but solely by the instigation of grace, and *not* by that of nature.

Secondly, that we correct with charity, goodness, and sweetness, with a true and sincere desire of our neighbor's good, and not in a spirit of harshness and asperity, from the promptings of hatred or antipathy, any personal displeasure, or through interested motives. A correction should have these qualities, to be made according to the Holy Spirit, who is essential and personal love between God the Father and God the Son, and whom the Wise Man calls "sweet, benign, humane," and our Lord, "paraclete and consoler," who came to reprove the world.

Then, is not all this well worthy of comment ; as also, plainly instructs us that we should console in reprovng? As correction is a work of charity, it is therefore most just and necessary that it be made with charity. The snuffers attached to the candlesticks, in the temple of Solomon, were used to remove what injured or impaired the brightness of the lights, so they represent well persons who warn and correct their brothers of their faults. These snuffers were of the purest gold, and hereby is signified that our warnings and corrections should be of the precious gold of charity, that we should bestow them with love and benevolence.

Thirdly, our corrections should be founded on truth, and not given on conjecture, nor reprovng unjustly the innocent ; for it is to be remembered

that our Lord calls the Holy Spirit "Spirit of Truth."

It is, therefore, in this spirit, and with all these conditions, that we ought to reprove. But there still remains to be added the circumstance and time, as being very essential, and of which St. Gregory says: All times are not proper for instructing and reproof: for very often words lose their efficacy by being spoken out of time; and, on the contrary, that which is said lightly makes, by conjuncture of time, a deep impression. Thus, one of the principal secrets for giving weight to a discourse, is to make it in its own time, even to the hour and minute. Of what use is it, says this holy Father, to reprove a man who is transported with rage, when he is not alone incapable of understanding what is said to him, as he is to restrain himself? In order that reproof should become profitable to him who receives it, the fitting moment for giving it to him should be studied.

Only a calm and peaceable soul is susceptible of reason; therefore, to warn and reprove usefully, wait for passion to subside, and for the light of reason to return. Nor should the person who administers the correction, do so when he feels agitated by passion, but should wait till the emotion has passed, and the mind has become calm. But, in case there is no time for such delay, and it is necessary to reprove instanter, he should watch with great caution over himself, so as not to act from impulse, but, as has been said, by the movement of the Holy Spirit,—otherwise, he will not

speak to the purpose—God not blessing his words ; and in place of correcting a fault, he will commit one ; and in attempting to reprove another, he will merit to be reprovèd himself. Certainly, God does not wish that we commit faults in correcting others, nor to revenge the injuries done Him by causing new ones. In this matter consult reason. Do you find it a wise method to sin in arresting sin?—to do good to your neighbor by damaging yourself? It will prove efficacious to follow the counsel of Seneca, who advises that the following be placed in the points of the evening examen : “ See if you have not reprovèd some one with too much liberty and boldness ; and that instead of correcting his fault, you have rendered it worse.” You should consider that what you say is not only *true*, but, moreover, if he to whom you say it is capable of receiving and strong enough to bear the truth.

Then let us practise fraternal correction according to this advice, in order to make it an act of charity. “ Fear not to reprove your neighbor when he falls,” says the wise Son of Sirach, “ and with a good word, as a hand extended to him, to raise him up and to save him.” And elsewhere : “ Have you heard some fault of your friend spoken of ? warn him charitably” —making him understand what has been said of him, for fear that from not knowing it, he justifies himself, and says : It is not so. If he is guilty, he will profit by this warning, so as not to commit the same fault again.

Alas ! says St. Bernard to Pope Eugenius, let

a horse to be seen to fall, and immediate assistance is rendered it; whilst a soul, infinitely more noble and precious, is lost and no one gives it a thought. God commanded the Jews on two occasions: "If thou meet thy enemy's ox or ass going astray, bring it back to him." Again: "If thou see thy brother's ass or his ox to be fallen down in the way, thou shalt not slight it, but shalt lift it up with him."

In conclusion, the fruit resulting from this good and charitable work ought to serve as a powerful motive for exercising it. "You will have gained your brother," says our Lord, "when your warning has had its effect." You will have gained him to God and to his salvation, which will be a marvelous gain, and an action worthy of an inestimable recompense. For as the soul, thus St. Chrystom wisely remarks above, is incomparably more excellent and perfect than the body, so those who by their remonstrances have caused wandering souls to return to the good way, merit a reward quite different from those who perform signal corporal works of mercy, and though they lavish on the poor immense treasures.

SECTION III.

Continuation of the Same Subject.

We have treated of *active* correction, and the manner in which it should be given; let us now

speak of *passive* correction, and how it should be received.

For the perfect understanding of this most important point, it is to be remarked in the first place that there is no living man on earth, of whatever age, temperament, or nation, and of whatsoever quality he be, who has not evil inclinations, vices, and sins. The Catholic faith, says St. Augustine, has always sustained this point against the Pelagians: "That there is no man, to whatever degree of virtue and perfection he has arrived, who, so long as he is clothed with this mortal body, can live without some sin." And in effect, behold him from the time of his conception, and whilst still in the bosom of his mother! David said of himself and of all men: "Thus have I been conceived in iniquity, and my mother has conceived me in sin." "Even the just man *sins seven times*," says the Wise Man, but many of the Fathers and custom add: "*Seven times a day*." Let us consider a very just man, an Apostle confirmed in grace and the favorite of our Lord, St John, who says: "If we say we are without sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." One only woman by grace, the glorious Virgin Mary, and one only man by nature, Her Son our Lord, were pure and free from all sin. For all others, without exception, have been sullied with sin, so that there can be applied to each one this saying of Solomon: "There is no man that sinneth not," in himself and by himself, or at least who has not sinned in Adam.

The reason for this is that our nature has been

vitiated in its source and at its root: that it will be so everywhere, and will ever produce corruption. As a bramble, planted wherever it may be, will always bear thorns; and as a poison, whether placed in an earthen vessel or in a vase of gold or silver, is ever a poison and dangerous; so also our nature is always and in all things corrupt. Do we not receive baptism, you say? I reply, that it takes away only what it finds; that it effaces original sin with which we are sullied, but goes not to the depth of the evil to remedy the source; its virtue being *not* to render us impeccable. It leaves us the malignity and the inclination to evil that the sin of the first man imprinted in us: but also it gives us for antidote the disposition for the grace and the help of God to resist this evil. Thus the most skilful surgeon in the world can readily heal a dangerous wound: but he cannot with all his art render the cured body invulnerable.

Behold, then, how we are made. We should persuade ourselves and think with much certainty that we have vices, imperfections, and sins, as we believe that we are men, and that we have hands and feet. We should think that we are all covered with defects, that all is vitiated and corrupted in us, with nothing that is sound, in accordance with these words of Isaias on this subject: "From the crown of the head, to the soles of the feet, all is diseased;" there being only wounds, ulcers, contusions, and infirmities. Job is a fitting representation of all this, for despoiled of his goods

fallen from his glory, deprived of his children, and reduced to the utmost misery, he was even attacked in his body with all maladies, and so covered with ulcers from head to foot, as rendered him hideous to behold, and made him even unrecognizable to his most intimate friends.

Further, we should persuade ourselves that we have many imperfections, vices, and sins, that we can neither see nor feel; and this blindness in not beholding them, and this insensibility in not feeling them, are one of the notable portions of our corruption and misery. Then, you should have this firm persuasion of yourself, that in whatever place, state, or condition you should be, and however perfect you may become, though you should live five hundred years, and be five hundred times as virtuous as you are and more holy (but which you will *never* be), you will ever have many defects. It may be possible that you see but very few of them, but hold it for certain that you have many more than you see; for says an Apostle: "We offend God in many things." In the same way that our body is filled with all manner of corruption that is not perceptible to us, so also is our soul full of defects which are unknown to us.

How many, think you, are there of the most perfect men who have not failings and imperfections before God, before His essential purity, His infinite holiness? "Can man," says Job, "be justified, compared with God? P hold, even the moon doth not shine and the stars are not pure in His sight. How much less man, that is rottenness, and the son

of man, who is a worm?" And elsewhere: "Behold among His Saints, no one is unchangeable," who keeps firm in virtue, whose feet do not sometimes slip, and who falls not into faults, at least venial. "And the heavens are not pure in His sight: how much more is man abominable and unprofitable, who drinketh iniquity like water?" And again: "The angels," those admirable intelligences, adorned with so many perfections for the service of God, "have not been stable in their duty, and God chastised them for failing;" how much greater the evil found in man, who is doomed to support a body that is destined to return to dust, from whence it sprung, being called a "house of clay," to serve as a vesture for the soul. Wherefore, firmly retain this belief, which is the source of "humility of the heart," and consequently of salvation; have deeply rooted in your mind, be intimately persuaded that you have many sins and imperfections, though you may be told to the contrary. "Those who praise you," says God by Isaias, who speak of you in eulogy, who say that you are virtuous and spiritual, who make you pass, at least in your own estimation, for a saint, who would canonize you, do but deceive you, and by these flattering and untruthful words "turn you from the true path of virtue, cause you to stray from the way of your salvation," to make false steps therein, so conducting you, without any warning, to precipices and to death. "God alone," before whom the universe is but an atom, and by the light of whose infinite purity all creatures are

impure, "He is the one to judge thee, and to say the truth, who thou art."

Since then it is an incontrovertible fact, that we commit many faults, that we fall into many sins, and that we are *clothed* with imperfections, should be first considered. Secondly, it should be also remarked that as one of the most striking traits of God's wisdom is to draw good from evil, and to cause the sins that have been committed to serve, according to His will, to His glory, and to the salvation of souls: so, also, one of the greatest marks of prudence exercised by man, is to derive advantage from his sins, to strengthen himself by his falls, and to convert his faults into means of salvation. Then for this, your faults should be made known to you, for you can never correct that of which you have no knowledge. Owing to our limited intellect and our abundant *self-love*, our sins lie hidden to us, or are cast out of sight; but when they are shown to us by others, by their warnings and reproofs, we should take in good part their charitable admonitions—making them serve us usefully. Behold now the means for so doing:

First, receive these corrections with humility; because, in effect, the fault into which you have fallen is a subject for humiliation, there being nothing in the world so humbling and abasing to man, as *sin*. Wherefore, you should receive with humility of heart the knowledge given you of so humiliating a circumstance. In the same way, when you call yourself, privately or publicly, a *sinner*; or when in Religion you perform some

acts of humility in the presence of others, as is customary on certain days—be careful not to speak or act thus from routine, performing such humiliations alone exteriorly and hypocritically: but with an *interior* spirit, before God and man; believing truly what you say, and using these exterior signs of abjection as faithful interpreters of your sentiments, and thus make known the esteem in which you hold yourself and others.

Secondly, receive these warnings with an avowal of your fault. Few persons acknowledge frankly and generously that they are in fault, and to speak it out boldly. “But I have not failed”—you may think and say—“why then should I assent to the accusation? to do this, would be an *untruth*.” I reply that when you are *very certain* of not being in fault, you should not make the accusation; but you can and should remain silent, or say merely, that it may possibly be so—inclining always much more to the side where there is the least doubt, and to believe rather another than yourself in what relates to your faults.

St. Gregory draws a nice distinction between the truly just man and the sinner: this consists, according to him, in the latter believing most readily all the *good* said of him, and with difficulty giving credit to the *evil*; while the just man does the reverse: he can never persuade himself that he possesses any virtue, or that he has done anything well, and thus he is ever readily disposed to think he has failed.

Thirdly, reprehension should be received with a

serene and contented countenance, as one who considers himself the recipient of a *special favor*, and one that is more useful to him than a large sum of gold.

Fourthly, they should be received with sentiments of gratitude and thanksgiving, as all benefits merit. If you regard as a benefit the reproof given you for a fault, as is most just, you should doubtless thank him who gives it; and if you esteem it a great favor, as it really is, since it regards your perfection and salvation, you should thank him for it with true sentiments of gratitude. Are you not most thankful to any one who apprises you that you have a spot on your face, that you are soiling your robe (or dress), and that if you do not walk carefully you will fall? Nevertheless, all these warnings are greatly inferior to the reproofs given you for the faults you commit.

Fifthly, reproofs should be received (repaid) with recompense, which recompense consists in praying to God for those who administer reproof, as also to give them pleasure whenever you can, and to entertain a real affection for them. "Reprove the wise man," says Solomon, "as it will please him, and he will love you for it the more."

Sixthly, they should be received with supplication that he have the goodness to continue reproving you whenever you fail, since you know it to be a most charitable and profitable service rendered to you.

Finally, they should be received with amend-

ment: for to this end should tend all warnings; otherwise they are useless.

Behold, then, the requisite dispositions and sentiments with which warnings and corrections should be received. But very often quite the contrary is done: in place of humility, they are met with pride, excite to passion and ill-humor, in lieu of affection and gratitude. Instead of a frank avowal of the fault, it is denied absolutely; or when this cannot be done, on account of the fault being palpable, it is excused, diminished, disguised, falsified, or so dissembled, so glossed over, as to be made to appear even beautiful; and often, again, one's faults are imputed to another. In place of a serene countenance, they are listened to with sadness, with evident signs of mental suffering; with a mournful visage which indicates a troubled soul; and not with the air of one who considers he receives a benefit, and to whom pleasure is given. Such persons as here depicted have neither gratitude nor recompense to bestow in return for so *charitable* an act; on the contrary, it is for them an occasion for murmurs, complaints, and vexation against the one who admonishes; and very far from begging this charitable duty to be continued, those who gave the reproofs are avoided as importunate, and their approach or intercourse is fled from, for fear that they will again reprove, and cause us to see ourselves as we are. But is not all this like growing angry with a mirror, and to break it, because it shows us our blemishes? or like declaiming against the sun because it discovers our ugliness,

which remained unseen (or hidden) in the dark: just as if we were to have no more imperfections or vices, when there should be no longer any one to take the liberty of correcting us. So, in place of amending ourselves, we remain as we were; and each time we are irritated we become worse. Moreover, the bad use made of these corrections causes God to deny us the grace either to know our faults or to correct them. We should, therefore, be careful to avoid such mistakes regarding corrections; otherwise, we will only increase the faults for which we have been reprov'd: whereas, to receive the warnings given in the manner prescribed, opens the eyes to our interest—and conscious of the fact, “that man,” though the most *wise*, “cannot know himself,” it is necessary that another should initiate us into this knowledge, to teach us “who we are,” and thus not to remain in the same state of ignorance, groping in our defects and vices.

The great good to be derived from these remonstrances and corrections, should not alone induce us to receive them well, but also to *love* them. St. Chrysostom, in an excellent homily written on this subject, tells us, in order to make us deserving of so salutary a dressing: “A remonstrance for a fault is a great good, and brings with it wonderful profit; it is the mark of a *true friend*, who has solicitude for us. However perfect a man may be, he need never *fear* that there is not *much* to reprove in him; as there is naught here below so *well finished* as to be *perfect*. Thus, to praise a man for

all that he is can only be mockery ; but to praise the *good* in him, so to give him courage, and the better to establish him in virtue, and to reprove the evil, in order to correct it, is the duty of a *friend* only.

Then, to take a reproof well, to turn it to profit, is for you a most honorable action. He who receives a reprehension generously, says Chrysostom, merits great praise, and an eulogy that can only be bestowed on *sublime philosophy*. The Holy Spirit has said previously by Solomon: "He who receives reproof with a submissive spirit, will be honored;" for is he not worthy of honor, and does he not perform an act of virtue, and of great wisdom? And again elsewhere: "An ear-ring of gold and a bright pearl—so is he that reproveth the wise and obedient ear;" for verily does reproof adorn him, and serve as an ornament for glory; and if it inflicts a passing pain when given, so also does the ear-ring when inserted, but it serves, nevertheless, to embellish the wearer. Wherefore, he will afterwards be pleased with him who gives correction, according to these words also of Solomon: "He that rebuketh a man," a man truly reasonable, "will afterwards find favor with him;" more esteemed and loved by him, "than he that by a flattering tongue deceiveth him;" fills him with a false opinion of himself, and thus causes his loss. Solomon, in the preceding passage, compares the one who reproveth to two excellent things—to a rich ear-ring and to a precious stone, showing thereby the esteem that should be had for reproof

and the good to be drawn from it. The reason that in well-governed republics, there are always two persons appointed for warning and correcting faults, or for making reports of them to those persons who can apply the remedy. Thus, among the Persians, there are "satraps," who are called the eyes and the ears of the King; because of their duty being to see and to listen to all that passed within his realm, so as to apprise him of it, and by such means he is able to keep all in order. Some think that David had similar ministers, of which number was God, whom Holy Scripture calls the "sight of David," the "*eye* of David," or he "*who saw* for David." The prophet Zacharias, in the judgment of the wisest interpreters, makes allusion to these officers, when speaking of our Lord, under the name of a stone (or rock), for he was to be the foundation stone of the Church, and the angle for joining and binding together the two separate walls—the Jews and the Gentiles—he says: "Upon one stone there are seven eyes;" wishing to say, this rock is not like the others, inanimate and insensible, but has seven eyes, meaning seven angels, of whom mention is made later on by St. John, in his Apocalypse; and men also who shall be employed in looking to all that passes within his Church, to provide for all, and to correct all. Accordingly, St. Basil and St. Augustine, in their respective rules, require that there be in religious communities persons to answer for the eyes and the ears of the Superiors, and make known to them, with truth

and charity, the faults that the others commit.

These Fathers both make use of a similar comparison taken from the ills of the body, which St. Augustine explains in these terms. If your brother has a wound in some part of his body, and wishes to keep it hidden, rather than to suffer the necessary incisions for its cure, would it not be an act of cruelty in you to remain silent, and a mercy towards your brother to make it known?

Wherefore, the Holy Spirit declares to us, in several places in Proverbs, that we should render ourselves fitting to be warned of our faults, that otherwise we will be covered with vices, as an uncultivated field is overrun with weeds. He says: "Poverty, ignominy," and numerous evils, 'will be found in him who is not willing to meet reproof:" and again: "He who contemns correction, will suddenly be destroyed," "and health shall not follow him:" here is meant the health of the soul, which can never be strong when we refuse correction so strenuously: no more than the body, when a slight touch causes it pain. Elsewhere the Holy Spirit again says: "He that yields to reproof shall be glorified." And "Reprehend the wise man, and he will love you:" give advice, or "Teach a just man, and he will make haste to receive it." Therefore, he who hates remonstrances, and is displeased by them, keeps company with sinners, and walks the road of iniquity: whereas, he who fears God is gladly warned of his

faults, so to enter within himself, and to think of amending.

The ancient Fathers of the Desert, not content with suffering in patience and humility the reproofs given them, had for an ordinary practice, and as a means they esteemed most useful to arrive at perfection, to reprove themselves with harshness, to speak against, and to condemn themselves in all things.

One of these holy old Fathers, being asked what road he found the best and shortest to God, replied, as related by St. Dorotheus, that it is "to accuse and condemn one's self in everything." St. John Climachus says the same: that to practise well, and to attain humility, we should be perpetually occupied in reproofing and condemning ourselves. One of his scholastics adds thereto, that this practice was no mere ceremony to acquire a degree of esteem for humility, as sometimes happens, but from a true sentiment of the heart. Thus have we been shown, in the first volume of this treatise, how the holy old man Mark (to whom the angel was accustomed to bring the Sacred Host to communicate him, each time that St. Macarius of Egypt said Mass), when having, at the age of one hundred years, used a little wine and oil at his usual meals, reprov'd and humbled himself, by speaking indignantly against himself, saying, "*wicked old man,*" "*old glutton,*" and "the slave of your appetite," etc.

SECTION XIV.

Of Concord and Union of Spirits.

One thing also, over which Religious should watch with all possible precaution, in their communities, is concord and union of spirits. "Be careful," says St. Paul, "to keep the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace." Behold the principal and the most important quality of living well together! To have the same sentiments—"To be of one mind, one towards another, according to Jesus Christ, that all may glorify God." The reasons for the necessity of this concord and union are spoken of by the Apostle in the following terms: "You should live, all of you, in a perfect union, as you are *one body*, animated with *one spirit*, as you are called in *one hope* of your *calling*;" having "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and Father of all; who is above all, through all, and in us all:" thus, we are all brothers. You compose one body. Then as the members of a body are not divided nor disunited—but joined and united together by nerves, muscles, and tendons,—so you should keep a like tie of union among yourselves: and as an eye, when the other looks to one side, will likewise turn the same way with promptness and in perfect correspondence; so you should all understand one another—letting charity give to all the same movements. Would you not consider a man a *monster*, and too horrible to behold, who had two heads

and two hearts? Likewise, should you think that the body you compose conjointly is not less hideous, when it does not agree in thoughts and affection, but is divided; for by such means it is as possessing *two heads* and *two hearts*. Learn, then, this lesson of peace and concord from the members of your body—and to exercise such beautiful and winning virtues, with all those dwelling in the same house with you. The body, continues St. Paul, of which you are the members, is animated by *one spirit*, that which obliges you among yourselves to live in perfect harmony; for where there is but one spirit, all the members must live well together—all their movements being in unison. You are all aspiring to the same hope of eternal beatitude—where all minds and all hearts are perfectly united, and where, if you are happy to go, you will live in a holy and intimate friendship; but to dispose yourself thereto, you should commence forthwith to practise the virtues as inculcated in this life. You have, adds the Apostle, the same Lord that you serve, the same faith and the same truths to believe, the same baptism in which you have put off the old man and put on the new, and have been made Christians; so many ties of love and union binding you so strictly together, doubtless must cause you to love one another and to live in perfect concord.

It is true that the quality of Christian should be for us a powerful reason for inducing us to live in peace and union. In truth, if fraternal charity is the soul of Christianity, and the distinctive

character of true Christians, the badge that distinguishes them from those who bear but the name; it is certain that they should have a mutual love one for the other, and as an effect and assurance of this love, to live in peace and in a true and sincere friendship. Otherwise, they should not deceive themselves in the opinion of being Christians, nor flatter themselves for bearing the name: they are not such! they have not the essential stamp. When Christians, says St. Chrysostom, will perform a thousand miracles,—if, however, they do not love one another, and do not agree among themselves,—if they live in dissensions, and in trouble, they will render themselves ridiculous even to infidels. For this reason, in the Greek Church, the bishop says in the Holy Mass: May peace be given to all, and may it be between all; and in the Latin Church, May peace be given you, and may it dwell among you. Wherefore the deacon says to the people, by order of the bishop; Let no one have anything against another; and then follows the holy kiss (or *sacred* kiss) of which St. Paul speaks, the men with each other and the women among themselves, before their communion. They repeat when giving this kiss: “Peace be with you and between us,” this kiss being the token of peace. Then at the end of Mass, the deacon takes leave of the people in these words: “Go in peace.”

We intend to say, to excite ourselves to this union, that the body of the Church, of which we are the members, is animated with but one spirit: and we add that this spirit is a “spirit of peace,”

of concord, and friendship; that which is the spirit of Jesus Christ, of whom, long previous to His birth, Isaias predicted that He would be the "Prince of Peace," and David: "In his days shall flourish an abundance of peace." . . . In truth, when he was born, the temple of Janus, which was opened for war, was closed at Rome; and there was a general peace throughout the world—a peace that the angels published with great rejoicing "to men of good will." Our Lord, during His entire life, cultivated, taught, and recommended peace. Wherefore, is He styled by St. Cyprian the "Doctor of Peace" and the "Preacher of Concord." When He sent forth His disciples to preach His Gospel, He commanded them to bring all men to peace. From whence He said of them, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace!" When they entered a house, they had orders to say before all, in saluting those who lived in the house: "Peace be to this dwelling!" He sent them without allowing them to take with them either gold or a staff; in order, as is elegantly expressed by St. Ambrose, to deprive them of the gold, the subject of quarrels, and of the staff, the instrument of vengeance.

He desired that His body should be received in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar under the species of bread, which is made of many grains of wheat; and His blood under the species of wine, which is made from many grapes, in order to impress us with concord and union. He died to give peace to the world, and to put it in accord. After

His death and His glorious resurrection, He appeared several times to His disciples. The first word He said on showing Himself to them was: "Peace be with you and among you." For an inheritance and a treasure, He left them peace: "I leave you peace, I give you My peace." But in what terms did He not pray to His Father to give to them and to all the faithful this peace, and to bind them with the tie of perfect charity and of an intimate union? "I pray you," He said, "that you all be one, and that there be as much, in proportion, of concord and union of thoughts, affection words, and actions among you, as there is between Us; that you all become perfect imitators of Our union and unity." By this is evidently seen that the spirit of Jesus Christ, that animates the body of the Church, is a spirit of peace, of concord, and of union, and that, for this reason, the Church should live and operate in all by this spirit. Wherefore in the Canticles it is called "Sulamitess," which means pacific, peaceful, and "Jerusalem," which signifies "vision of peace." Again is it, remarks St. Athanasius, that the garment of our Lord, symbol of the Church, was *seamless*, and therefore could not be rent in pieces, which obliges the soldiers—men of discord and of war—not to tear, but to preserve it entire, and to cast lots for it.

The infamous and unfortunate Arius, having torn this vesture by his heresy, our Lord appeared to St. Peter, Patriarch of Alexandria, the illustrious martyr, when in prison, under the guise of

a child of twelve years of age, and of extraordinary beauty, but with his robe torn in front from top to bottom, the two sides of which rent he held together. St. Peter said: Alas! Lord, who has thus torn Thy robe? It is Arius, replied our Lord: thereby signifying the horrible division that he was about creating in the Church.

Finally, St. Paul concludes his reasons, by exciting the Ephesians to concord, saying: "They had but one God, Father of all." He proposed to them as model the *Divinity*, of which the three Persons, though distinct, have but one essence—most simple; the same understanding and the same thought; one will and one affection: acting out of Themselves, They produce all Their actions and works—though of an infinite variety—in this intimate union, and in this oneness of unity, of design, and of strength. In saying that "God is Father of all," the Apostle insinuates tacitly, and by a necessary consequence, that we are all brothers, and therefore obliged, by this sweet tie, to a perfect agreement among ourselves—and to a true and sincere brotherly love.

To all these reasons of the Apostle, there must still be added another; which is, that concord is the most efficacious means of keeping and preserving things entire, as discord is the readiest and most certain of losing them. The more there is of unity, or at least of close union, the greater the security—the further remove from ruin; on the contrary, the more things separate and are divided, the more liable are they to be corrupted,

and to draw nearer to their destruction. By division things fall into decay and perish entirely; for it is evident that where there is *not being*, there can be no *preservation*. Then, in accordance with metaphysics, *being* and *unity* are two terms turning on the one pivot, and that signify two inseparable things: the one being the essence, the other the property. Wherefore, the Pythagoreans, in their mysteries, called *unity* "God and life": God, because immortal, as are all things so long as they are one: "life," because death creates two, by separating the life of the living thing, and the soul from the body. Also, did they call the number two "change, source of discord, and death." From whence comes the inference that God having, in the creation of the universe, given His benediction to all the other days of the week, did not give it to the *second*; because two is the first number that withdrew from unity, to divide itself; and consequently it is the origin of division—the harbinger of ruin.

A historian has said when speaking of the Roman Empire: "Small things increase and become great by *concord*, whereas the greatest things decrease and perish by *discord*." Thus, was this empire immensely powerful—extended widely over the earth—whilst its citizens continued in harmony; but so soon as dissension animated them one against the other, and civil wars were lighted in their midst, it commenced to wither—to fall into decay, so as to be almost reduced to nonentity. Our Lord also says: "Every kingdom"—whatever

grandeur and strength it may boast—"divided against itself"—if discord finds entrance—"shall be brought to desolation—and house upon house shall fall,"—ruin must inevitably follow.

Thus, Aristotle says, in the first book of his "Politics," that the greatest good of towns and communities is friendship and concord; as thereby they are less subject to seditions.

St. Gregory Nazianzen, treating this subject, in the eloquent orations he has composed on *Peace*, says: that so long as the world preserves peace intact, that all keep mutually bound in the invisible chains of benevolence, with which the Creator has united them,—the universe is truly a world, and merits to bear the name of "beauty," since it cannot possibly conceive anything more beautiful or ageeable; but if peace is banished from it, and this union of parties dissolved, all this beauty will be lost. This Saint continues: "Nations, towns, empires, armies, families, marriages, and all assemblies subsist by peace and concord; whereas, tumults, seditions, and quarrels sap their foundations." In the third oration, he remarks that even robbers, who are only bound together by crime, cultivate this spirit of peace and a good understanding among themselves; it being necessary for the seditious, who have sworn to excite discord, to usurp tyranny; and so of all wicked persons, who have plotted some conspiracy, and are desirous to execute their design, they must be on good terms and agree among themselves; so that concord makes and perfects all things, and

discord undoes and ruins them! There are found in Thrace, upon the Mountains Rhodope and Hemus, precious stones of a black color, called *philadelphias*, a word signifying *brotherly love*; these stones, placed near one to the other, retain their beauty and durability, but which qualities diminish and disappear entirely when separated. It was in this sentiment that Prince Scilurus, when dying, left to his sons, to the number of twenty-four, a quiver of arrows, a single one of which could not be broken, so long as they remained bound and united together; whereas, each one was readily snapped asunder when untied and taken separately. By this he gave them to understand that so long as they loved one another and lived unitedly, they would remain invincible; but so soon as there arose any misunderstanding amongst them, and they became disunited, they would be easily overcome, and serve as a prey to their enemies. So, when God wishes to ruin a state, He permits a revolt of spirits—that hearts become divided, and that everywhere reign sedition and mutiny.

This the prophet Isaias predicted in regard to the unfortunate city of Jerusalem, that God had resolved to deliver up to the power of stranger princes, in chastisement for its sins: “Nothing shall be seen in the city,” says the Prophet, “but sedition and revolt. The people shall rush one upon the other—every man against his neighbor—the children shall make a tumult against the aged—and the base against the honorable.” For as God is “peace and charity,” thus called by St. Paul

and St. John, and as He takes pleasure, remarks St. Gregory Nazianzen, in bearing such beautiful and amiable names, there must be inferred the consequence, as drawn from it by St. John, "that those who dwell in charity, dwell in God, and God in them;" that where charity, peace, and concord are found—be it in kingdoms, towns, or houses—there is nothing to fear, because God makes His dwelling there, and gives His protection, and therefore no one can perish, so long as peace and charity reside with them, and God is their all-powerful Protector.

St. Francis, having seen at "Our Lady of the Angels," a great multitude of demons, making every effort to enter the monastery, but in which they could not succeed till one of the Religious bickered with another, so as to give evidence of hatred. This division and enmity at once gave entrance to the demons. But the Saint brought a timely remedy to the evil by calling and reproving this brother for his fault, and reuniting the two divided spirits. The demon does not dread so much the Religious, says St. Bernard, who keep rigorous fasts, long watches, and preserve unsullied chastity, because he has devised means to draw many of these to himself—entrapping them in his snares, and eventually ruining them; but those whom he fears he cannot overcome, those who torment him, and give him the greatest trouble, are such as live peaceably, and whom the tie of charity binds and unites to God and their brothers.

St. Gregory of Tours relates that Radegondas,

foundress and simple Religieuse of the Monastery of Holy Cross, at Poitiers, and previously the consort of King Clotaire, being dead, two Religieuses of the same monastery, Chrodielta and Basine, daughters respectively of Kings Charibert and Chilperic, did not wish to live under obedience of an Abbess of less rank or quality than themselves. Wherefore they aspired to the abbacy, which ambition created division and discord among the Religieuses, who until then had been very united; but by their discord they disturbed not alone their own community, but the entire province, and even all France. These two royal Religieuses left the monastery, together with forty of their sisters, whom they had gained over and drawn to their faction, and proceeded to court, to make complaints of their Abbess, whom they misrepresented, as treating them with great severity and without deference. But the King and his ministers, readily perceiving in these undisciplined daughters much more passion than reason, dismissed them without satisfaction: wherefore, not having succeeded in their design, they were compelled to return to Poitiers, where they sought for shelter and protection within the Church of St. Hilary; but so enraged were they against their late Abbess and monastery, as to excite the whole town to open revolt and instigate certain robbers and wicked men, whom they had influenced, to pillage and destroy the Monastery of St. Radegondas, to seize the Abbess and to throw her in prison, where she met with cruel treatment. To check these grievous

disorders, and to extinguish this raging conflagration, the Bishops of Bordeaux, Poitiers, with others, assembled in council several times, with little fruit, until they were forced to cut off from the Church and to excommunicate these wicked spirits, who, by their ambition and discord, had caused so many evils.

St. Martial, exorcising a person, asked the demon how he called himself, when this latter replied: I am named "master deceiver," for I employ a thousand inventions and artifices to deceive the human race. And how is your master called, added the Saint. He is named "disseminator of quarrels and discord," for this is his principal and highest function. Behold the evils occasioned by discord; and then turn to the benefits procured by concord, which are so admirably described by David, in the one hundred and thirty-second Psalm—which, according to St. Basil and St. Augustine, should be understood as relating to Religious houses. It commences thus: "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" The words of this Psalm, says St. Augustine, with its sonorousness so agreeable, have a melody sweet and pleasing, both in song and sense, that it has built up Religious houses: for its harmonious chant ever makes deep impression on such who can appreciate a community life; and its versicle has been as a trumpet sounding over the universe to invite its inhabitants to dwell together peaceably and charitably. David continues to show that the happi-

ness and the advantages of the Religious life are “like the precious ointment on the head, that ran down upon the beard of Aaron,” and which ran down to the skirt of his garment, “as the dew of Hermon, which descended upon Mount Sion; for there the Lord hath commanded blessing and life for evermore.”

Herein the Royal Prophet touches upon two excellent prerogatives of the Religious life; wherefore, to show its grandeur, he cries out in admiration: “How good and how pleasant it is!” By these words, remarks St. Basil, are to be understood the advantages and delights of this kind of life. First, the advantages of Religious life are that in a house where peace and concord reign, all the Religious progress in virtue much more rapidly: that they exercise good works with greater facility; that they observe their rules and vows more easily, and that God is better served than there where trouble has sway. As in our body, to render our members capable of performing their varied functions well, it is necessary for them to be healthy; that is to say, in a state of natural peace and concord with their four humors: so also, in a moral body—such as is a Religious community—the members, the Religious, should dwell in peace among themselves in order to perform their different offices, and to acquit themselves well of their duties. Also, David says: that God pours out His benedictions on such a house, therein causing to be led a true life without interruption—a life that is now all grace and virtue, to be here-

after one of glory: that such a house is watered continually with the dews of heaven—as were the mountains of Hermon and Sion, which, though sterile of themselves, were, nevertheless, fertilized by the copious dews. The pleasures of this holy and perfect life are those that spring naturally from concord and sincere friendship; pleasures which are assuredly much to be prized. What pleasure is it not, and what satisfaction, to live in congenial company—where dissensions and animosities are banished, and where peace and freedom reign: where sincerity and charity bind all spirits together. Hugh of St. Victor said happily and truly: To be united with a person in place and not in heart, is a torment; to be so in heart and not in place, is true affection; but to be united in place and in heart, is a felicity and a paradise.

This concord and fraternal charity ameliorate greatly all interior and exterior sufferings in Religion, and soften all austerities: it is like an oil, which causes the yoke of the rules, the vows, the offices—all temptations and trials—to become sweet and light. Thus is accomplished that promise of God, made by Isaias: “It shall come to pass, in that day, that his burden”—all miseries—“shall be taken away from off thy shoulders, and this yoke from off thy neck:” the weight of the rules and the obligations of Religious life—meaning, you will not feel them as a burden, and your yoke will be so oiled and penetrated with the balm of joy and peace, that will promote the mutual affection you should have for one another,

that by this union of spirits it will be divested of all its difficulties and so rendered easy to bear.

David says likewise (or compares it) to the holy oil mentioned in Exodus: an oil composed of several precious and odoriferous perfumes, that was poured out upon the head of Aaron, and running down from thence to the skirt of his garment. Thus concord is in a Religious house a perfume of holiness, that sanctifies Religious—consecrating them to God, applying them more specially to His service, which serves as a lenitive to all bitterness of spirit, and by its good odor rejoices, not alone those who dwell in the house, but has influence even over seculars. Then, this precious and divine perfume of concord should anoint and perfume principally the head of Aaron: that is to say, the first and principal members of a community, who, as the head, are raised up above the others, and from these flow down to those who are as the skirts of the garments, from their occupations, which are more lowly; but to possess this perfume, and to cause it to pass from one to another, to all in the house, it must be composed of divers precious ingredients; that is, of many excellent virtues, of which we are now about to treat.

SECTION XV.

In What and with Whom We Should Practise Peace and Concord.

After having noticed the reasons that oblige Religious to agree among themselves, and to dwell

in union, let us now see in what, and with whom, they should practise this union and concord.

In what? I answer that it is in all things, as much as possible: that is, in opinions, judgment, affections, in words, and in works; so that discord and dissension be not found amongst them.

“Let all be united in spirit and heart,” say St. Peter and St. Paul, in the same thought, “that you be of one mind, having the same charity, being of one accord, agreeing in sentiment.” As to words, behold what the Apostle wrote to the Corinthians: “I beseech and conjure you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all have but one heart, one soul, and one mouth, letting there be among you no schism nor diversity of opinions, but that you be all of the same sentiments.” Also, he wrote to them: “I make myself all to all:” in all things pleasing and condescending to all.

I repeat, in as much as possible, because spirits even among the best men and saints do not always agree; for they often see the same things differently, each according to his own light. Wherefore St. Paul says: “Each one may follow his sentiments in *indifferent* things.” St. Augustine and St. Jerome may here be cited as examples, they being of contrary opinions in regard to certain undecided questions, and for this purpose, several letters, wherein each sustained his own opinions with much warmth, but without wounding charity: thus, it may well happen sometimes that the just do not agree as to their understanding—not enter-

taining the same opinions in all respects ; but they ever agree in will, as they always desire the good—and thus tend to God ; otherwise, they would not be just. It may possibly be, wrote St. Augustine to St. Jerome, that you entertain a sentiment contrary to truth ; such a thing could be permitted, provided that you do nothing that is opposed to charity. The tutelary angels of the Jews and Persians, as mentioned in the Book of Daniel, did not agree, or were opposed one to the other, as the former wished to make the Jews go out of Persia, and the latter to retain them ; though they had but the one design : that of God's glory and the salvation of souls.

Moreover, there should be agreement inasmuch as requisite ; when, for instance, God is offended thereby, one should not fear to differ and to separate. There is, says St. Gregory Nazianzen, a discord very good and a concord very bad ; and one should not love and practise concord and a union of spirits but when it is good, and for a good end ; that while uniting us together, it should also unite us to God. St. Paul defines it in these simple words : “ God grant you to be of one mind, one towards another, according to Jesus Christ ; ” as He wishes it, and will teach it to us.

With whom should we agree ? I say that the Religious should agree and live in peace, particularly with those in the same house. It is most just and natural that the bonds of charity should unite him more strictly with these than with strangers, and that the fire of this charity should give more

warmth to those who are near to him than to those who are far off.

Lastly, Religious should observe more care to live on good terms and in friendship with the *least* of his brothers, than with seculars, for would it not be true blindness, to seek more the love and to cultivate more assiduously the affections of the latter than of the former? For with your brothers, you are members of the same body, whose welfare consists in the firm tie and intimate union of the members; then these brothers, these members of your community, are the persons with whom you must live and die; on whom you depend in many things, both in spiritual and temporal necessities. But you are not, in this strict sense, members of the same body with seculars: you see them to-day, and the morrow will remove them from you: these seculars love you only for their interest, and they often engage you in affairs prejudicial alike to your profession and salvation. Wherefore, there is greater wisdom and much more profit to be derived from living on good terms with those in the community than with seculars; and it would be better to be at variance with ten seculars than with the least of your brothers.

Secondly, Religious should agree and live amicably with the Religious of all other Orders, and also with ecclesiastics. Let those who are united as to institutions, remarks St. Bernard on this subject, be also united in spirit, so as to sustain, defend, and aid one another in bearing his burthen,

for the Wise Man says: "When a brother aids his brother, both are consoled thereby;" and if it happens, God grant it may not be, that they quarrel with or vex each other, will not this be to cause a mutual loss? St. Bernard says of himself: "I have made profession but in one order, and I wear the habit of this order alone; but I love all others, and I bear them all in my heart." In truth, "charity," which is not jealous, as is confirmed by the Apostle St. Paul, caused him to love and cherish with true affection all the religious orders of his time: the Benedictines, Carthusians, Canons Regular, Premonstratensians, etc., as he himself testifies, in his letters and in his Apology, wherein it is evident he had assisted them all, both by his counsel and his influence. From an exuberance of charity, sincerely disinterested and truly evangelical, he even gave to some the inheritance and lands that rich persons had given him for his own order; thus he was seemingly the common father of all the regular congregations that then flourished in the Church.

The chronicles of the Friars Minors give a circular letter, written at Milan, A. D. 1255, by Brother Hubert, General of the Religious of St. Dominic, and Brother John of Parma, General of those of St. Francis, to be read to the Religious and novices in all monasteries, and to be afterwards kept in the archives with their other papers of importance. By this letter, these two great personages recommended, with all possible earnestness, their Religious to love and protect each other. never to speak

evil of one another on any subject, and on no pretext whatever to dispute, with this view to retrench whatever might be an occasion of dispute; all of which the Religious observed scrupulously. Thence followed their reasons for the foregoing, viz.: "Consider how great and sincere should be the love between our two Religious Orders, that God willed should take birth at the same time—to labor with the same designs for His glory and the salvation of souls, and to unite us in our employments with a true charity. How can we be recognized as true disciples of Jesus Christ, if we have not for one another this perfect charity? How can we by our preaching persuade others of its necessity, impress it on the minds of the faithful, if we, who are more obliged to practise this virtue, should be the first to lose sight of it? And how can we sustain the assaults of our enemies—stem the tide of persecution—if we do not assist one another, if we are not armed with charity? Some time subsequently, that is, in the year 1278, Brother Jourdain and Brother Jerome Diascoli, Generals of these two Orders, enacted at Paris some statutes to bind their Religious still more closely in the spirit of friendship, and to stifle whatever misunderstanding may have glided in amongst them.

When St. Catherine of Sienna conceived the design to become a Religeuse, it is said, in the history of her life, that several holy founders of different orders, already numbered among the blessed in Heaven, appeared to her, so that she

might the more readily make choice of the Order for which she had the greatest attraction. Accordingly she decided to embrace that of St. Dominic, without the others conceiving any jealousy on account of this choice, and which caused them to lose a subject who would have been an ornament to any Order.

St. Anthony relates that a man of high rank, having asked counsel of Pope Clement IV. as to the religious Order he should embrace, being undecided whether it should be that of St. Dominic or that of St. Francis, the Pope replied: "That both these Orders were excellent (for it was when they were at the height of their primitive fervor, and were doing the most good in the Church) and though one may have more or less than the other of some things,—for instance, that the Order of St. Dominic surpassed that of St. Francis in discipline and obedience, whilst that of St. Francis excelled in holy poverty: thus, you may, with all security, attach yourself to the one you wish, without altogether detaching yourself in affection for the other." Then this great Pontiff added these memorable words: "That one is not a good Friar Preacher, who does not love the Friars Minors; and that this one is an abominable Friar Minor, if he despises the Friars Preachers."

It is related of Blessed Bertram of Valencia, and Religious of St. Dominic, that he loved generally all Religious of every Order, and that he rejoiced to hear them praised; blaming and holding in aversion such as, to pass encomiums on their own

Order lowered and contemned that of another. St. Francis Borgia, third General of the Society of Jesus, bore such great respect towards all Religious, that whenever he met them in the street he was always the first to salute them. He considered with esteem and reverence, in their respective habits, the service that their institute had and still rendered, to our Lord and His Church.

I add hereto the sentiments and celebrated words of Father Francis Riberyra, one of the most virtuous and wisest men that we have ever had in the Society, and who is famed for his excellent writings on Sacred Scripture. At the close of his commentary on the Prophet Aggius, he said, after having given much praise, and with justice, to the ancient Religious, who had as valiant soldiers combated generously for the glory of God, against vices and heresies, “that hell was augmenting its troops by the agency of Luther and Calvin, and by so many other impious heresiarchs, that he thought it was incumbent on him to make recruits also, and for which purpose he designed our Company—the Jesuits—to aid these veteran soldiers to sustain and to vanquish the attacks of the enemy.” Then, transported with the ardor of true charity, and with a zealous desire for union amongst us, he cries out, speaking to God: “Who will grant me the grace, who will cause me this joy, that I may see all Thy soldiers, ancient and the new, combating with a perfect union of spirits and an equal ardor of courage, under a single general, Jesus Christ, and His lieutenant, the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome, against

Pharoah and his troops? Why are the soldiers of the same King and of the same army divided in spirit and affection? What matters it in what manner the one or the other be clothed—of what colors and of what arms they make use, if we have all the same standard of the Cross, the same vows and oath of fidelity against a common enemy, and for the glorious service of the same King? Grant us, Father of Lights, this mercy, that we love all mutually, with a sincere and true love: that we bear honor one to the other, while we contend to whom shall be rendered the most honor; forgetting ourselves, that we may serve Thee steadfastly in the same spirit. The demon, in this depraved age, has sent from hell many of its envoys to seduce men and cause their ruin: grant, by Thy goodness, that Thou may also have many zealous servants and disciples who will confront Thy enemies, and thus save souls. Tear up the roots of bitterness and division that shall be found amongst us, in order that, being well established and grounded on charity, we shall rejoice as true brothers, for the glory, progress, and happy success of each other in our victories, that we may adore Thee as our common Father. May we hold as being done by ourselves whatever is accomplished by our brothers and our companions-in-arms. We are members of the same body—we live in the same Church; we are called by the one signal—by the sound of the same trumpet—from the life of ordinary Christians to a higher and more perfect life: we all hope for heaven, where we shall possess the

same beatitude eternally. Why, then, during our brief career here below, should we yield to jealousies, and take up arms one against the other? The demon raises every day fresh troops to wrest from Jesus Christ towns and provinces; and yet we, who are His soldiers and His subjects—loaded by His munificent liberality with all riches and honors, to enable us to defend His interest—we disloyally leave His goods to be lost, His estates to be impoverished by domestic discord and the civil wars we create, while seeking after our own petty cause!

Then, in concluding this holy affection, he makes the following prayer: “I have asked Thee, O Father of Mercies, two things, that I conjure Thee to grant me—not to let me die without beholding their effects both for myself and for Thy servants, the Religious of other Orders, whom I wish not to consider as strangers, whatever may be the habit they wear, but as persons who are nearly allied to me; for my fathers and my brothers, for whom I entertain sincere love and veneration, and whom I regard with respect, as Thy ancient soldiers and worn-out troops of Thy militia, I pray that Thou mayst daily increase in them Thy graces and Thy benefits; and that, whilst I live, I may not fail to offer Thee my prayers for them: ardently wishing to be myself aided by their prayers and sacrifices. May these sentiments of my heart—that is, the affection and respect that I bear them, and the prayers that I make Thee in their behalf—remain, O my God! engraven in this book, in order that

whoever will read them will be excited to make similar ones, and obtain of Thee, through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, that which my sins render me unworthy of. If Thou favorably hearest our prayers, there will soon be seen a great change in Thy Church: she will again grow young as the eagle—will flourish as the lily, will bud forth in strength and bear an abundance of blossom and fruit: her heart will be filled with joy, and her mouth with Thy praises: there, where she is dry, sterile, and dying of thirst, she will be so well watered as to be changed into a fountain. Praise and glory be, for evermore, to Thee, to Thy Son, and to the Holy Ghost! Amen.”

Behold the words and sentiments of this excellent man, which are so applicable and useful to our present subject.

SECTION XVI.

Continuation of the Same Subject.

By the foregoing instructions and examples, the Religious sees how he is obliged to live in peace and union with Religious of all other Orders, and not to say or do anything that might wound the charity that should exist between them. For this end, it is necessary he should weigh all the reasons we have advanced—admitting that God, as Author of all Religious Orders, has portioned to each its degree of grace, its particular beauty, and its special perfection; and that He wills to re-

ceive from one order a service that all the others conjointly could not possibly render Him: that there are in all these varied orders Religious who are great servants of God; who honor Him excellently, in different ways, and who have, therefore, acquired for their respective orders much merit before His divine majesty; and that thus they should all be esteemed and none contemned. Moreover, if we should not despise any condition, even the lowest, among seculars, for the reason that God has in every one of them chosen souls and servants whom He reserves—and “who,” to use the language of Scripture, “have never bent the knee to Baal” (before the world and its vanities), then with how much greater reason should such a tribute be paid to Religious and their orders!

Rufinus relates that St. Paphnucius, one of the most celebrated Fathers of the Desert, and who dwelt near Heraclia in the Thebaides—having prayed God to make known to him to whom he was like, in virtue and merit, an angel told him: You are like a certain fiddler in a village close by, who gains his livelihood by his music. Another time, making the same request of God, he heard a voice from heaven saying: You resemble the principal inhabitant of the nearest town. And the third time, desiring still to learn the same thing, he heard that he was like a merchant who was coming to visit him. Then, if seculars and persons of lowly condition (or class) equalled before God such great Saints, it is very easy to judge as much, and more, of Religious Orders. It may

even happen that, in a community seemingly relaxed, there may be an unknown father or an humble brother, who, serving God in all simplicity of heart, purity of intention, and interior recollection, must be very perfect and most pleasing to His divine majesty.

The demon, capital and enraged enemy of man's salvation, foreseeing the great benefit produced by this perfect understanding and close union among Religious and priests, does all in his power to sow discord in their midst, and to raise divisions between them,—this being one of his greatest stratagems and most subtle artifices that he employs to prevent much good, to cause a thousand evils, and to disturb the entire Church.

Though discord among private soldiers is very prejudicial to an army, that of generals and others in command causes much greater detriment: in like manner; though dissensions prove baneful when arising among the secular Christians, yet it is much more so when existing between ecclesiastics and those who conduct souls, and who hold a more prominent position in the Church. It is a pitiable, as well as a disgraceful fact, that the Church is so often and more dangerously disturbed by the dissensions of her own children than by the persecutions of heretics: suffering more from envies, jealousies, animosities, slanders, and calumnies, than from the fiercest attacks of infidels and other evil-doers outside the true pale.

“The Church sometimes enjoys peace with strangers,” remarked an ancient author, “when her

own wicked and unnatural children torment her, and like cruel vipers, tear the entrails of their own mother, in striving for influence and honors." Wherefore, Religious should see the importance and beauty of this desirable peace, and do their utmost to preserve it inviolable, and live in close union with other Religious and with secular priests. Let them consider what St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, whom he blamed: "I learn that there are contentions among you; that every one of you saith: I indeed am of Paul; and I of Apollo; and I of Cephas, or Peter; and I of Christ." I receive none other than Jesus Christ, and I belong to Him. "Do you not see that you are deceived? Is Christ divided? Has Paul been crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" etc. . . .

Neither should Religious speak and act by this spirit of division, and from vanity or pride, and say: I am of the Order of St. Benedict; and I of St. Dominic; or, for my part, I claim St. Francis or St. Ignatius for father; but let all be in a spirit of concord and union, and by referring secondary to first causes, rather say: We all belong to Jesus Christ; He is our true Father and principal Founder; He it is who has given to St. Benedict, to St. Dominic, to St. Francis, to St. Ignatius, and others His spirit in the diversity pleasing to Him, yet so to unite us all as to cause us in concert to advance His service, to labor at our salvation and that of our neighbor. It was our Lord and Saviour who was crucified for us, who redeemed us by His

blood, and not St. Francis, St. Ignatius, nor any other Saint. Thus it must be when, perfectly united in heart and mind, we employ ourselves in our duties, each in his way, and as incumbent on him, that by this union we reciprocally share and partake of the labors and merits of one another.

David, comparing the Church to the city of Jerusalem and to the Mountain of Sion, says: "Jerusalem is built as a city. Great is the Lord and exceedingly to be praised, in the city of our God, upon His holy mountain. With the joy of the whole earth is Mount Sion founded." The Church, designated by the city of Jerusalem, is truly a city, but one that is not entirely built, but which is every day added to, and nears to its completion. A city to which some one is ever adding a stone to increase its growth, to ornament and embellish it more and more. Then, when some new workman gives his aid in building up this city and labors for its embellishment and protection, all who dwell in this city, upon this mountain, and particularly all co-laborers, should most gladly welcome him, and in unison rejoice in praising God, who is great, and exceedingly to be praised, in this mystical city and holy mountain of His Church.

After saying the Church is like the city of Jerusalem getting built up, the Prophet adds, with sentiments most suitable to our subject, when he prays that we should all strive to make Jerusalem so compact that its inhabitants may dwell in peace and friendship, mutually communicating their

goods and their merits. Let us, therefore, make prayers and vows to this effect, that the Church may enjoy peace and prosperity, and be not afflicted by wars, either foreign or civil.

Behold here the terms in which this prayer is expressed: "Oh, holy Church, may you be peaceable and quiet! May safety reign within your walls;" that is, security to be reposed in the princes and influential of the faithful; "and that your towers and bastions, which constitute your greatest strength," here is to be understood all ecclesiastics and religious orders, "may defend you against all the assaults of your enemies. I have made this wish of peace, prosperity, and of good for you, principally in consideration of those whom I know, love, and honor as my brothers, and who, by resemblance in condition and occupation, are nearer to me, and who also promote zeal for God and His mysteries."

St. Augustine, explaining this passage of the Psalmist, says: "O Jerusalem! O city that is continually being built as a city, wherein something and pleasing is made each day! O holy Church, founded on charity and concord! May thy peace be made by thy virtue and thy fraternal charity, because thy principal virtue is this charity, and that, by this virtue, charity, and peace, thy towers will overflow with wealth, and ecclesiastics and Religious will be overwhelmed with graces!" Behold the prayer we should offer, the mutual union of minds and hearts of all ecclesiastics and Religious. At the same time, two things

are to be remarked hereupon : the first is that all Religious, while they should live among themselves and with ecclesiastics in a spirit of love and concord—however, one may love his own order more than others, procure more readily its advancement, and look more to its interest: this even he is required to do; but which, far from being contrary to virtue, to fraternal charity, and opposed to God, is rather according to God, and in keeping with His intentions: as He has for this called us to such an order, and not to another. Thus God, by willing us to be born of such parents, and to have such persons for brothers and sisters, has certainly wished that, as we are bound to them by ties much stricter than with all others, we have for them also much greater affection and sympathy. So also God, having inspired such a person to enter into such an order, and not into the many others, it is evident His design was to attach them more also to it. Therefore, as God wishes that a person partake of the spirit of the order he embraces, so also must he have a more special affection and zeal for the same order. But for this reason, it is not necessary to contemn or blame other orders; on the contrary, one should love and honor them all.

To be obliged to love and honor one's own father and mother more than the parents of another, we are not, however, authorized to contemn and despise those who are not thus allied to us; but in accordance with the commandment of charity for the neighbor, we should bear love towards all, with

the discretion that wisdom and virtue require.

Aristotle taught that, when self-love is blamed, the blame is not absolutely for this love, which is in itself reasonable, God having impressed it in the depth of the nature of all things, as a principle of their preservation and as a safeguard against all that could injure them. It is then to be blamed only when it is greater than it should be, and surpasses the bounds of reason. In like manner, a well-regulated love for one's order or community, as we have shown, is not reprehensible.

Secondly, it is not acting contrary to union and concord, when in a spirit of charity, and not from animosity, we speak of the defects of some order or blame the irregularities that have crept into these communities. Of this we have a remarkable example in St. Bernard, who, with his Religious, led a most austere life, and in the strictest observance of the rule of St. Benedict. Such a life was a tacit condemnation of that of the Religious of Cluny, who were very relaxed under the government of Ponce, their seventh Abbot, and which gave rise to the rumor that the Abbot of Clairvaux and his Religious threatened them publicly, for not observing their rule as they had vowed. St. Bernard, as counselled by his great friend, the venerable William, Abbot of St. Thierry, wrote the renowned "Apology," wherein he at once states that he loves, praises, and reveres the piety of the most glorious Order of Cluny, and declaims against the Religious who, from a hypocritical pride, allows himself to contemn others. Then, re-

ferring to the failings of Cluny, he said: It is now necessary that I represent to you some relaxations and defects found amongst you, that I know must displease you, and that, I cannot but doubt, all virtuous persons desire to avoid. Even though such things be done in the order, they are, nevertheless, far removed from the order. No order receives anything disorderly, anything contrary to the spirit of the order. Therefore, no one should imagine that I am speaking against the order, but rather that I defend it, when I reprove not the order in the men, but the vices of men, that overturn the order. Wherefore, I fear not to displease such as love the order: on the contrary, I do nothing but what is agreeable to them when I persecute and condemn what they themselves despise. If, therefore, some one takes offence, it evidently appears that he has no affection for the order, since he does not wish its corruptions and disorders condemned; that is to say, the vices and abuses that ruin it.

SECTION XVII.

The Means for Peace and Concord.

Religious, as we have said, are obliged to preserve peace and concord among themselves; but this is not always easily accomplished, on account of differences of age, variety of dispositions, inequality of humors, diversity of sentiments, distinction of offices and employments, no less than

the viciousness of our nature, which renders it ever difficult for persons who dwell together not to say, do or meet with something to disturb peace and harmony in some degree. So that what one esteems, another blames ; what this one approves, that one condemns ; and what one desires, another rejects. As all persons who write form the same characters ; however, there are not two who form them exactly alike : thus, the same thing is seen differently by different persons ; each one beholding it in keeping with his own opinions, views, and affections, so as not readily to agree with another on the same point. St. Macarius asked Abbot Arsenius one day, why he acted so savagely in avoiding the company of others ? St. Arsenius replied: God knows it is not from any ill will, and that I love you all sincerely ; but I cannot well accomodate myself to, nor unite, the divergences of conversations with God and with men. The angels, who are innumerable, have but one and the same will, and therefore agree perfectly ; while two men have much difficulty to live together without some contradiction, without one refusing what the other wishes. Wherefore, so as not to fail in charity, I find it more prudent to separate myself from others. It was for this reason revealed, as related by Rufinus, that the virtue of two married women and sisters-in-law living together in the same house for fifteen years, without ever giving either a cross word, nor having had the least misunderstanding between them, was preferred to the virtue of St. Macarius.

Richard of St. Victor deplotes this misfortune, particularly in Religion. The primitive Christians, he says, who lived in the time of the Apostles, had, as we are assured by St. Luke, but "one heart and one soul." Neither the diversity of wills nor the possession of wealth divided them; but charity, with the bond of a same spirit and a holy peace, united them strictly and sweetly together. But alas! to what have we come in these latter times, so degenerate and unfortunate, to say nothing of seculars, whom ambition blinds and arouses, one against the other, when Religious live together with so little good understanding, yield to so many dissensions, that it is a difficult matter to see two who agree perfectly, excepting it be in what is essentially evil, and directly opposed to God. Everywhere, in all orders, the walls of Jerusalem—city that signifies "vision of peace," (and symbol of religious houses)—are left so open by the divisions formed therein, that she is threatened with a speedy and inevitable ruin. Under the same habit is carried a diversity of spirits and affections; so that it is achieving much, when one keeps in Religion the appearances of peace and union; and that those who come to the tomb (sepulchre) of our Lord (that is to say, the cloister) to seek Him, find but his grave-clothes—meaning, the exterior and the cloak of religion.

Though concord and peace are with difficulty obtained and preserved among persons dwelling together and even among Religious, however, these virtues should not for this be considered as unat-

tainable, but the means thereto must be known and employed. First, it is necessary to remark that in communities are found spirits naturally fractious, punctilious, and formal, who take offence readily—become nettled for a trifle: a word, a look, a gesture, a careless action (made without the least evil design) touches them to the quick. Such dispositions as these should labor unremittingly to rid themselves of these turbulent and offensive qualities, so as to live in peace and union of mind with other persons dwelling in the same house.

Moreover, it is great wisdom to preserve peace with any one whomsoever: it being easier not to rupture peace than to restore it after it has once been broken. Then, so as not to disturb it, you have but to attend to yourself, and to be reserved; whereas, to renew it, to *re-unite* divided spirits, you must treat with *two*, yourself and your party. Also, is it less difficult to prevent a wound than to heal it, or to make the separated parts of a cut unite: in like manner, the labor is much less to prevent a quarrel than to appease it, to restore peace between those at enmity.

For the good of peace, all quarrels and differences should be carefully stifled in their commencement. It is with them as with fire, which it is so important to extinguish in the beginning: otherwise a spark can readily cause a great conflagration. Important results often arise from small principles, and the most baneful, the most frightful divisions, have sprung from the slightest occasions. The rupture of friendship and the lamentable discord

made between the Emperor Theodosius the Younger and his wife Eudoxia—a discord that disturbed their whole Court—came from an *apple*, that some unknown person casually presented to the Emperor just as he was proceeding in great ceremony to the church on the “Feast of Kings.” The Emperor, admiring this apple for its uncommon size, color, fragrance, and beauty, sent it to his spouse as a token of affection ; and this latter gave it to Paulinus, a lord of great quality—as eloquent as wise—and for whom she had great esteem. Paulinus, on his part, not thinking of any evil, kindly offered it to the Emperor, who received it with considerable emotion, and, so soon as occasion presented, inquired of the Empress what she had done with the beautiful apple he had sent her ? Eudoxia replied she had eaten it—fearing that, if she acknowledged having presented it to Paulinus, he would take offence, so as to be displeased both with her and their mutual friend, whom she esteemed and admired for his virtue and science. Then the Emperor, greatly vexed, showed it to her, to convince her that he knew the truth. Believing that he had just cause for conceiving a bad opinion of one and the other, he commanded that Paulinus be put to death, though he was truly innocent, and never could he resume the affection he once had for his wife.

Therefore, suffer not your differences and quarrels to strengthen ; bring to them a timely remedy, so as to annihilate them, to adjust promptly the discordant spirits, for fear lest they engender suspicions,

alienations, antipathies, that will subsequently become incurable. For this reason, St. Paul tells us: "Be angry, and sin not." If some fault of inadvertence or some human infirmity causes you to be displeased with your brother, do not thereby offend God—stifle this first movement in its origin, and "*Let not the sun go down upon your anger.*"

Finally, it must be said that, owing to the endless occasions that present themselves in the commerce we have with one another, and the misery of our nature, there is nothing but virtue that can foster and support a continual peace in communities. Wherefore David says: "Let your peace and union be made and preserved by your virtue." Virtue should be the tie and the cement, otherwise it will relax. Abbot Joseph, in Cassian, gives also this warning: Charity cannot be unalterable and enduring, but between persons endowed with an equal virtue, and who have the same intention to arrive at perfection. Then, in bringing to a conclusion all he had expressed concerning friendship, he adds: Behold the most assured (or confident) opinion of the all-prudent and enlightened men, that true concord and a union of spirits cannot remain indissoluble when not existing between wise and virtuous persons, who in concert tend to the same good and praiseworthy end.

As virtues constitute the foundation of the peace and concord that should exist among Religious, let us now see which are these virtues specially referred to. St. Paul teaches them to us, when writing to the Ephesians, and recommending this

concord and peace, he tells them: Live in peace with others, and to have no contentions. "With all humility and mildness, with patience supporting one another in charity; careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Then it is certain that the virtues of humility, sweetness, and patience are essential to this design, and that at least by omitting to exercise them it is impossible not to have some differences frequently. This we will see further on.

Abbot Joseph, when treating of the means to establish a firm peace and an indissoluble friendship between Religious dwelling together, advances eight virtues, the first of which is poverty of spirit. According to him, this poverty consists in a disengagement of affection from all the things we enjoy, and all the goods of earth, persuading ourselves that it is an injustice and an impiety, after having contemned all the riches and vanities of the world, to make more account of a piece of furniture in our cell, and of trifles generally, than of that *priceless* charity and affection that is due to our brother; an affection that can never be refused him by one who has renounced the love of riches, and who is exempt from an inordinant attachment to wealth, that source of divisions, the cause of lawsuits and dissensions. This was evident among the first Christians, who agreed so perfectly as to have but one heart and one soul; and in order to live thus, they renounced all affection for, as well as possession of their goods, which were placed in common.

The second means for a solid peace is that each one renounce his will, for fear lest, deeming himself competent for his own guidance, he would prefer to follow his light to that of his neighbor. St. Bernard has given this reason on the same subject, when he says: It must be that you who live in community, so as to have peace and to be on good terms with all, should prefer the *will* of others to your own. Assuredly is this an infallible means; for who can become displeased with you, or quarrel with you, when you do what he desires?

The third means to preserve concord is to know that the goods of charity and peace should be so esteemed as to be preferable to all things, however useful and necessary they may be considered. In a word, there is nothing equal to the value of charity, nor that brings so much good as peace. St. Gregory teaches us that a man, however virtuous he may appear, is not so in effect, if he lives in discord with his neighbor. Those, says he, who live at variance with others should be warned to hold for certain that whatever virtues they apparently possess, they cannot become truly spiritual, if they do not try to accommodate themselves to their neighbor. According to St. Paul, the fruits and the effects of the Holy Spirit in us are *charity, joy, and peace*; it then follows that he who does not wish to live in charity and peace, does not desire to partake of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, nor consequently to be spiritual. Also, the same Apostle writes to the Corinthians: "Since among you there

are jealousies and dissensions, do you not thereby show that you are carnal?"

The fourth means is to persuade yourself that you should on no account, even for a just cause, yield to anger; there is nothing more opposed to peace than such a passion and vice. Wherefore, you should never hesitate, he says afterwards, to leave and contemn everything, however necessary and useful in appearance, in order to avoid the trouble of anger.

The fifth means is to appease the mind of your brother, irritated against you, though it be without reason, and to soothe his ill-grounded excitement, with as much care as if you yourself were displeased with him. One and the other's anger—*your own* and *his*—are equally injurious to you, and you are obliged to apply a remedy to both. Finally, he who forbids you to become angry with your brother intends that you should not scorn the vexation he manifests against you; it being one and the same interest, whether you cause your own loss or that of another: it is equally an injury to God, who desires the salvation of all men.

The sixth means, which is certainly a most powerful one for destroying all vices, is to think each day to be your last. If one could be deeply impressed with such a belief, he would easily live in peace with all, as he would have other things to think of, if so near his end; and no time to give in anger towards his brother.

The seventh means is to fly diversity of judgment, which is generally the mother of discord, and to

rely more upon the judgment of another than upon your own ; it being easy for self-love to deceive us, and for the demon, who often meddles, to transform himself into an angel of light, to make us mistake falsehood for truth. Say not : I am older, I have more experience, and I know more than many others ; but listen to the Holy Spirit, who says ; “Lean not upon your own prudence,” which is always less than you imagine, and which will be wanting to you in time of need, if you are not humble. Then it sometimes happens, says Abbot Joseph, that he who has a better mind and greater science is mistaken in a search of truth, while he who possesses less, meets with it sooner. Wherefore, let no one, however learned he may be, persuade himself that he can surpass others, and that he has no need of assistance.

St. Arsenius, on account of his extraordinary capacities and learning, had been selected by the Emperor Theodosius the Great as tutor to his sons Arcadius and Honorius, but the Saint, illumined by divine light, left the Court to retire into solitude. There he acted not by his own wisdom, but would consult his juniors, and take their advice on all occasions, in preference to being his own guide. St. Augustine, who may be well regarded as the wonder of great intellects and of learned men, wrote to St. Jerome that he was ready to be instructed, not only by himself, but even by the least of men. I beseech you, he said to him, from time to time to have the goodness to warn and correct me without any fear, whenever you see I

need it. For though at present, according to the custom of the Church, in the distribution of preferments, the episcopacy may be greater than the priesthood, at the same time, Augustine, bishōp, is in many respects less than Jerome, who is simply a priest ; and correction should not be refused nor despised, let it come from whomsoever, even though from the least. These examples, furnished us in such great personages, teach us that we should not allow ourselves to be arrested by our opinions nor our senses, but to yield readily to those of another ; which is absolutely necessary to live in peace with them.

The ultimate means to preserve concord is in regard to words, which are often the sources from whence flow quarrels and animosities. This means consists in watching carefully over their proper use in the differences that may arise on various subjects to be met with, particularly in the sciences : and not to allow one's self to become excited, provoked, or indignant. There are some spirits naturally contentious, loving to dispute, to bicker, to domineer, and always to contradict whatever is said. If you say white, they will say black ; if you are certain such a thing exists, they will contend it does not ; they will rise up against themselves : like "Cœlius," the lawyer mentioned by Seneca, who, when supping with one of his clients, and noticing that this one agreed to all he said, could not longer endure such absolute condescension, and he cried out in anger : Say at least something contradictory, in order that we may be

two. The knight of Navarre, "Sanche d'Arbite," was of this same humor, having for device, "If so, if no," wishing to signify hereby, that if one of these words were said to him, he would use the other, for the love of contradiction. Such warlike spirits are enemies to peace. Do and say nothing in a spirit of contention, says St. Paul. Writing to Titus, he warns him: "Avoid foolish questions and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain:" knowing that, by sharp and overbearing words, charity is wounded; of which a servant of God should never be guilty, but imitate St. Ephrem, who when dying asserted that during his whole life he had never once had a difference in words with any Christian.

Rufinus relates an amusing incident of two holy old men, who dwelt together in the same cell, and who had never had together the least dispute, when one of them said: Let us pretend to have some difference, as is common with other men! His companion replied: I do not know the meaning of a *difference*. The former added: See this brick, that I place here between us; now, to cause difference, I will say it belongs to me, and you must answer, No—it belongs to me. The brick was then placed accordingly, and the first one said: This brick is mine! The second one replied: No, it is mine, and not yours. Nevertheless, remarked the former, it is to me it belongs. Then, since it is yours, replied the latter, take and keep it. Thus they soon came

to a perfect agreement ; not being able to continue their dispute.

An ancient Father of the Desert said : When some one speaks in your presence, be it of the Sacred Scriptures or any other subject, never contend with him ; but if what he says is good, approve of it ; if it is not good, content yourself by telling him so, and then add : You doubtless have some reason, that I cannot see, that causes you to speak thus. By this means you will always remain in humility, and will make to yourself no enemies. But if you dispute to sustain your opinion, it will give occasion to scandal, and it will be impossible for you to live in quiet. Avoid, then, entering into dispute upon any subject whatever.

It is sometimes allowable in the schools to clear up a doubt and seek out a truth by dispute, provided it is made in a spirit of charity, without envy, spite, anger, or bitterness, and that a union of wills reigns in the division of judgments. It is thus that the Lacedemonians, before battle, offered sacrifices not to Mars, the god of war, but to Love,—wishing that concord and friendship should be the generals of the army to conduct them in their combat. In keeping with this idea, St. Gregory Nazianzen, in that beautiful oration he composed on the moderation to be observed in disputes, says among other things : What is there more useful and more excellent in all sciences and in all questions to be agitated on their respective themes, than peace ? And on the contrary, what is there more despicable and more prejudicial, than division of wills ?

St. Ambrose says most apropos on this subject: The communication between men by speech is a source of division to them in familiar intercourse, and in polemical disputes on questions of faith and the virtues great care should be taken that there be no movement of passion to sully or to disfigure one and the other; but that such intercourse and discussion be pursued with tranquillity, sweetness, benevolence, and civility, without the least injury or insult to any one. Contentions and debates should be banished from social intercourse; for therein to propose and to agitate questions of little moment, is rather to make evident or to display a subtlety of intellect that can be of no advantage. A debate should be without anger: sweetness without bitterness; instruction without harshness; exhortation without offence. Such is the teaching of this holy doctor, who traces out for us the manner in which to use words so as not to disturb peace nor wound concord.

But the sovereign means to perform and to practise all the other requisites we have already mentioned, is to conduct ourselves like Christians, perfectly and divinely, towards our neighbor. But for this end, we must behold him with the eyes of faith; we should be attentive to the teaching of faith concerning him. Strengthened by this knowledge, and also by the acts of faith thereon produced, you will necessarily act towards him in keeping with these views.

Faith teaches us that man is the work of God, the master-piece of His hands, a divine creation,

His living image, and His son, for whom He prepares a participation of His felicity, and the enjoyment of the beatific vision in heaven ; that our Lord has so loved him as even to die for him ; that He constitutes him His goods and His treasures, that He has acquired and ransomed at the price of His blood ; and that when about approaching the altar to make some offering to God, we recall that we have had a misunderstanding with our neighbor, we should there leave our present, to seek first a reconciliation with him ; that God is more glorified therewith than by our offering and whatever else we could have to present Him. Doubtless all these considerations and facts oblige us to entertain esteem, veneration, and love for our neighbor, and to treat him with such deference and regard, as readily dispose us to preserve peace and concord with him.

SECTION XVIII.

Conclusion on What Has Been Said in Preceding Section.

Let us conclude this subject by saying that to live well in community, all Religious should be ardently desirous to promote peace and concord, using their utmost endeavors to keep inviolably among themselves a good understanding and a union of spirits. Thus will they imitate the first Christians, who had but one heart and one soul ; and their houses would resemble that locality in

Constantinople, where, under the Emperor Theodosius the Great, one hundred and fifty bishops assembled for mutual agreement, from which cause, in commemoration, the spot was called "Concordia." Then all religious houses, where there should be no other than exercises of piety and actions of peace, made in the name of the God of peace, and by peaceable persons, should bear the name, and still more the effects, of "dwellings of peace, and places of concord." They should also merit to be called the garden of the Spouse, as mentioned in the Book of Canticles: "My Spouse is a garden enclosed—a paradise of pomegranates." The pomegranate is a fruit that contains innumerable seeds, very dissimilar as to figure, but perfectly arranged, and so compact that they cannot be easily separated: thus, this fruit is a fitting image of the concord that should reign in religious houses, where the members live under the same roof, and should therefore be united among themselves, in the strictest manner, by a cordial and sincere charity; in such a way that they cannot be disunited but by violence, though they differ one from the other as to age, disposition, nationality, employments, and in many other respects. Let us contemplate the heavenly bodies: though they are so varied in their magnitude, enclosed one within the other, and also in their movement; for while some revolve from east to west, others go contrawise: some moving with an incredible velocity, and others slowly and with heaviness; but despite all this there is no clashing, they injure not one

another, encroach not, nor ever give offence; but each makes its movements and its periodical revolutions in an inviolable peace and a wonderful order. This is what caused holy Job to say: "God maketh the heavens to agree in all their variety;" and again: "Who can declare the order of the heavens; or who can make its harmony to sleep?" to hush the concert of their music. In like manner Religious, typefied by the heavens, should in the diversity of their dispositions, conditions, and offices, be so well accommodated together, as to make their movements, and perform all their actions in peace and good will: so that it may be said of them: "The mystical heavens," as well as the natural firmament, "show forth the glory of God, and publish loudly His praise." This was the case in the ancient monasteries, the great admiration of the whole world, whose innumerable Religious, with a variety of occupations, lived nevertheless in the closest union, and as so many divine melodies in the temple. A like testimony has been given by St. Athanasius of the Religious of St. Anthony, who sang the praises of God incessantly, and entertained such love and respect for one another, that there could not be found a single one who had ever murmured against his brother.

St. Gregory the Theologian gives the following praise to the Church of Nazianzan: I do not doubt, says he, that other churches have not the qualities and perfections that give to them lustre and renown; but the special ornament of ours is

that she singularly loves peace and concord, and countenances no divisions.

Thus should one use every care, and employ all means, to live together in perfect union and concord ; rendering subservient to this end every possible effort to nourish and increase these virtues, and to avert from them all that could in the least wound them.

Those, says St. Chrysostom, who in a community reunite divided spirits, and who thereby procure peace, perform the office of Jesus Christ, who came into the world to reconcile God with men, and men among themselves, and to banish discord. By giving themselves to so excellent and divine an action, they are, as pronounced by our Lord, "blessed," and called "children of God." They are the pillars, the ornaments, and the delights of communities : whereas, on the contrary, those who disturb this peace, who cause divisions, and thereby create difficulties, are the greatest scourges in Religion, and they should be severely chastised and exterminated. St. Paul says : "He that troubleth you shall bear the judgment, whosoever he be."

The Holy Spirit instructs by the Wise Man what should be done in such a juncture : "Cast off the scoffer ;" that is, the quarrelsome, as being true pests in a house, "and contentions will go out with him :'" all quarrels will cease. As in music, when a singer is out of time, and so disturbs harmony, the only expedient is to silence this discordant voice, to dismiss the one who creates the discord, and accord will be readily restored.

St. Basil enjoins that the slanderer and the sower of discord should be, in punishment for his sins, separated from others, and no one permitted even to work with him. He thus wishes to show the amount of evil such a one does, and how execrable he becomes, since his work has to be entirely separated from that of others. But if he fully recognizes and does penance for his sins, so as to correct himself, it is permitted that his work be again received, though it should not be employed for the use or benefit of the community, but for other purposes, in order to make the offender understand the heinousness of his fault, and to cause him fear of again falling, which he can readily do, if not properly dealt with and punished.

A frightful narration is recorded in the Annals of Citeaux as being an unmistakable chastisement from the hand of Divine justice upon the sower of discord. The lay brothers of a monastery of this order, situated in the territory of Wormes, Germany, were leagued together, and had conspired, under the guidance of one of themselves, against their Abbot, a wise and virtuous man, who wished with reason to reform them in some respects. These mutinous spirits, becoming more and more refractory, disturbing the whole house, heedless alike of threats or entreaties, at length decided to advance boldly and to offer insult to the Choir Religious, on Christmas Eve, during their absence in the church, by entering their cells, and overturning or breaking all therein. The Abbot, having received some hint of this evil design, wished to

prevent its execution. He therefore had all these seditious ones assembled, when he showed them their fault, and remonstrated with them in all sweetness and charity. After this he interrogated the audacious chief of the *mêlée*, but this one replied but with insolent arrogance. The Abbot, beholding him so hardened in guilt, threatened him on the part of God, that if he did not speedily amend he would soon experience the chastising hand of Divine vengeance. The evening preceding Christmas Eve, after complin, this wretched man was suddenly seized by such acute pain as to cause him to utter the most frightful cries, without, however, wishing to confess his sins. So he expired on the spot, in the arms of his principal accomplice, who was thus forced to witness so fatal a misfortune, and to turn it to his own profit. Behold the end of a spirit of discord!

St. Arnould, Bishop of Soissons, had with him, whilst travelling, two Religious, one of whom said something uncharitable to the other. The Saint, learning this by divine revelation, called this Religious to administer to him a severe correction, and then dismissed him, notwithstanding the entreaties and prayers made in his behalf by the other Religious.

One day the Religious of St. Benedict, quarreling in the cloister, exasperating one another, a brother who was about entering, met at the door St. Benedict, who said to him: Go, and tell these turbulent spirits that they leave me no rest, that they drive me away from their house and that thus I go, not to return.

There are none, not even excepting the martyrs, to whom the slightest discord has not proved injurious, as we will now see. Whilst the Sts. Montanus, Julian, Flavian, and companions, who it is thought had been disciples of St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, were in prison for the Faith, they wrote a letter to the Christians of their church, to whom, among other things, they said: We must speak of charity and concord, that hold us most intimately united in this place; for we must live after this manner, so as to gain the victory in our combats with the demon and our other enemies, and finally to obtain of our Lord what we petition Him. It is He who says: "Blessed are the peacemakers," etc. Assuredly they are His heirs, the co-heirs of His Son Jesus Christ, as certifies St. Paul. That if no one can be an heir who is not a son, and none can be sons if not *peaceable*, it is clear that no one can pretend to the inheritance of God, if he disturbs peace and concord. And this we say, not without reason; for behold what happened, and what we know by divine revelation: Montanus having had a little difference with Julian, so as to speak to him with sharpness, had in the night a vision, whereby he seemed to be in a very large field, and in some luminous place, where his clothes as well as his flesh became as white as snow; and also his flesh became so transparent as to enable him to see his whole interior. He then perceived at the bottom of his heart some spots and blemishes that he recognized to be the traces of his discord and the fault he had committed in

disputing with warmth with Julian. Therefore, my well-beloved brethren, let us use every endeavor to have and keep between us peace, concord, and a union of spirits, so as to become here on earth, by fraternal charity, what we will be one day in heaven.

We will now conclude by saying to all Religious, that if they do not use the vigilance they should, as regards fraternal charity, they offend God in offending His image, His servant, and His son ; and they offend our Lord Jesus Christ in His members, doing an injury to Him in what is most dear to Him and which He has acquired by the price of His blood and His life ; also they offend the Christian religion, when they shake the foundation in transgressing its principal law, which is charity.

They offend their own Order, that cannot subsist but by the concord and union of its children, and that must inevitably fall into ruin by their *disunion* and *discord*. They offend their neighbor, because they offer him displeasure, expose him to have some thought, speak some word, or do some act, in which there will be sin. Finally, they offend against themselves, because they disturb their peace of mind—they perform an act detrimental to their salvation; and to view the matter in another light, they deprive themselves of the assistance of this person whom they have so tried, and who, otherwise, would have extended to them a benevolence and friendship that now he cannot so readily nor so freely offer.

CHAPTER VI.

PATIENCE.

ANOTHER virtue most requisite for living well in communities is patience, without which it is impossible not to suffer much evil, and to cause it to be suffered by others. Patience will render supportable all vexatious occurrences and all trials encountered in this life—without these disturbing you interiorly or exteriorly.

According to the teaching of St. Paul, patience is absolutely necessary to us: for whatever condition of life is man's—in whatever time and place he finds himself,—he always carries within himself, in his body and in his soul, fruitful sources and infallible causes of suffering: in his body, being subject to hunger, thirst, heat, cold, weariness, pain, sickness, and death; in his soul, that is filled with darkness, aridity, disquietude, passions, and sin. Besides, he can be afflicted exteriorly by poverty, contempt, calumny, injuries, and outrages. But the doctrine of the Apostle is true in a special manner of Religious dwelling together.

There are, says St. John Climachus, three stages, as it were, in religious life, and three classes of persons who embrace them. The one lives in solitude without any company, the other is associated with one or two companions, and the third dwells

in a monastery with many—in *patience*. Mark this word! it shows the necessity of this virtue in such a mode of life; a virtue that should serve as the foundation, on account of the multiplicity of occasions presented for its practice.

Abbot Agatho said: If you dwell with others, it is necessary, in order to live well, that you be like a stone column, which would not be displeased when receiving injuries, nor feel vainglory when praised. This same sentiment was that also of an ancient Father mentioned by Ruffinus, who relates that the Maziques having invaded Scete, and there killed a vast number of Religious—Abbot Poeman, with another Father more aged than himself—named “Nubius”—together with five younger Religious, fled and took refuge in a place called Termut, there stopping in a temple abandoned to idols. Here they passed seven days, awaiting God to reveal to them into what part of Egypt they should retire, and in accordance with the direction of Nubius, they remained in perfect solitude and silence. This holy old man threw stones every morning at an idol in this temple, and in the evening would say to it: Pardon me for treating you so badly! I did wrong in stoning you thus. At the close of the seventh day all the brothers were assembled, and Abbot Poeman said to Nubius: Whence comes it, Father, that during the whole of this week, a man who believes in God as you, should have shown submission to this idol by asking its pardon? The holy old man replied: It is for the instruction of you all that I did so: it was to make you see how we

should conduct ourselves, so as to live well together. Here follows his explanation: Tell me, I beg you, when I cast stones at this idol, did it utter a single word, or become angry? And when I asked its pardon, did it esteem itself more, and grow vain thereat? No, certainly not, replied Abbot Poeman. Well, then, my brothers, continued Nubius, we are seven here; if you desire that we should dwell together, we must after the example of this idol not become displeased when reproved, nor grow vain and entertain self-esteem when another humbles himself before us to beg our pardon. If any one of you do not wish to observe this rule, let him go where he pleases. The saintly old man having finished speaking, they all with one accord cast themselves at his feet, and promised him to put his instruction into practice. Thus, they lived together many years in great humility and patience, making rapid strides towards perfection.

Abbot Moses said one day to his disciple Zachary: Brother, tell me what I should do for my salvation? Zachary, much astonished at these words, knelt before him, saying: Ah! Father, it is I who should ask such a question of you. Speak, Brother! for I beheld the Holy Spirit descend upon you, and I have been strongly inspired to propose this question. Then this disciple answered: Since you command me, I will speak. Hereupon, he took his cowl, cast it on the ground, trampled upon it, saying: If any man has not patience to endure a like treatment, he cannot be a *true* Religious.

St. Francis said to his disciples in a like sense:

“If a Friar Minor had a distinct knowledge of all things in the universe; if he spoke with the tongues of angels, cast out devils, performed all sorts of miracles, even that of raising the dead to life; if he had the gift of prophecy, and that of discerning the affections of the heart; if he preached to the infidels with such success, as to convert them all, and if he should edify the whole world by his sanctity, all that would not be to him the subject of *perfect and true joy*.”

Afterwards, to show in what this true joy consisted, he proposed a supposition as follows: “Were we to arrive at the Convent of St. Mary of the Angels, very wet, covered with mud, perishing with cold, dying of hunger, and that the porter, instead of letting us in, were to leave us at the gate in this pitiable state, saying angrily: You are a couple of idle vagabonds, who stroll about the world, and receive the alms which the real poor ought to get! If we bear this treatment with patience, without being troubled, and without murmuring: if we think sincerely that the porter knows us well for what we are, and that God permits that he behaves thus to us, mark this down as perfect joy. I suppose, moreover, that we continue to knock at the door, and that the porter, considering us importunate, should come out and give us some severe blows, and say, ‘Get along, scoundrels; go to the hospital, there is nothing for you to eat here.’ If we bear all these things patiently, and we pardon him from our hearts and with charity, note, this would be a subject of perfect joy. Let us, in fine, suppose

that, in this extremity, the cold, hunger, and the night, compel us to entreat, with tears and supplications, to be allowed to enter the convent, and that the porter, in great irritation, darts out with a stick full of knobs, seizes us by the cowl, throws us down in the snow, and beats us till we are quite covered with bruises:—if we bear all this ill-usage with joy, with the thought that we ought to participate in the suffering of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, note this, and note it carefully, that this is for a Friar Minor the subject of a true and perfect joy.”

Behold the doctrine of St. Francis, to show that patience is a virtue essential to Religious.

St. John Climachus relates of one Albecyre, a Religious of the monastery near Alexandria, of whom he speaks in much praise. This Religious had been in this monastery fifteen years when he himself came, and during all that time had met with nothing but humiliations and rough treatment from every one; and to such an extent, that when in the refectory, he was left unnoticed—often having to leave *fasting*. St. John Climachus asked him once, for his own edification, why he was treated so ill? Believe me, Father, replied this humble Religious, that by my brothers acting towards me as they do it is not that they mean me ill in effect, but only that they wish thus to try me, and to assure themselves of my religious vocation; for without *patience*, he signified, no one can be truly Religious.

In Religion, from inevitable necessity, there are many things to cause suffering to nature. Such as

the strict observance of the rules and vows, the spiritual and corporal austerities peculiar to each institute, the want of useful or necessary relief in time of sickness, either from the poverty of the house, or some special design of God. And even when the Superior's watchful charity has provided for the sick, many things are neglected, given out of time, or improperly. It is known what happened to St. Bernard.

Once his illness proved to be of so complicated a kind as to lead all to fear that his end was near. Under these sad circumstances, the Bishop of Chalons, William of Champeaux, who was deeply interested in the preservation of the holy Abbot's life, hastened to Clairvaux. He was persuaded that a less austere diet, together with repose and care, might restore his health; and with this conviction, he on his knees begged the Chapter of Citeaux to give him permission to have the management of Bernard for one year. Accordingly, the holy Abbot was placed in an especial manner under the obedience of the Bishop of Chalons, who in virtue of this right had a separate dwelling prepared for the Saint, without the inclosure of the cloister, and confided the sick man to a physician, whose directions were to be strictly observed. Nevertheless, God permitted that notwithstanding all this care and these precautions, it should be quite to the contrary.

William of St. Thierry has given in his journal account of all that he saw at Clairvaux, in his visits to the Saint during this illness. He says: "Hav-

ing come to see him, with another Abbot, I found him in his cell, which was like to the lodges ordinarily assigned to lepers on the high road. He was there enjoying perfect repose, being released from all care of the house. After he had, on his part, received us with gracious charity, we asked him what he did and how he lived here. He replied, with a gentle smile, which was habitual to him: 'I am happy, perfectly happy here: for before, reasonable men obeyed me; and now by a just judgment of God, I obey a man without reason.' This he said of an arrogant doctor, who had boasted he could cure him, and into whose hands he had been committed by the Bishop and Abbots. We ate with him, and we thought that every kind of care ought to be taken of his health, the re-establishment of which was so necessary. But seeing that, by the order of this quack, they offered him food which a person in good health, and dying of hunger, could scarcely eat, we were indignant, and it was with much difficulty we could preserve the rule of silence, and refrain from treating this ignorant doctor as a sacrilegious homicide. As to the man of God, he was indifferent to these things; his digestion being so greatly injured, that he was no longer able to discern the taste of what he took."

During several days he ate coarse fat, that was given him in mistake for butter; he drank oil for water, and many similar things were of daily occurrence. Thus, much patience was needed, as also requisite, in order to preserve peace, union, and charity.

We have treated and fully shown it to be a virtue which is ever necessary in religious houses, and which is the foundation of all the good that can therein exist ; for peace and concord arise from patience. As humiliations dispose the soul to humility, so patience prepares it for peace, and places it in a condition of possessing so great a treasure. Neither can charity and union subsist without this virtue, owing to the diversity of opinions, judgment, and affections; the variety of things of daily occurrence, in commerce with men : there being much to endure, to yield, to bear in silence, on the part of one and the other ; to speak with sweetness, complaisance, and to suffer patiently on many occasions. Wherefore, St. Paul, exhorting the Ephesians to union, points out to them as a means, patience : “ Supporting and bearing with one another in *patience*.”

When depicting to the Corinthians Charity for the neighbor, and describing its qualities, he places *patience* in the first rank, saying : “ Charity is *patient*.” Hereupon, St. Gregory has left us these remarkable words : He who cannot resolve to be patient, will soon see himself incapable, by his impatience and anger, to live well with others. For by patience only can concord be nourished and spirits united ;—without which there will occur many things to disturb the one, and to disunite the other.

I say, moreover, as the heaviest burden of religious life is that of obedience, owing to the passionate love we have for our liberty, it is not possible

for nature not to suffer by this renunciation of its inclination, all matters, small or great, easy or difficult, foreseen and unforeseen, and in accordance with the will of another. Then, Superiors can possibly sometimes increase the weight of this charge, by being ungracious, impatient, choleric, domineering, or otherwise imperfect; since they are but human. Though God imparts to them His authority, He does not for that reason always give them His patience, sweetness, and wisdom. Therefore, in obedience there is ever much wherein to exercise patience, both on the side of subjection of one's mind, as well as on the part of Superiors.

SECTION I.

The Necessity for Patience in Communities.

One of the principal subjects for patience in communities, is the obligation to live and converse with others for whom you have comparatively little congeniality. You have to live with men, and consequently to suffer; as all mortals are subject to numerous defects, their vitiated nature has for its portion but misery and sin.

To live alone in a desert, one has to suffer only from himself, and you will be to yourself a source of pain; but living with others, you have a double suffering, having to endure them as well as yourself; and the more numerous the community, the more there is to suffer, not being able to dispose of

the will and minds of your companions, as you can with your own.

Religion is, comparatively speaking, like the world, where all men are not equally wise and virtuous; for while a *few* have much wisdom and virtue, many, and the majority, possess but *little* of either, and a *few* have none at all, or very little.

Religion resembles a fruit-tree, loaded in the spring with beautiful blossoms, but all of which do not come to perfection: a portion fall off—others remain and grow into fruit, but quite differently; for while some grow and become matured, having profited by the sun, others are small and worthless: some are ruddy and sound, others withered and worm-eaten. So in religion, the blossoms that fall are the novices who are wanting in perseverance; and among the “chosen ones,” who make their religious profession, all are not actuated by an equal degree of virtue: for while some arrive at the summit of perfection, others go but half way, and still others advance but little. There are in communities the perfect, the imperfect, the good, and sometimes the *bad*, all of whom must endure one another. The bad, it is clear, must necessarily give great exercise for patience, nor do the good permit this virtue to lie dormant; for though *good* for sinful men, they have always many imperfections, the nearest to perfection being those who have the fewest faults. But let each one be ever so good and virtuous, yet this does not prevent him being opposed to your humor and temperament: he may be quiet and melancholic while you are active and

joyous, and so on with each and every disposition, since contrary things cannot agree and assimilate, without doing themselves violence.

Moreover, good or perfect as each one may be, they think and judge of things quite differently from you: for instance, one person speaks so as to draw others to receive his views, and to preserve peace you must silently yield—which is to do considerable violence to self-love, specially if you are quick at repartee. It can again happen, that with great virtue, one may entertain some extravagant opinions—too vivid an imagination, as opposed to seeming good sense; or may have coarse, rude manners in speaking, walking, eating and drinking—things which are displeasing in themselves and most contrary to you and your views. Thus, some persons render themselves generally disagreeable by their natural defects, while they are not really offensive to God; these actions not being sinful, yet for all this they try the patience of those with whom they dwell, and others must resolve to endure and to practice patience.

Though one rose-bush should bloom more freely than another, and embalm the whole surrounding air with its fragrance, it is not, however, *thornless*: in like manner, those who are the most perfect in religion—those who are more adorned with the roses of virtue, and emit the sweetest odor of sanctity—are not, for this reason, faultless—but often speak some word, or have particular ways, that accord not with your ideas nor your taste, and thus hold the place of *thorns* to you—to prick and give you

pain. Great minds—minds of refinement and culture—have naturally much to contend with in Religion, and that for two reasons. The first, in subjecting their judgment, and following that of another: the second, in bearing with the ignorance, the impertinence, and the extravagances of weak minds. But they should exhibit the superiority of their mental capacities by an exemplary submission and forbearance. They should consider that to suffer things contrary to reason, is the effect of a superior reason; for it is an evident sign of a capacious mind and of more liberal views, to know that all men cannot be alike—that there must necessarily be a marvellous difference of perfection in individuals of the same class; and moreover, we should not, in this world, where sin exercises its tyranny, expect anything of man but weakness and imperfection. Thus, they will do what St. Paul says is practiced by the Corinthians: "*For you will gladly suffer the foolish; whereas, yourselves are wise.*" They will show condescension to others—patiently enduring what cannot be amended so as to become useful to the neighbor; for so long as these high-toned minds remain aloof, soaring above the common level, they cannot practice fraternal charity. Therefore they must descend, as the eagle—a bird of lofty flight—that never stoops to earth but when it is to seize its prey. Behold a great eagle falling from the third heavens to earth, for the salvation of his neighbor—St. Paul, who said: "*I was simple with the simple,*" accommodating to their weakness, "*making myself all to all, to save all.*"

Another subject of patience in Religion, even on the part of the good, is that it sometimes happens some one, well-intentioned, commits faults and even failings of moment, which are attended with evil consequences to others who are innocent, yet these cannot avert them, and are thus constrained to suffer, in seeing the faults continued, as also in bearing a part of the penalty ; in the same way that a healthy member of our body suffers from the nearness, or from sympathy to another, that is sick or diseased.

Also, in Religion one should expect to suffer, and this in a spirit of expiation, and you should not place your hopes for peace and repose in the virtue and wisdom of others, since even the good can disturb this repose, but solely and surely in your *own patience and virtue*.

Then if the good, with all their virtue, cause suffering and disturb peace, doubtless the bad will do so much more effectually. In all communities, even the most regular, there are to be found some self-willed, unyielding spirits, some cross-grained dispositions, some unmortified souls. From the commencement of the world, when it was yet in its infancy and its innocence, so to speak ; when there were but four persons (as mentioned in Scripture) who lived together, and composed the family of Adam : of two brothers, one killed the other. In the family of Noah, of three sons, one mocked his father, and thus merited to fall under his malediction. Of Abraham's two sons, one was vicious : Ismael tried to lead astray and corrupt Isaac. In

the family of Isaac, of two brothers, one was good, the other bad, and upon which account, the first was beloved by God and the latter reprobated. Of Jacob's twelve sons, one alone was found innocent, the chaste Joseph, whom the others hated and persecuted, for having accused them of a crime to their father. Of David's two sons, one was guilty of fratricide, and then revolted against his father, whose life he wished to take, as well as his crown. In the Sacred College of Apostles was not there one of the most wicked and abominable of men?

Behold examples of this truth, and which are figuratively represented in the following: The Church, says St. Jerome, was prefigured by the Ark of Noah, wherein were enclosed the wolf and the sheep, the lion and the lamb, the crow and the dove, and every species of animal, clean and unclean.

Religious communities are like the threshing-floor of the Gospel, where the good grain is mingled with the straw; like the net containing fish of divers kinds; like the royal banquet, where among the guests who are well-clad and orderly there appear some unadorned, who have not on the wedding garment; like the ten virgins, a group composed of wise and foolish; like a stately mansion, wherein are not only vases of gold and silver, but also of wood and earthenware; like the field of the father of a family, where the tares are mingled with the good grain. St. Augustine, explaining this latter parable, says: The wicked are mingled with the

good, not only in the world, but also in the Church. You know it, and you have experienced it, an experience which increases in proportion to virtue, for Scripture says that when the wheat had grown tall and headed into ears, meaning when souls have attained eminent virtue, then it is, the cockle appears (a self-evident truth), and that, according to the word of God, they will not be separated till the final day of judgment.

This Saint then adds : So long as the Church militant exists, so long will the good grain suffer and groan amidst the straw, the headed wheat amidst the tares, the vessels of mercy among the vessels of wrath, and the lilies amongst the thorns. We shall never want for adversaries to persecute and to give us occasions for exercising virtue, and for the wicked to war against the good.

But let us now take a closer view of our subject and consider this truth as being evident in the best regulated and holiest communities : and see that from their very commencement, and during the lifetime even of their founders, there have been disorderly and perverse Religious, who have occasioned much trouble to others. In the East, St. Pachomius was the first who assembled together many Religious to live in community under one rule,—a rule that was brought by an angel from heaven. Among these first good, simple, and obedient Religious, there were some who were cunning, malicious, and intriguing. It is related in this Saint's life, that some of his Religious, living according to nature, and not thinking to strip themselves of the old man,

caused much sorrow to the Saint, who often exhorted them to return to their duty, and prayed fervently for them to obtain such a grace; but, not becoming better, nor even desirous to become so,—even ignoring the presence of their holy Founder,—many of them returned to the world.

Some Religious chose St. Benedict for their Superior, and set out to live under his government, but not being able, or rather, not wishing to endure his sanctity, nor the warnings he gave them, they resolved to rid themselves of him: and for this end, they mingled poison with the wine they intended he should drink; but the Saint having received knowledge of it, by divine revelation, made the sign of the cross, as was his custom, over the glass, and it immediately broke: thus did he escape the death threatened him.

St. Robert, reformer of the Order of St. Benedict, and Founder of that of Citeaux, suffered many contradictions in a monastery where the Religious had besought him to direct them, and to replace them on the right road: soon after his arrival, they conspired against him,—specially one of their number, who, being envious of the Saint's virtue and renown, believed he was thereby deprived of as much praise and honor as was lavished on the Saint. Subsequently, being elected Abbot of Molesme, some of this community—true children of the demon—says his historian, rose up against him, causing him, by their wickedness and their irregular lives, great grief and a thousand humiliations. Then he adds: Do not be astonished,

you who read this, to see how iniquity found place in a company of sanctity ; for Scripture teaches us, in the Book of Job, that the children of God, the tutelary angels of the province, and the children of this holy man, assisting before God, Satan came likewise and mingled among them. Thus, there has never been wanting in the Church, from its very birth, just souls for its profit, nor wicked ones to exercise it.

St. Bernard, delivering a sermon on the Feast of Easter, to the Abbots of his Order, testified that, in their own time, which was still the infancy of this Order, there were many relaxed and tepid Religious in their monasteries: Religious who allowed themselves many liberties contrary to their rule and observances, and therefore walked with but one foot in virtue. Besides, he complained of several old Religious of his house, who were vexatious and troublesome, who caused much suffering to himself and others. But that which is decidedly the most remarkable, is that his secretary, Nicholas, who was a bad Religious,—a hypocrite and a traitor,—deceived the Saint, under an appearance of piety; forged his seal,—writing to many in the Saint's name—imitating the style of his letters, for special designs and interests; and which St. Bernard was constrained to divulge to Pope Eugenius, that he might not be surprised by the treachery. His letter to this Pope was as follows: “We have run great risks by our false brothers; they having written in our name several letters, under a forged seal; and that which I most fear is, that your Holiness has been

made a recipient of the fruits of this deception and falsehood." Later on, this wretched man having apostatized and left Religion, St. Bernard wrote again to the same Pope as follows: This Nicholas has left us; and well he did, for he was not of us. But in departing, he did not carry away with him all villanous traits of himself. I knew him for a long time, but awaited for God either to convert him, or make him known himself, as being another "Judas,"—which has happened. If he goes to Rome,—for he boastingly believes he has friends at court—I assure your Holiness, that no one is more deserving than he of imprisonment for life, and that he merits most justly to be condemned to perpetual silence.

At the commencement of the Order of Carthusians, some disobedient and rebellious Religious, having been driven out (or expelled) by their general, St. Anselm, afterwards Bishop of Beauvais, went to Rome to make complaints to the same Pope Eugenius; which they did so effectually, that they obtained a brief, *surreptitiously*, by which power was given them to enter the Great Carthusians, without making any satisfaction. St. Anselm had recourse to St. Bernard, to engage his influence with the Pope, in order to disabuse him and to maintain justice. Thereupon, St. Bernard wrote him, among other things, the following: The demons who tempt us rest and sleep not; they have raised a new tempest on the mountains, and spread their nets in the desert. The Carthusians have been so agitated and disturbed by the storm

that they seem to be at their wits' end, not knowing longer where they are. Learn, most holy Father, that this disorder has come from the enemy that is still in existence; he sent there some rebels and prevaricators of their profession, and thus lighting up a domestic war, has attacked through them those he could not conquer by himself. Their pride is ever increasing. They rejoice at the evil they have caused, and insult those who suffer. As they have borne off the victory, they make of it a triumph; the Prior is no longer Prior, and whilst the proud are exalted, the humble groan.

St. Severinas, Apostle of Ravière, had in his monastery some most vicious Religious, three of whom, in particular, he judged it necessary, in punishment for their pride and insolence, to deliver for some time to the power of Satan, by permitting him to enter their bodies.

St. Severinus, first Abbot of Fulda, was maliciously accused by three of his monks—jealous of his reputation and glory—before Pepin, father of Charlemagne, who sent him into exile.

St. Romuald, Founder of the Order of Camaldolese, was greatly harassed, persecuted, and outraged by some of his Religious, one of whom, provoked that the Saint had been more liberal towards one of the monasteries than towards others in the distribution of alms, entered his cell by force, bitterly reproached him, beat him, and then drove him from the house. Another one, a young man addicted to great vices, by a suggestion truly diabolical, accused the Saint (who

was then more than a hundred years old) of having been guilty of a sin against purity. Others again, of the monastery he first entered on leaving the world, conspired his death, because the sanctity of his life was a tacit reproach to them ; and they would have executed their design, if God had not withdrawn him from their hands, by inspiring one of their accomplices to divulge to the Saint the danger with which his life was threatened.

Nor are such grievous faults confined to male Religious *exclusively*. Thus, in the monastery of St. Fare, among a great number of most virtuous and wise Religieuses, there were some who were very relaxed and disedifying, and who by their scandalous disorders and bad example caused much sorrow to the Saint.

Therefore, we should not be surprised on meeting sometimes in Religion, troublesome and vexations spirits—for as we have seen, the wicked can therein be mingled with the good—and false Religious, who cause the good to suffer from their contempt, suspicions, aversions, envy, murmurs, calumnies, as also by their resistance and opposition to virtue, their officiousness, deceptions, affronts, and by their bad example generally. Behold the perils and detriment resulting from false Religious! But you will ask why God permits this mingling of the wicked with the good? This will be made evident in the following section.

SECTION II.

Why God Permits the Mingling of the Wicked with the Good.

Let us now suppose an undoubted truth, which is that God, being infinite goodness, wisdom, and power, could readily prevent evil if He absolutely willed it: nor would He ever permit it if in the evil He did not foresee good results, and if from the source of malice there could not flow salutary waters for various purposes. God, says St. Augustine, has judged it to be better to draw good from evil than to prevent absolutely all evil; because God, infinitely good, would never suffer that there should be evil of any kind in His works and among His creatures, if he possessed not power equal to His goodness, and so to turn all to advantage, to cause good to result from evil, as the sun from shadows and the rose from a stem hedged by thorns. In this He is quite different from men, who by their wickedness draw evil from things in their nature good, as spiders their venom from the sweetest substances; whereas, God by his goodness extracts good from evil, like the bee its honey from the bitterest flowers.

Doubtlessly, God hates sin infinitely, but he has a sovereign remedy for destroying it, and it is easy to judge that he would destroy it efficaciously, would close the door to it forever, if He did not know that by permitting sin to enter, He thereby

procured for us a greater good than the evil of which it is the cause. The property of His infinite wisdom is besides to leave His creatures to act according to their inclinations: necessary things necessarily, free men freely; otherwise it would have been in vain to have provided creatures with all requisite faculties, and He would condemn Himself for inconsiderateness, of being wanting in judgment. Thus men, using and *abusing* their liberty, do evil, and voluntarily commit sin; whereas, the property of God's infinite sanctity is to correct and purify evil after a certain manner, by converting it into good; and the work of His infinite goodness to produce ever a greater good, by making it succeed to something more beneficial. In this manner has He made use of the sin of Adam, that He permitted (not willing to prevent it) to operate for His greater glory, and for the salvation of all the human race, by the mystery of the incarnation of His Son: of the sin of the Jews in putting to death our Lord and Saviour in order to ransom souls, and to render them blessed: the cruelty of emperors, judges, and executioners has been conducive to establishing the true Religion, of bringing to light the virtues of its servants, the invincible strength of its martyrs, the admirable sanctity of its confessors, and the angelic purity of its virgins.

In pursuance of this process, never would a wise legislator permit any evil in his republic, if he did not foresee that, by permitting it, he would effect a greater good than in destroying it.

All the above supposed, let us now see what good

God expects to draw, and does effectually draw, from the mingling of the wicked with the good, and of the result of their mutual intercourse.

St. Augustine points out two good effects, when he says: Do not think it is without reason that the wicked are left in the world, and that God does nothing good with them, and through their agency. It is not so:—God permitting all wicked men to live, either that they may become corrected, or that good men may be exercised in virtue by them, and by such means become better still. Just as serpents and other venomous animals,—or such as are fierce and cruel, like the lion and tiger,—though they are in some ways hurtful, they possess at the same time that which is useful;—whether it be in the cure of some malady, or for other purposes, if only to represent some of the divine perfections, and to add a fresh lustre to the beauty of the universe.

Behold here the double benefit proposed by God in the conservation of the wicked among the good! The first regards the wicked, and it is to correct them by the leisure he grants them for reflection on their wicked life, to think of the great danger they are exposed for condemnation, and of the fearful punishments prepared for them in eternity, if they do not amend. Again, it is to draw them to virtue by the good examples, the virtuous actions, the instructions and prayers of the just. The second, which bears upon our subject, regards the good. It is to exercise them, and thus to afford them the means of acquiring perfection and vast treasures of merit. The wicked are useful to the good, again

says St. Augustine, as fire serves silver to purify it; or as the wife of Job served this holy man to sanctify him. St. Paul writes to the Christians of Corinth, and in their persons to all the just: “*All things* are yours, whether it be Paul, who has planted, Apollo who has watered, or Peter, as chief or head of the church, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come; for all are yours;” and there is nothing that does not belong to you, and is not for your use, as explained by St. Thomas, who understands by the world, first exterior and corporal things: the sky, the elements, what composes them, and even the wicked and reprobate, of whom he says: The reprobate seem to be called by God for the good of the elect, to which good all things concur, and to which they must contribute; so that, for example, in a town, if there be but one person predestined, all that is in this town is but for the good and the salvation of this predestined; as all that is in a house, the servants, the furniture, and the riches, everything included, are but for the heir of the household.

St. Augustine, explaining these words of David, speaking of the sinner; “*Thou wilt seek his place,*” says: What is the meaning of his place? It is to say, *his use*. Then, is the sinner good for anything, and can he serve some purpose? Yes; for God makes use of him in this life to try and exercise the just, as He made use of the devil to afflict Job; and of Judas to betray Jesus Christ, and thereby to save the human race. There is then in this life, means for employing the sinner use-

fully, and this is the signification of "*his place*:" as the straw has its place in the furnace of the goldsmith, where it burns to cleanse the gold: in like manner, the wicked, who persecutes the just, is useful to purify him. God, continues this holy doctor, has made a scourge of the wicked, and has given him honor and authority, which he abuses so as to fill provinces, towns, and families, with poverty and misery, which afford occasions to just men to amend; but in return, God deals to this impious one what he has merited by his unjust vexations, wherein the just has found salvation, and the wicked ruin.

St. Gregory the Great, treating this same subject, says: God, who is all powerful, permits that the adversaries of His elect should increase in wealth, honor, and temporal power, so as to purify the life of these chosen ones by the evils done them. Otherwise, He would never allow the wicked to exert violence towards the good, if He did not perceive how advantageous they were to the latter.

Finally, the wicked purify the just by the afflictions they cause them to suffer, as the life of sinners serve for the profit of the innocent, according to these words of Solomon, "*Fools are useful to the wise.*" And whenever, continues this holy father, we see to the contrary, that the wise obey, and fools command: that the just are the servants, and sinners the masters: how then is it true that the foolish are useful to the wise? It is, however, true, because the fool, elevated to the dignity of office, abuses his power against the life of the wise man, whom he torments, afflicts, calumniates, and after

this manner *serves* him, because by these persecutions the rust of his sins is consumed, and he is made to advance the affair of his salvation. Then this Saint continues by a beautiful comparison, saying : We see sometimes in grand houses that servants govern the youth of their little masters, whose father has given power to these servants, so that they reprove, menace, chastise them, when necessary, without, however, losing the quality or condition of domestics towards these children ; but simply execute the authority and duty incumbent on them, and by these salutary corrections they serve to fashion and subdue them, and so render them wise.

It is mentioned in Genesis of Esau and Jacob : “The greater served the lesser, and the elder the younger.” These two brothers, though of the same age and parentage, were, however, quite different in disposition and manner : consequently Esau was reprobated by God, and Jacob elected. St. Augustine explains and adapts this to Christians, who having but one Father, God and our Lord, and one mother, the Church, live nevertheless quite differently ; for while some are virtuous and peaceable, others are vicious and troublesome, ever at variance with the good. For my part, I deem it still more applicable to Religious, who dwelling in the same house, having the same Founder and Father, the same religion as mother, but who, notwithstanding, lead lives very dissimilar, in regard to the care of their perfection ; and that the tepid and irregular ever cause suffering to those who are well disciplined.

But how do the bad Religious serve the good? I reply, in the same way that it is said the hammer serves the gold to polish and shape it; that the mill-stone serves the wheat to grind and convert it into flour: or as the oven for baking bread. But let us consider this reason yet more attentively.

The wicked serve the good,—first, to try them, and to show whether they are *truly* good. I do not wish, says God, to exterminate the nations that Josue left, but to draw, by means of them, proofs of the fidelity of the people of Israel,—to see if they observed the commands of God. Thus, God destroys not the wicked, in order to prove the fidelity of the good, who live among them: if they will persevere, in spite of all contradictions, and if, by the continual intercourse with the wicked, they do not participate in their malice, any more than the rays of the sun partake of the mire upon which they fall: than Job did when amidst idolaters; than the wheat mingled with the straw; the good grain amidst the tares; and the lily among the thorns. Thereupon, St. Bernard cries out: O wheat amidst the tares! O good grain in the midst of straw! O lily surrounded by thorns! Then, as the wheat is not converted into tares because among them, nor the good grain into straw because mingled with it, nor the lily into thorns, though so surrounded by them; neither should a good man, when obliged by his condition to live and converse with the wicked, partake of the qualities of the sinner.

Secondly, the wicked are useful to the good, by causing them to exercise the various virtues.—such

as charity, mercy, compassion, zeal for their brother's salvation; practicing towards them acts of kindness,—returning good for evil,—excusing, helping, loving them, though these, in compensation, do but persecute and afflict the good:—such being the most exalted degree of charity.

Again, the wicked are useful to the good, by making them practice humility. 1. By considering their nature, so vitiated, and knowing they have a like inclination to evil, and that, without a special grace, they too would fall, and possibly into much greater sins; that, therefore, they must attribute to God, the little good they possess, and nothing to themselves. 2. When blamed by the wicked, they enter within themselves to consider and study their actions, their words, and their whole deportment, and thereby beholding the defects for which they are accused, they humble themselves interiorly, finding it but reasonable that they meet with the treatment they merit. 3. In regard to works they undertake for the service of God and the salvation of souls, and seeing themselves therein contradicted by the wicked,—thwarted in the midst of their actions,—or beholding themselves disapproved of, condemned as useless;—they are thus made to know and experience their own weakness and impotency for such good works, and the need they have of God's assistance, to meet with success; therefore, they petition humbly for His aid, and place all their hopes in Him alone,—desirous to conform to His holy will in all events. Thus, the results are much more beneficial than if the works undertaken

had met with no obstacle,—no resistance offered to their happy issue. An angel of Satan was necessary to St. Paul, to preserve his humility in the midst of his great and glorious achievements, and also to render them more illustrious.

Finally, it is an exceeding great humiliation for the good to be so thwarted and kept under by the wicked, for lords to be placed beneath villagers and porters to be exalted over princes, that the children of the house should submit to rebellious slaves, that the just, the best of whom is more excellent and of greater consideration than all sinners united, should be engulfed (or confounded) by sinners, that the children of light should be contemned by the children of darkness. Behold how humility is acquired.

John Mosc mentions a remarkable example of this in his “Spiritual Meadow.” One of the Fathers of the Desert, he says, related to us that a lady of high birth, coming to Palestine to venerate the holy places, resolved to stop at Cæsarea, to beg the Bishop to give her some virgin to instruct her in piety. The Bishop accordingly appointed her one who was profoundly humble and of a very sweet disposition. Some time afterward he asked this lady if the virgin suited her purposes, to which she replied, that the girl in question was most excellent, but was of no advantage to her, as her humility rendered her timid and silent, not presuming to contradict her in anything. The Bishop on learning this gave her another maid of quite an opposite disposition—blunt and vexatious,

who quarrelled and bickered incessantly, offering many impertinent reproaches to this lady. In the course of time the Bishop again inquired of this lady how she progressed with the *second person* he had sent her. The lady replied that she found her very good and all that she desired, for nothing more was needed to constrain her to acquire humility. Therefore, it is serviceable to endure the contradictions and persecutions of wicked spirits to obtain humility, to practice patience, and to acquire vast treasures of merit.

In truth, says St. James, "*patience hath a perfect work,*" by acquiring for those who practice this virtue immense treasures and crowns of brilliant glory. What would Job have been without temptations, and all the afflictions he suffered? It is evident that the assaults and combats of the demon contributed marvellously to his glory, and to that great esteem he acquired before God and man. The evils that Satan caused him redounded in reality to his profit, for his losses enriched him, while his grievances filled him with joy. Thus it is that the wicked are serviceable to the good, and useful to their salvation and perfection.

It should then be concluded that the wicked, being employed by God for this work, and the good persevering in patience to this end, when the number of the good will be completed, there will be found no more wicked, and that all wickedness shall be exterminated at the close of the world; until then, the just must be patient.

What is God's reply, in the Apocalypse, to the

request of the blessed souls of the holy martyrs, when they asked to be revenged upon those who put them to death? as also, when they requested the resurrection of their bodies? God answered: "Wait still awhile longer, till the number of their fellow-laborers and brothers, who would receive from sinners the like treatment, be also completed." St. Augustine remarks that this is like the reply of the father of a family of several sons: these sons returning from the field one after the other, he says to the first one who asks for his dinner, "Your dinner is ready, but have a little patience till your brothers shall have returned, in order that together you eat with joy, and that this rejoicing, being common, will render the joy of each all the greater and sweeter." It is again like the reply made to the servants in the Gospel, who, seeing the tares among the wheat, asked if they should go and gather it up. And he said, "*No; lest, perhaps, gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and then I will say to the reapers, gather up first the cockle and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barns.*"

SECTION III.

The Use the Good Should make of the Wicked.

Since God uses the wicked, as we have said, for so noble and important an employment—viz.: the salvation and perfection of the good—these should

doubtless enter into the designs of God, and turn to their own advantage the machinations of the wicked. For this purpose, it is necessary to persuade one's self efficaciously that He employs the vicious for His ends—that they but serve Him as instruments for detaching the good from themselves and from all terrestrial things; to exercise, to fashion, and to polish them: to prevent them from relaxing—to make them practice virtue, and to acquire the perfection to which they are called. Wherefore, they should, with these views, and for these reasons, endure the proceedings of the wicked with respect, patience, courage, humility, submission, as also with gratitude towards God, and love towards those who thus try them.

It is commanded, says St. Augustine, for servants to be submissive to their masters—Christians to infidels, and for the just to keep faith with sinners. Wherefore, the good should not be afflicted, as they shall serve but a time, to reign eternally hereafter. Servants are obliged to endure harsh and perverse masters. The citizens of Jerusalem had to bear with the inhabitants of Babylon, and even with greater patience than if they had been their fellow-citizens. Thus a wise father commands his son, whom he loves truly, to obey his servant: he has given him for his tutor, one from whom he not alone receives instruction, but also the punishments he should inflict, and he must obey him implicitly.

The distinguished William of Paris says, after St. Augustine: What cause for glory has the

sinner, since my Father makes of him a scourge to correct me? For as we have said, God, in quality of universal cause, uses the wicked as His instruments to perfect the good, who constitute His noblest works, and that they may receive all the requisite beauty becoming his master-pieces. As the metal and the stone do not fear the hammer nor the other implements, so likewise a good man should not dread or shun the wicked. The child has no shrinking from the sight merely of the rod or ferule, knowing they can do no harm of themselves, but he fears the master who can employ these to strike him.

The above pious and wise doctor gives occasion here for using the comparison of the marble, of which I remark first, that the hammer, chisel, polisher, and other tools are absolutely necessary to work, cut, scrape, polish, and shape it; that without them it would ever remain rough, coarse, unshapely, dull, and imperfect. Second, by the aid of these tools, the marble becomes beautifully polished and bright, from it are produced excellent designs, *chef-d'œuvres* beyond price, that the beholder esteems and admires, as in keeping with the talent and science of the "master-mind" who conceived them and gave them the requisite strokes for perfecting their beauty. Wherefore the marble does not fear nor fly these tools nor their application; but on the contrary, seeks after and loves them; it should not be displeased when receiving the blows, but rather content and thankful, ready to express gratitude to the workmen, if such were

possible, knowing that its beauty and perfection are due to them.

Behold the necessity and utility of contradictions, the persecutions and the war that the wicked declare against the good, to cultivate and polish them, and to render them beautiful and excellent images of God and of our Lord, who was humble, patient, meek, poor, obedient, and *altogether perfect*.

Three young men, having in the city of Babylon refused to pay divine worship to an idol, were, by the orders of King Nabuchodonosor, cast into a fiery furnace, where, in place of being burned, they were not even so much as touched by the fire; for, says Holy Scripture: "*The angel of the Lord went down into the furnace, and he drove the flames of the fire out of the furnace, and made the midst of the furnace like the blowing of a gentle wind, bringing dew; and the fire touched them not, nor did them any harm. Then these three, as with one mouth, praised, glorified, and blessed God in the furnace.*" The idolaters who had cast these young men into the furnace, and whom passion and envy had excited to increase the fire in order to burn their victims the sooner, were themselves consumed on coming near the furnace: thus the *straw* was burned, whilst the *gold* was being refined. Then King Nabuchodonosor, surprised and confounded by so wonderful an occurrence, opened his heart and his mouth to the praises of God, who had wrought so glorious a miracle, also passed an edict, that thereafter no

one should, under pain of death, dare to speak evilly of the God of the Christians, as He alone was the true God, whom they should recognize and adore.

Here follows an example, as given by Palladius : Eulogious, who had successfully studied and practiced the profession of law, was touched with the love of God, and a desire for things eternal; consequently, he renounced the world, distributed the greater part of his wealth to the poor, reserving but a meagre portion, as he was unable to work for his livelihood. However, he was not content; for while, on the one hand, he wished to have no intercourse with the world, on the other he did not feel he had sufficient courage to lead the life of a *recluse*. But here divine Providence came to his aid, by giving at once a solution to his difficulty and the means of effecting his laudable desire. Incidentally he met one day in the public square a poor helpless cripple, asking alms of the passers-by. Eulogious stopped, looked steadily at this forlorn creature, whilst he communed with God in his heart, making Him this promise: Lord, I desire, for the love of Thee, to take this cripple to my home, and I promise Thee to assist and support him till death, so that I may by this means sanctify myself. Then grant me, O Lord Jesus, the requisite patience to serve Thee faithfully in this poor man! He then said to the beggar: Do you wish, my friend, that I take you with me, to provide for and assist you in all your wants? The man replied, God be pleased that you deign to do me this charity! but I am unworthy of

it. I will now go to get a donkey, said Eulogious, the better to convey you. On his return he placed the cripple upon the beast, conducted him to his house, where he cared for him with as much affection and tenderness as he would have bestowed upon his own father. In fact, treated him much better than his condition deserved, and as much so as his infirmities demanded. Thus, after fifteen years of charity, and of services equally well rendered and received, the demon insinuated himself into the mind of this man, took such possession of his heart, that he was made to murmur against Eulogious and to heap abusive and infamous language upon him. And the more Eulogious tried to soothe him, the more irritated this wretched being became. Finally, seeing that nothing he could do or say had any power over him, and that he insisted on being taken back from whence he had been brought, the patient Eulogious concluded to consult the nearest Religious as to the course he should pursue, and how best to appease this infuriated man, whom he did not wish to abandon after the promise he had made to God. He was counselled to take this poor man to see St. Anthony, which he succeeded in doing after much trouble and patience. On arriving at the monastery, St. Anthony commanded Eulogious to give a statement of facts before the assembled Religious, which he did accordingly, as follows: I found this poor man in the market-place of Alexandria, lying on the pavement, and abandoned by every one. Touched with compassion for his misery, I thought to take him and

to care for him; so I prayed God for patience to bear with his imperfections, promising to supply all his wants, so that we would be thus of mutual assistance to one another. We have now dwelt together for fifteen years in peace; but behold, at the end of this time, and a few weeks since, he commenced to torment me in a most extraordinary manner, without my knowing what ill I could have done him; and not being able to apply a remedy, and not wishing to abandon him, as he so often entreats me and as he almost forces me to, by the advice of friends whom I sought in my dilemma, I came to implore your counsel and assistance. I earnestly ask your prayers, for this man causes me great trouble. Whereupon St. Anthony replied that he should not leave this cripple, as it was most advantageous to him thus to have his patience exercised. Then, having severely reprov'd the cripple, the Saint bade them both depart, saying: "Go in peace, and be mindful not to separate from each other." Thus it is that the wicked help the good, and of whom the good should make use for their special profit.

SECTION IV.

Conclusion of the Good Use that Religious Should Make of the Occasions of Patience Furnished them by Others.

Let us conclude this subject, and say that since, by a secret conduct of God, there are found fre-

quently in the holiest communities some crabbed, harsh, ill-disposed spirits, who give trouble to others, Religious should determine to live well with them, and to possess their souls in patience. If in the best, the holiest, and most perfect community that ever was, that of the Apostles, governed by our Lord himself, there was found that most atrocious of wicked men, Judas, and that the two sons of Zebedee, by their ambition and desire for pre-eminence, offended the other Apostles, should we expect that there should be anywhere, or at least sometimes, persons who are not vexatious, disorderly, and vicious ?

Judas was elected, says St. Augustine, to teach us that if so small a number as twelve could not be without an evil and a wicked spirit, we who are obliged to dwell among sinners should have patience. And St. Ambrose adds: Judas was chosen, not by chance, but by counsel, our Lord wishing to suffer abandonment, to be betrayed and delivered up by one of his own Apostles, so that if it should happen your companion, and the one with whom you live should abandon and betray you, or prove in any way unfaithful and perfidious, you should bear with him on this model, in all moderation and patience.

Job said of himself: "*I was the brother of dragons, and companion of ostriches,*" animals that are by nature so devoid of kindly feeling or affection, as not even to care for their young. It is as if he said: I have lived well with the wicked and ill-directed spirits. And wherefore Sacred Scripture

remarks that Job lived in the country of Hus, in the midst of infidels, St. Chrysostom likens him to a dove surrounded by hawks, to a lamb among wolves, to a star in the obscurity of night, and to an off-shoot of sanctity in a country of iniquity. It was, says St. Gregory, by way of enhancing the brilliancy of his glory, to remain good among the wicked, for it is no great merit to be good when with the virtuous, but it is deserving praise to be virtuous in the midst of sinners. As it is a more grievous crime and more blameworthy to be wicked among the good, also it is something deserving very high esteem to be good among the vicious.

St. Bernard, explaining these words of the spouse in the Canticles, "*As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters,*" says: It is the mark of no ordinary virtue to live well among the vicious, and in regularity with the disorderly, to preserve one's innocence and sweetness in the midst of self-willed, perverse spirits, as also, and still more, to be peaceable among the turbulent and officious, to bear love towards those who dislike you.

O lily, admirable for thy whiteness! O flower, tender and delicate, mind thyself amidst the thorns! Certainly, patience is absolutely necessary, and without it you will ever be disquieted and annoyed, as persons are never wanting to give cause for trouble.

Then, for the better and more speedy accomplishment of your duty, to enable you to act wisely, to work out your salvation securely, and to attain perfection promptly, be resolved once for all to

practice patience, supporting in peace and tranquillity the varied occurrences and uncongenial spirits met with in our daily intercourse, the harassing difficulties to be encountered in divers manners in social life. Apropos to this, what follows was said by an ancient Father to a man whom he saw carrying a corpse: "My brother, you do well to carry the dead, but you would act still better to support the living."

One thing worthy of consideration is that nothing in this life is perfect, and that in all ages, there have never been but two persons who were perfect: our Lord by His nature, and our Blessed Lady by grace; all other beings have had and will have their defects and imperfections. It is only in heaven that perfection is found. Thence it follows, that there is no one in whom there is not something contradictory, and there is nothing said or done by yourself or others that is without imperfection; thus, it is a good and prudent counsel to tolerate unnoticed what cannot be amended, and to be readily contented, since the very reprehensions that you give to others cannot be made without some defect.

Moreover, one should suffer in patience the trifling displeasures, abuses, and wrongs offered him in the house where he dwells, using towards them a wise and Christian dissimulation, and so let them pass.

To return evil for evil, says St. Paul, is to revenge one's self like a man; but to love our enemies, is the revenge of saints and of the blessed.

I wish to relate here a remarkable incident of a Turkish prince, to teach Religious to endure with patience and charity the injuries that sometimes they may receive from one another. Curopolate recounts that Diogenes Romanus, Emperor of Constantinople, having been taken in battle by the Turks, after most arrogantly refusing peace, as offered by Asam, their Sultan, was treated most humanely by the Sultan, who even admitted him to his own table. The Sultan once asked him: Had you taken me prisoner, and I had fallen into your hands as you see yourself in mine, what would you have done with me? Diogenes replied frankly, but with arrogance and indiscretion: I would have had you beaten to death. Alas! I will not imitate your cruelty, said the Sultan; for I learn that your Messiah commands you to live in peace, to forgive injuries, and that while He resists the proud, He communicates his favors to the humble. The Sultan then made peace with Diogenes, and promised that never during his lifetime should the Turks molest his empire, and that he was now restored to his liberty, together with all the other prisoners of war. Since an infidel could renounce his rights with such generosity, and conciliated himself with an enemy against whom he was justly irritated, with how much greater reason are not Religious obliged to renounce themselves, show forbearance, patience, and forgiveness in all their little misunderstandings one with the other.

By such means, we evince both humility and strength. Doubtless we should be strong to sup-

port sweetly the imperfections of others,—to accommodate ourselves to their humor, and to condescend to their will in the varied things that are of daily and hourly occurrence in a community. He who submits his will to that of his brother, says Cassian, and who knows how to yield to occasions, evinces more strength than the one who warmly defends his sentiments, so as to gain the ascendancy. For he who bears with his neighbor performs the action of a healthy and vigorous soul, whereas he who is to be borne with, is evidently one who is feeble and sick. Also, the Apostle says: “*You who are stronger, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please yourselves.*” Finally, it is not the duty of the infirm to carry the infirm, nor of a sick person to bear upon his shoulders another as feeble as himself; but that is expected of the man who has health and strength. Thereby, the Religious exercises charity, and arrives at perfection. For, as St. Gregory remarks: We endure our neighbor in proportion to the love we bear him: if you love him, you endure him without pain, and if you have no love for him, you have no patience with him; for the less love we bear a person, the greater the difficulty to endure him, as his actions generally very soon become *insupportable* to us, when the wings of charity are wanting, to render them light. This truth appears most evident in the love we entertain for ourselves, causing us to suffer all things from self, with an unvarying sweetness, and without murmur; also, in that which mothers have for their offspring, from whom they endure, in con-

sequence, thousands of ills and sufferings, not only without grief, but even with joy.

It is a precious secret in religion, and a signally wise counsel, to love those with whom we live, and to feel aversion to no one; it being no slight pain nor light torment to be constrained to see daily a person for whom we have dislike, and to have constant intercourse with her, meeting her at every step, sometimes in the choir, in the refectory, or again, at recreation: whereas, it is ever great pleasure to live and converse with those we love.

As according to St. James, "*Patience hath a perfect work,*" so also Eliphaz, speaking of the virtues of holy Job, unites patience with perfection: "Where is thy patience," he says, "and the perfection of thy works?" *Perfection*, says St. Gregory, *takes its origin in patience, or causes this virtue to follow immediately.*

For verily is that one *truly perfect*, who evinces no impatience on beholding the imperfections of the neighbor: from whence arise these words of our Lord: "*In your patience you shall possess your souls,*" you shall be masters of their movements. St. Thomas, explaining the above quotation, says: "Possession brings a peaceable domain," and wherefore it is said that man by patience possesses his soul, because this virtue extirpates from the soul all passions that disquiet and trouble it: such as impatience, wrath, sadness, spite, murmurs, and all others that adversity ordinarily produces.

Let us now see this patience exercised. Ruffinus relates that two brothers, having become Religious,

and dwelling together in the same hermitage, a Father of the Desert came to visit them. They received him with great joy and with all possible charity. The ordinary prayer and psalmody being finished, this Father entered alone their little garden, and seeing it well planted with vegetables, which composed their principal provisions, he had an inspiration to test the virtue of those two holy brothers. Wherefore, he took a stick and beat down and ruined all indiscriminately. The brothers, a short time afterwards, walking through their garden, and beholding this destruction, made no remark thereon to this Father, nor showed him the least vexation or emotion, but returning with him to their cell, they commenced forthwith to recite their evening hours; after which, with a profound reverence, one of them said to him: Father, there still remains in the garden a cabbage: would it please you to have us pluck it to cook, for it will soon be time for our usual repast. Behold the effects of patience!

The same Ruffinus also relates that a Religious named Eulalius, being in a monastery where there were certain undisciplined, tepid Religious, who attributed all their faults to him, charging him with all their misdeeds, for which he was obliged to submit to the reprehensions of the Superiors, as also of the senior Religious, but without ever excusing himself. On the contrary, he knelt before his accusers with all humility, avowing that he was in fault and a great sinner. However, as these accusations were of daily occurrence, without proofs

of amendment (for could he avoid faults of which he was not really guilty?) they imposed on him in penance fasts of two or three days successively, to which he subjected himself with an admirable submission, and accomplished most faithfully. Thus things went from bad to worse, till this good brother was so decried in the house by the artifice of these malicious ones that the senior Religious in a body went to make reports to the chief Superior, and to obtain advice as to the course to be pursued with Eulalius, whom they represented as being most troublesome, whose presence it was no longer possible for them to endure. Moreover, that through his fault and awkwardness all the furniture and utensils of the house were either broken or so injured as not to be fit for use, and if he was allowed to continue his wickedness the house would soon be ruined. The Superior, a prudent and considerate man, after hearing these complaints, replied that in a few days he would remedy the matter; and having recourse to prayer to ask for light, God revealed to him the innocence of Eulalius and the malice of the others. But nevertheless, Eulalius had to bear the persecutions of these wicked spirits, who gave him no rest, though his patience never flagged, being equal at all times to the assaults of these *evil doers*.

These occasions are extraordinary as rare in well-regulated communities, but such illustrious examples of patience should readily confound the Religious who are sometimes so wanting in forbearance in ordinary circumstances for which they

should always be prepared, since they have pledged themselves to live in company with others, where trials are inevitable.

SECTION V.

The Limits of Patience—When Converted to Zeal and Justice.

Before concluding this chapter, we shall advance one very important remark, which is that though we should suffer patiently the trying, unmortified spirits that are to be met with in Religion, however, patience should have its limits, and give place sometimes to zeal and justice.

We say then, in the first place, that one should not be astonished when, in Religion, there are defects, vices, and sins; and if sometimes certain Religious are guilty of scandals not to be silently tolerated. Vitiated nature is everywhere and at all times a *bad* nature, and if Religion divests a man of his secular garb it does not strip him of this inclination to evil; it merely aids him, by more powerful means, not to fall, while the tendency ever remains. Seculars take scandal all too readily, when they see failings of any kind in a Religious, whom they would have to be *impeccable*, or *all spiritual*, so as not even to have occasion to eat, drink, or sleep; and they show themselves quite ignorant of human nature and faintly understand these words of the Apostle: “*We all are sinners, and we fall frequently.*”

It is related that some of St. Augustine's servants acted with insolence, and committed some grievous faults, whereby the good citizens of Hippo were scandalized and the populace excited to indignation. Thereupon, St. Augustine wrote and published a letter; and among other things he remarked: However solicitous I may be for the good government of my household and the discipline of my domestics, I am still a mortal and dwell among men: I am neither so arrogant nor so vain as to believe or to say that my family is better or more virtuous than that of Noah, and out of eight persons one was reprobated; or better than that of Abraham, to whom, however, it was said: "Drive out of thy house the bondwoman and her son;" nor of that of Isaac, whose twin sons were so unlike in virtue that Jacob was the object of God's love, and Esau of His hatred; nor better than those with whom St. Paul conversed, for had they been all good and perfect, he would not have had occasion to say: "We suffer all tribulation, combats without, fears within;" and speaking of the virtue and sanctity of his disciple Timothy, he says: "I have no man so of the same mind, who with sincere affection is solicitous for you as Timothy, for all seek the things that are their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's;" nor again, better than our Lord's own family, wherein the eleven were constrained to suffer among them a traitor, a rebel, a thief. Finally, my family is not better nor holier than heaven, where the angels became transgressors, and from whence they fell. This representation

St. Augustine made to his people, so that they should not be surprised on seeing those of his household offending, and committing sin like other men.

Secondly, we say that conformably to the divine motives, in permitting that there should be found in religious communities some undisciplined and even vicious spirits, they should be tolerated with all requisite patience and goodness, without prejudice, however, to the common good and to *essential* charity. But when these persons, abusing the patience with which they are endured, and the charity extended them, do not reform or change for the better, but contrawise, injure the community by their example, then measures should be resorted to, in all courage and strength, to compel them to return to their duty; and if they are incorrigible, they should be cut off from the community, driven from thence *instantanter*.

A generally received opinion, in common with theologians, approved of by the holy Fathers, and authorized by experience, is that whatever reason can be alleged to the contrary, Religion has the right of interdicting to the incorrigible intercourse with its other members, and to drive them out from its houses: as also that inferiors, urged by zeal for the common good and for their own security, can request this same of Superiors. This being no more than was done by the Religious of St. Pachomius, when they entreated him to expel from their midst one Sylvanus, who having been a comedian in the world, still practised his buffooneries, and could

not rid himself of jesting, greatly to the annoyance of the whole community.

The Angelic Doctor, treating this subject, says: I reply with the Apostle: "Take away the wicked from amongst you," for a little leaven disturbs the entire dough: thus the obstinate, refractory, and incorrigible Religious should be driven out. The Seraphic Doctor says as much, so also others. Aristotle, in his code of morals, has given us a principle of a good government, that the incorrigible and those whose vices are incurable should be exterminated from republics.

I find three reasons for considering a Religious deserving of expulsion from his Order. The first, is when he becomes incorrigible and rebellious to all the remedies resorted to for bringing him back to his duty. The second, when he commits a crime or scandal that places the Order in peril of losing its honor, and of being defamed. The statutes of an Order determine that, in chastisement, the delinquent should be driven out; for as the Order is not obliged to retain an undisciplined member, who disturbs and overturns all domestic regulations and does not wish to amend, neither is it bound to keep the vicious, who dishonor and sully its reputation. The third is when a person has not made known an essential, or very important obstacle, to admittance as a member; for while on the one hand, it is deception that caused him to be admitted, and on the other, he is hindered from enjoying the goods he possesses, and the Superior can justly deprive him of the same. The *last two* reasons are ap-

proved by the Sovereign Pontiffs, and founded on natural and personal rights. If now it is asked, who is it that is held to be *incorrigible*? with the doctors I reply: a Religious is *incorrigible* in three ways: either because he changes not his life, but continues his usual disorders and misdeeds; or because, having been warned and reprov'd three times, he does not amend; or because, from a spirit of rebellion, he eludes the place to which he was condemned in penance. Now, let us see the sentiments of the Saints on this subject, as also their custom.

Commencing with St. Basil, who says: When a Religious gives evident signs of tepidity, and is alike unobservant of the commandments of God and his duty, compassion should be at first shown him, as to a sick member; and the Superior, taking him aside, tries by paternal warnings and remonstrances to effect his cure; then, if for this, he does not act more rationally, and is not corrected, he should be severely reprov'd before all the community. If, after all these remedies, together with frequent admonitions, he does not amend, but boldly, and lost to all self-respect, he continues his disedifying life, then it is expedient to cut him off, though this be done with regret and many tears, as a corrupted and defective member, from the rest of the body. It is thus that physicians never fail to amputate (after repeated searings and incisions have been useless) a member recognized as incurable, and whose disease would prove injurious to the others. We are necessarily

obliged to imitate the physician in this retrenching of incorrigibles; for our Lord tells us: "If thy right eye offends thee," places you in peril, "*pluck it out, and cast it from thee.*" Clemency towards such persons approximates closely the indiscreet indulgence and culpable mildness of the high priest Heli towards his sacrilegious children. It is an outrage on the common good, so long as this order of St. Paul is not executed, viz.: "Why are you not condemned to grief and affliction, rather than not drive off in shame from your midst he who has committed this action." Then there necessarily happens that which follows: "Did you not know that a little yeast suffices to sour a mass of dough?" that one wicked or insubordinate spirit is sufficient to disturb by his example the virtue of many good persons?

St. Basil, treating of the same subject elsewhere, repeats: If they who sow discord among the brethren, and who contemn the orders of Superiors, are not desirous to correct themselves, let them be separated from the community, for it is written: "Send out the sower of discord, and contentions will go out with him."

St. Augustine commands, in his rule, that the Religious guilty of a fault should be first reprov'd in private; if he denies it, let him be convinc'd by two or three witnesses, and then receive punishment; but if he refuses to submit to the penance imposed, let him be driven from the house, which will not be an act of cruelty, but a mercy, that by his infectious intercourse, many may not be lost.

Hereupon Hugh of Saint Victor says, much to the purpose: It is not cruelty to separate from others one who is incorrigible, and to drive him off; it is much better that the loss of one should be the salvation of many than that many, by the example of one, should be in peril of loss. St. Jerome, or the one who, under his name, is the author of "Rules for Religiouses," passed this law: She who is found amongst you to be rebellious, presumptuous, and haughty, who does not wish to obey, and who, by her contentions and dissatisfactions, troubles the peace of the sisters, teaching them to be disobedient, she must be punished by frequent and rigorous fasts: when fasting does not subdue her, she should be brought to confusion before all the community, and there should receive severe disciplines. If hereby she is not brought into measures, and if, as evidence of her pride, she still refuses to submit to obedience, let her be *driven out*, expelled as the apostate angels, to have no place in the kingdom of God. St. Benedict commands in his rule, that the disobedient and proud Religious, the murmurer, and the relaxed generally, should be, in accordance with the command of our Lord, warned once or twice in private; if without amendment, let him be reproved in chapter publicly; and if this effects nothing for him, then let him be *excommunicated*. After having shown the solicitude incumbent upon Superiors, and the pains they should take to cause the transgressor to amend, he concludes that if all these precautions fail of effect, the delinquent should be severely chastised; if the whip is of no

avail, prayer is to be employed, so that every possible means be used to obtain for him the grace of self-knowledge; but if he remains invulnerable to all remedies, further solicitude is useless, and he should be driven from the monastery.

In the constitutions of the Order of St. Dominic, it is prescribed that, after resorting to the various kinds of chastisements for faults committed—or else in conformity to the rule of St. Augustine, if found more expedient—he be divested of the religious habit, and driven out.

St. Francis commands in the thirteenth chapter of his first rule, that if any of his Religious sin against chastity he must at once be deprived of his habit, of which he has by his crime rendered himself unworthy, and therefore he is to be absolutely driven from the Order. Again, in the nineteenth chapter of the rule of the Third Order, he directs that if any one, after three warnings for his fault, continues incorrigible, he should be cut off from the community, and sent away.

Our Lord going out to Mount Olivet to commence the combat of His Passion, and speaking of swords, St. Luke relates that the Apostles said to him: "*Lord, behold here are two swords;* and He said to them: It is enough." Why is it enough? Why should there be *two*, or why not more? Because, replies Pascale Ratbert (ancient Abbot of Corbie, in France), that number was needed by the disciples of Jesus Christ; two were necessary to them, and they should not have had less. "The one," in the language of Holy Writ, "to wound salutarily

souls that are sick," and so to cure them: the other to punish crime and disobedience; and again, to cut off from the body the guilty member if he amends not. And it would seem that God, from the commencement of the world, wielded this sword in chastising Cain, after he had taken the life of his brother; for God drove him out from the place of his nativity, and from the company of his parents, as Cain himself, complaining to God, says: "Behold, you have driven me far from the sight of my native land." Upon which words St. Ambrose comments as follows: "God drove Cain from His presence, so as no longer to bestow upon him the care He had previously shown, and He sent him into exile, far from his parents."

SECTION VI.

Reasons why the Incurrible can be Cut off from Communities.

Behold now some reasons for proving that a tepid, undisciplined, incurrible Religious can and even should be driven away. As the general good is ever preferable to the particular, Religion should, for its conservation and maintenance, rid itself of such Religious that it knows to be groping in vice, without hope of change, and so cut away the defective member that can injure the others. St. Bonaventure says wisely, that when a person asks for entrance into Religion, and it is granted him, it is to extend to him a great grace and a

singular benefit, to which are attached many other blessings: first, it gives him the means for effectively withdrawing from occasions wherein he had much offended God and wrecked his salvation; secondly, he has been admitted to the company of God's chosen servants, who invite him by their example to walk in the road of perfection,—but he is bound to adhere to the observances of Religion, to enter into its designs, if he wishes to be a participator in all its blessings and to be retained as a member. Whilst he is faithful to his obligations, Religion cannot dismiss him from her service, but if he wanders from the beaten track, to cast himself into that of vice which she prohibits, when warnings and reproofs oft-repeated are of no avail, and he becomes refractory and rebellious,—continues obstinate in his tepid life to the great scandal of seculars, as well as of those of the same household, to whom he is most detrimental,—then he should be no longer tolerated, but be driven off, as Religion is not bound to retain one who has so grossly violated his promise. But should he be imprisoned? The doctors reply, this cannot be always conveniently effected, on account of the number who deserve such a punishment, and to oblige religion thereunto would be to impose on it too onerous a charge. It is acting with too great severity, you add, and with manifest cruelty, to resort to such extremes: would it not be better to show compassion and commiseration for these persons? St. Bonaventure replies: A *misplaced* pity is a cruelty that injures and wounds many virtuous persons.

Would you consider it a judicious and praiseworthy kindness to open your door to a robber, who would take that which belongs to another? or to deprive a poor man of all that he has? Besides, it is seldom, if ever, that the Religious who for a long time has been relaxed ever becomes good and so to persevere. What kindness is it, says Origen, and where the mercy, which in sparing one, gives death to many others? or, at least, places their lives in jeopardy? A single sinner, obstinate in evil, can ruin an entire people, as one diseased sheep a whole flock.

St. Bernard, writing to an Abbot who had consulted him in regard to one of his Religious, as turbulent as crafty, and who, consequently, occasioned him much trouble, said to him: "Try first, by sweet and gentle means, to bring him back to his duty; then use rigor—giving him penances, both private and *public*. If none of this works its effect, have recourse to the counsel of the Apostle, who says: '*Cast out the wicked man from your midst.*' Therefore you should send away this bad Religious, for fear lest he may corrupt the good, teaching them to be as disobedient as himself; for a bad tree cannot produce good fruit! Separate him, remove him as you would a gangrened member from the body. And do not fear to wound charity by the loss of one who by his perverseness and his intrigues readily disturbs domestic quiet; but rather, remove scandal from the many to secure their peace."

In conclusion, it must be avowed that these

disasters are most lamentable when they have reference to Religious, but let others who have by a special grace been preserved profit thereby; and profoundly humble themselves before God, believing that, as they are of a like nature, exposed to the same vicissitudes and temptations as their unfortunate brothers, they are consequently liable, without help from on high, to experience similar falls; thus they should tremble for themselves, and in this fear *grow wise*. When Lucifer, with his companions in rebellion, were driven out of heaven and precipitated into hell, says Job, the good angels were seized with fear, which impressed them with a salutary timidity in their own strength; thus they were preserved from falling likewise.

St. Gregory says: Let the dread of such falls render others more steady in their way, and more circumspect in their conduct. As when we see falling a portion of a wall, that buries beneath its ruins many persons, who unfortunately were close to it, each one, by a sudden fear and a natural desire for self-preservation, flies from the spot to a place of safety. In truth, we have much cause of fear, since there is nothing stable in this world, no place, nor state, nor profession, no age, where one is screened from all trespass and dangers. The angels in heaven, our first parents in the terrestrial paradise, Judas in the company of our Lord, Nicholas among the deacons, so many anchorites in their solitude, and so many Religious in their cloisters, have had deplorable falls and are lost eternally! Cannot the same befall us? Do not say

as some: I feel within myself no such tendency! I have a better heart; or that I feel my will to draw me to an opposite course. Do not thus become emboldened, and permit yourself to be puffed up by such sentiments of vanity: all those who have apostatized from Religion where they believed and hoped to live and to die, when they entered therein and made their novitiate, said as much. Wherefore, is humility, attended by fear and vigilance, absolutely essential to prevent one's falling into such frightful precipices.

Moreover, Job remarks another good result from these defalcations: "The good," says he, "are thereby purified." Your separation, says St. Augustine, will be their purification; and when you go out from their midst, carrying your sins away with you, you will thereby free them from the danger of following your example and your pernicious counsels. Thus they will be disposed to work at their perfection, and to receive in abundance the graces God has prepared for them; as the good seed strengthens when the noxious weeds which injure it are rooted out.

Let us also recall these words of St. John: "They who separate themselves from us, not having the Spirit:" and as St. Cyprian and St. Augustine read it: "They have gone out from amongst us; but also they were not of us; for had they been they would have indisputably remained with us: and their exit has served to show us who in reality they were." Therefore, all those who are with us are not for that reason *of us*, for when they have not the

spirit of Religion, and do not conduct themselves by prescribed rules, they are in the body of the Church, and in that of Religion, only as the bad humors in our body, which ever feels relief when such are cast out. Then, when such members leave, voluntarily or by expulsion, do not be sad, do not become afflicted, for they were *not of us*. The good, says St. Cyprian on this subject, have no thought to leave the Church nor Religion: for a passing wind does not blow away nor disturb the wheat, while it plays with the chaff; nor does the storm overthrow the trees that are deeply rooted, but only such as are without strength,—with their roots close to the surface of the earth.

SECTION VII.

Of those who, being very Sick, are not, however, Incurable.

When Religious are not incorrigible their maladies, though desperate, are not incurable, and thus, as there remains hope of their restoration, zeal and justice should not be exercised in such rigor as to drive them off at once from Religion, but we should employ more gentle measures, which, nevertheless, are painful and bitter to nature. By retaining such persons in Religion to correct them of their faults and disorders, and try to bring them into regular discipline, the aforesaid virtues are devoted to their correction, causing them to perform certain penances; otherwise they would never im-

prove, for nature is of itself drawn to evil, with a tendency ever on the decline from bad to worse, so they would continue to offend, and finally become so obdurate in sin as to be rendered incorrigible.

The ineffable source from whence flow all the ills in religion (and it may be added, in republics and kingdoms) consists in these few words: "Sin is committed with *impunity*, faults and crime are permitted to go *unpunished*." Man wishes to be thus governed: when reason has no power over him, to make him comply with his duty, other means, by the senses and by pain, should be employed. Wherefore, in all well-governed states and well-regulated religious orders there have always been special chastisements for the punishment of different faults. Each religious order has, therefore, its particular penances for grave and light faults. St. Benedict directs in his rule for punishing serious faults, what was above related, viz.: that the offenders should first be warned charitably in secret; afterwards reproved publicly; thirdly, excommunicated, if the delinquents feel this punishment, but if they are insensible to this they should be punished by disciplines and fasts; fourthly, that all the Religious should unite in prayer for them; fifthly, they should be deprived of their office and lowered in rank; finally, if they do not amend, they should be separated from the rest of the community, either by imprisonment or by perpetual expulsion from the monastery.

Cassian, previous to St. Benedict, mentions many species of chastisements as being common in the

monasteries of Egypt, for punishing faults. He says: If some one, through carelessness, has broken the earthen cup he uses in drinking, he will ask a penance for it before the whole community when assembled for prayer. Then in penance he has to prostrate on the floor, remaining thus during the time of prayer, and till the Abbot bids him rise, which is a mark of pardon for his fault. He will do the same when dilatory in answering a call to some duty, or when he goes to a regular observance out of time; or if, in chanting psalmody, he hesitates and drawls ever so little; also if he speaks an idle word, if he replies somewhat brusquely, too abruptly or boldly; if he does negligently, or in murmuring, whatever he is commanded; if, to continue his reading, he delays to go where obedience calls him; if, when office is ended, he does not retire directly to his cell, but stops with some one, even for a short time; if he takes the hand of another; if he amuses himself in breaking silence, even momentarily; if he has had an interview with some of his secular friends, or spoken to them, when no senior Religious was present; if he has received or written letters without the permission of his Abbot. The graver faults, however, such as manifest insults, formal contempt, outbursts of anger, serious quarrels and antipathies, haughty oppositions, and similar misdemeanors, were not corrected by these gentle chastisements which are felt only in the soul, but by means of harsher ones, and such as afflict the body, as administering severe disciplines to the

guilty, or expelling them from the monastery. For instance, we read that St. Pachomius, being engaged with some of the principal fathers of the community, a brother placed at the door of his cell, near by where these good fathers were assembled, two mats that he had made that day, in order that they may the more readily notice them and praise him for his industry, as he was not obliged to make but one a day. St. Pachomius penetrating the design of this brother, and seeing the bottom of his heart, heaved a deep sigh, and said to the fathers present: Behold this brother, who has taken much trouble to-day, and gives it all to the demon! for he has in his work sought more the esteem of men than of God, he has made his body labor more than he should, and thus he deprives his soul of the fruits of his toil. The Saint had this brother called, reprovèd him severely for his vanity, and ordered him to stand with these two mats behind the brothers whilst at prayer and to say to them as they went out, I beg you, my brothers, to pray God to have pity on my poor soul, which has made more account of these mats than of His eternal kingdom. He was besides commanded, when the others were assembled in the refectory, to stand in the middle with his mats around his neck, till the brothers arose from table. After which he was to retire to his cell, and there remain during the space of *five months*, condemned to make two mats daily in silence and solitude, and to have no other food than bread and salt.

St. Cunegundas—spouse of the saintly Emperor

Henry I.—became, a year after her husband's death, a Religieuse in the monastery which she had built, to live under the rule of St. Benedict, and by the consent, as also the entreaties of all the Religieuses, she invested one of her nieces, named Jutta, as first abbess, a dignity of which her virtue and regular observance rendered her worthy. The youthful Abbess acquitted herself most honorably of her charge for some time. Nevertheless, it happened with her, as it often does, that a person may have sufficient virtue to be an inferior, to live under subjection, but not for governing others, and bearing the weight of authority. Consequently, she became gradually relaxed, and abused her power by seeking her own gratification and ease. The Saint was deeply afflicted to see so marked a change in her niece, with whom she used every endeavor, but in vain, to bring her back to duty, and which neither remonstrances nor entreaties could effect. Thus, one day, on a Sunday, Jutta failing to be present for divine service, St. Cunegundas went to seek her. She found her breakfasting with some young Religieuses of her own age, and who were her confidantes. The Saint, moved with a holy indignation, reproved her sharply, and then gave her a good slap on the cheek, which ever afterwards retained the marks of her fingers.

St. Peter Damian relates that Serge, father to St. Romuald, and descendant of the Dukes of Ravenna, having abandoned the pleasures and vanities of the world, which he had formerly loved to excess, became a Religious. But while pursuing his exer-

cises of virtue, he was tempted to return to the world. St. Romuald, on being warned of this, set out instantly, barefooted and with his staff, from the heart of France, where he was, to the monastery of St. Severus, near Ravenna. There he found his father, wavering and ready to fall. He could only retain him then in the cloister, by placing iron fetters on his feet, and treating his body with great severity, till the temptation was subdued, so that he lived and died holily in Religion.

Behold the penances and chastisements inflicted for faults, even upon persons who were most dear—a niece, a father, it being necessary to resort to such expedients for the common, no less than for the *particular* good.

“Mercy and judgment I will sing to Thee, O Lord,” says David, “because Thou hast used them towards sinners, and I, after Thy example, shall use them also.” Mercy and gentleness should ever be employed, when they will suffice for correction; but when powerless, then, at whatever cost, the sinners should not be permitted to perish, but be withdrawn from sin, just as a sick person, who has to be cured of his disease, to prevent its proving mortal. The more powerful remedies of justice should, however, be moderate and be justly tempered. Then this temper consists:

1. That they should not be imposed either from a movement of natural impetuosity or anger, but from virtue, with a Christian spirit, with a zeal for the common good, with a sincere charity for the

guilty and an earnest desire for his welfare, and not as a punishment for the *person*, but solely for the *fault* to be corrected or the vice to be destroyed.

One should unite himself interiorly with God, enter into his designs, and all His divine intentions, when he chastises a sinner. Hildebrand, who was afterwards Pope Gregory VII., when in France, and visiting Blessed Hugh, Abbot of Cluny, assisted at chapter, wherein the Saint reproved, corrected, and punished the faults of the brothers. During this exercise he beheld our Lord present, suggesting to him what he should say and how act, and the penances he should impose on each. Those who have to correct others should pray our Lord to grant them a like grace.

There should always be in chastisements, even the severest, and for the greatest crimes, some kindly feeling for the culprit, and pity for the miseries of nature: let the oil of mercy be ever mingled with the wine of justice, to cure the wounds of the poor Samaritan; thus, rigor should be exercised towards the fault and compassion felt for the sinner.

Ruffinus relates that a Religious, having committed a fault and being reproved with great sharpness, went to seek St. Anthony. Some other Religious of the same monastery followed him, and reproached him for his fault in presence of St. Anthony. St. Paphnucius, who was also present, spoke to them all this parable: "I saw on the bank of a stream a man sunk into the mud up to his knees; some persons came to help him out,

but they only sank him deeper, and down to his neck." Then, St. Anthony, looking at the Blessed Paphnucius, remarked: "Behold a man who judges of things according to truth, and who is competent to save souls."

Another Religious, of the monastery of Abbot Elias, having been driven off for yielding to sin in a moment of great temptation, had recourse to this same St. Anthony, who kept him for some time with him, and then sent him back to his monastery. But the Religious did not wish to receive him, so they drove him off a second time. He returned to St. Anthony, saying: "Father, they will have nothing to do with me." Thereupon the Saint sent them these words of reproach: "A vessel after having been wrecked, and lost all its merchandise, with which it was freighted, has at last reached, with much difficulty, the seashore, and yet you wish it to be again cast away." These Religious at once understood the language of the Saint, and they received their banished brother.

2. To render chastisements moderate, and to give them the just temper, they should not be considered in themselves, but in regard to the fault committed. Though they be sometimes most severe in their nature, they are not to be used immoderately, in like manner that a decoction of which a medicine is composed should be taken in doses increased or diminished according to the degree of sickness: thus, it is always just when well proportioned to the malady it is intended to cure. Though the punishments of hell are horrible and *inexplicable*,

both as to their rigor and duration, they are, nevertheless, moderated and never to excess; on the contrary, theologians teach that, however great they may be, they are less than sin merits, and that thus God ever shows favor to the condemned without their deserving it. Thus, no judgment can be formed of the penance by the evil it does, but by the fault it punishes. St. Francis, who cordially loved his Religious and had great compassion for their faults, wrote a letter to the Blessed Peter Catanius, whom he appointed General of his Order, and two letters to Brother Elias, his Vicar-General, after the death of Catanius, in which he recommended to them in most pointed terms to show unusual kindness towards those who commit faults. I will know, says he to the latter, if you are a servant of God, principally and solely by this mark: if you attract to Him, by sweetness and mercy, the brother who will have fallen; and if you cease not to love him, though he shall have committed a most serious fault. However, St. Bonaventure says of St. Francis that, with all his sweetness and compassion, he knew not how to flatter faults, but to chastise them severely, nor to encourage the vices of sinners, but to reprove them harshly.

3. To give to correction the necessary temper, and to make it productive of good, the proper occasion and time should be considered. Many fail in this respect, either from negligence or from lack of courage; from a false charity, or a vain hope of amendment, they are dilatory to reprove and

punish faults whilst still light, and in a condition to be remedied; but wait till habit causes them to take deep root in the soul, and so to become incurable. At first, a mild remedy is often sufficient, whereas, later on, when faults have become habitual, violent measures must be employed, and these even prove useless, so that no alternative remains but to expel the sinner from Religion. Perhaps but two years since this unfortunate Religious commenced to grow relaxed, but still retained a sufficiently delicate conscience and fear of being lost; had proper reproof and judicious penances been given him,—such as were in keeping with his faults and disposition,—and thus he would have been saved. But, unfortunately, his cure was undertaken too late, and owing to this negligence, he has been lost eternally. When the person is hardened, and has, by a long course of infidelity and sin, become insensible to the lights and inspirations of God, it is almost impossible for him to be rescued from his pending ruin.

It is an old and true adage, that to effect a cure, the remedy must be applied in time, for fear lest, if the malady increases, the remedies will be alike powerless and the disease stronger than the medicine. Therefore, those who are now in Religion and have correction and penances imposed on them for faults, should receive these remedies with all patience and respect, accepting them as tokens of God's mercy, as do the sick, who receive the medicines prescribed for them not alone without complaint and murmur, but joyfully and with

gratitude to the physician who thus endeavors to restore them to perfect health.

. Yes, but you say, I have had a penance given me for a fault I have not committed. I reply: 1. that it is better for you to be innocent than guilty. 2. Though man punishes you for a fault of which you have been unjustly accused, allowing this to be so, God chastises you thus for some fault of which you are guilty. It is known how St. Ephrem and two companions with him, of whom he speaks, were accused and cast into prison for crimes of which they were innocent, and that the justice of God pursued them and punished them in this manner for other sins which they had really committed. Then, of how many sins are you not guilty unknown to man, and for which, consequently, you have never met reproof or punishment! It is for some one of these that God punishes you now with great mercy in this world, in order that He be not constrained to chastise you severely in the next, in purgatory, where you will endure frightful sufferings without merit, it being a place of atonement only, and wherein you are made to satisfy divine justice. On the contrary, if you make good use of the penances now given you, you will satisfy fully, or at least in a great measure, the penalty due your sins, as also gain treasures of grace and glory, with a speedier admittance into heaven. In performing your penances, imitate the disposition of the holy souls who are in their state of purgation, where they endure excessive and inexplicable pains without other

fruit than to acquit themselves fully of their debt. There never escapes from them a word of impatience, a single murmur against God, whose infinite justice they recognize and adore, praising and blessing His holy name; thus they suffer with such admirable sweetness and submission, with so great and profound respect, that if the door of purgatory was thrown open to them, and they were invited to ascend to heaven forthwith, they would not accept their liberty while there yet remained a single blemish to their purity, preferring to continue in their prison and in suffering till their debt was cancelled and they were rendered worthy to be in the presence of infinite Sanctity.

3. You should in your consciousness of innocence, and in the punishments you submit to, unite yourself to our Lord, who you know was so reviled and persecuted, though He was innocence itself. Then, behold Him in this state of suffering and humiliation, embrace Him tenderly, unite yourself to Him by faith, love, and a true desire of imitating Him. He has given you the example and merited for you the grace to suffer any amount of accusation for faults you have not committed. A Religious of St. Francis, who had been formerly very rich in the world, having met with a sharp reproof from his Superior, who also imposed on him a severe penance, went to the church, sad and dejected, to complain to our crucified Lord of the wrongs done him; but here the crucifix replied in an articulate voice: "You should understand and consider the injuries and affronts, the sufferings and the death,

that I, who am innocent, have endured for love of you, who are a sinner." The Religious, having heard these words, remained humbly comforted and full of respect, so as thenceforward to become most patient.

CHAPTER VII.

OF HUMILITY.

AS humility is the foundation of all virtues and the gate of heaven, we cannot doubt of its being most necessary in Religion, where, in a special manner, profession is made of acquiring and practising virtue and of gaining heaven.

First, humility is necessary in regard to God. St. Bernard, speaking of the three essential qualities one should possess to live well in community, and which he calls, "*With order, with a social spirit, and with humility;*" thus, the first requisite has reference to one's self; the second, to our neighbor, as we have explained above; and the third to God. The reason he advances for it is that the Religious who lives well, who carefully acquits himself of his duty, draws from it no vanity, but refers all the glory to God, according to these words of St. Augustine: All the great science of man is to know that he is nothing of himself, and that which he is (or holds) he has from God, and for God. One may add, as a second reason, that since, in Religion, the rules have to be observed exactly and the vows fulfilled,—since in life there is a continual combat with nature, it needs be that God greatly assists a person and communicates to

him many graces, consequently humility is most necessary, while, at the same time, it better disposes the soul to receive all these aids and graces. St. James teaches us this truth, when he says: "God resists the proud, and gives his grace to the humble."

Secondly, humility is most necessary to a Religious to live well in community. A brother having said to Abbot Agatho: Father, since God has given me the desire to live in a monastery with others, I beg you to teach me the manner of living well with them. Abbot Agatho replied: Take care, above all things, to live always as on the first day, and to practise humility during your whole lifetime.

St. Basil, forming a man to the social life, tells him: To render yourself fit for this kind of life, persuade yourself that you are the most miserable and the vilest of men; that you are loaded with imperfections and sullied with sin; and it is alone the goodness of others that opened to you the door of the monastery, and but by the purest mercy were they moved to receive you into their midst. Seek in truth to become the *least* one, and the servant of all.

St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, tells them: "I beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called: with all humility and mildness; with patience supporting one another in charity." The Apostle names humility as the first means to accomplish what he advises (according to the explanation of St. Thomas and

Cardinal Cajetan on this passage), because this is the most necessary virtue to live well in community,—as the first sin that should be banished is pride. Thus, the Wise Man says: “Among the *proud there are always contentions.*” The proud never agree among themselves; for while one wishes to exalt himself, another will not be humble; when one desires to command, another resists, and refuses to obey; the former uses efforts to enforce obedience, the latter does likewise so as not to yield; and from thence arise their disputes and dissensions; consequently, pride is the enemy of peace and concord, whereas humility is the mother and nurse. Therefore, he who seeks to live in peace in a community, should resolve on practising humility, *interiorly* and *exteriorly*.

1. The true spirit of the religious state is properly a state of humility, abjection, and of contempt for the honors of this world. Thus the Religious, to be *truly* Religious, should necessarily be *humble*. It is this virtue which some so greatly need, and to whom Religion is not *serviceable*, but rather hurtful; for when it does not succeed in humbling them it but serves to inflate them—to make them vain and proud. St. Bernard speaks of such Religious with great vehemence, when he says: I see, much to my regret, that some, after having renounced the pomps of the world, learn to become proud in the school of humility itself: and that, under the protection of a meek and humble Master, Jesus Christ, they are much more arrogant and perverse, more impatient in Religion, than ever they were in the

world; but what is yet more astonishing and unaccountable, is that many cannot bear to be contemned and humbled in the house of God, whereas, in the world, they were, both by birth and occupation, very *lowly*: thus, not being honored there where ordinarily honors are sought after, they seek to be so in some manner *here*, where the profession of life embraced excludes and contemns honors.

Again, one should have humility, in order to esteem and respect the sentiments of others, and even, when possible, prefer them to his own. It is so easy for a person, with ever so little mind and learning, to have a good opinion of *self*, and to have it increased; to maintain his own sentiments, and to desire that they be approved and received, fearing lest they be examined, controlled, and rejected. However, it is well to be resolved on acquiring this spirit of submission, if one does not wish often to commit serious errors: to mistake, by an artifice of the demon, deceit for virtue.

From what misfortune, says Abbot Joseph, in Cassian, will it be possible for a man to protect himself, who is thus attached to his own judgment, if he does not renounce himself and become truly humble? Then he cites, as example, St. Paul,—vessel of election that he was, and filled with an abundance of the graces of God, in whom, and by whom, as he himself says, Jesus Christ speaks, went to Jerusalem solely to confer with the Apostles, and to submit to their examination the Gospel he had received by divine revelation.

In Religion humility should also be exercised

as to charges and employments. Ambition glides into religious houses nowadays, as it did once into heaven and into the terrestrial paradise ; and as it is the vice that has mortally wounded reasonable creatures,—angels as well as men,—it also commits great ravages among Religious, from the unhappy inclination of human nature for whatever is great and brilliant; thus one's natural pride often appears and in divers ways; either in the desire to be noticed and brought forward, to be employed in important duties, and to have ascendancy over others.

Hearken to what St. Teresa teaches on this subject, and carefully profit by her instructions. She says: “ Let us not, in Religion, pay attention to and make account of certain petty things, called injuries and affronts. In these foolish points of honor, we act as little children, who in their play build houses of sticks and mud, and call them castles. Ah, my dear sisters, did we but truly know in what honor consists and in what is its loss, we would have quite other sentiments. God will never be found in monasteries wherein reign points of honor. Never will He there pour down His graces abundantly. Be convinced that the demon ceases not to attack us—to aim blows at us—for he alone is the author of honors in monasteries, and there he establishes his laws of glory (or pride) as he does among people in the world: then, this honor is placed in certain *petty things* that seem to me astonishing! Literary men, too, it would seem—though I do not confidently assert it—think they should always walk according to the degree of their

science. That he who hast taught theology, should not lower himself by reading philosophy, since it is a point of honor to rise and not to descend; and should Superiors command the contrary, he would consider such a command an affront, the demon knowing well how to suggest reasons for saying that, even according to the law of God, the teacher of theology has been wronged; nor will there be persons wanting to defend him and to sustain him in his complaints. The same pride and ambition may likewise have sway among Religieuses: for instance, the one who was Prioress is not suited for a lower office. Deference has to be paid to the most aged in the house: thus, their age is not lost sight of, and this marked respect is exacted, or considered as merited. They say, the Order commands it. But in truth, there is in this something laughable, or rather, a subject for tears. For the Order commands not that we live without humility, and if it requires that the seniors should be the most respected, it is only because it desires all things to be well regulated; but as to me, I should not be exact in those points of the Order regarding *my honor*, so as to prefer it to another's. Let us not place our perfection in observing such things as relate to our individual esteem, for if I do not trouble myself as to this care, God will raise up persons who will take it for me. The cause of this springs from our vitiated nature being always inclined to rise; whereas we can never ascend to heaven by this road, and so long as we are averse to descending. O Lord!

Thou art unquestionably our model. In what hast Thou placed Thy happiness, O my sovereign Master? Hast thou lost it humiliating thyself, even to the cross? Certainly not; on the contrary, Thou hast gained it for Thyself and for us. O my sisters! believe, I beseech you, for the love of God,—believe that we stray from the right road, if we take this one, which from the outset makes such a bad turn. God wishes that souls should not be lost for desiring to follow a miserable point of honor, without knowing wherein consists true honor.” Elsewhere, she speaks again on this subject: “Whoever entramels herself in a point of honor should absolutely break these bonds, if desirous to advance in the road of virtue. It seems to me that a point of honor is an evident snare spread in this road, causing therein such havoc and so great evil as to affright me. I see persons performing acts of exalted sanctity, so as to fill with admiration and amazement all who know them. How happens it, then, that such souls, in place of arriving at the summit of perfection, still crawl upon earth! What is it that holds them thus below, after having signalized themselves by such uncommon actions? It is simply because they cling to a trifling point of honor; and what is yet more deplorable is, that they do not wish to have this defect made known to them—the demon convincing them sometimes that such vain maxims are useful for their guidance. But I conjure you, for the love of God, to listen to this ‘*little ant,*’ whom our Lord wishes to

speak, and to believe that, if you do not remove this caterpillar of a point of honor, even though the tree does not perish entirely—because of some few nibbled and scanty virtues that still remain—it will not, however, flourish, and the little fruit of good example it may produce cannot be sound nor lasting. I say, and repeat it, that, trifling as may be a point of honor, its effects are ever detrimental: it is similar to discord in a musical concert, where, how little soever jarring is this dissonance, the perfect harmony is destroyed. We desire union with God, and to follow the counsels of Jesus Christ, who was charged with injuries and false accusations, and, nevertheless, we sinners wish for the protection of our petty honor, and to preserve our credit. But it is impossible to arrive thereat by such means, because these roads conduct to divers ends.” Behold the teaching of St. Teresa, who had good reasons for declaiming against *points of honor* and ambitions, that are sometimes, and alas! too often, found in Religion, where vitiated nature ever follows and accompanies us, and where, too, it is very easy, if one is not most vigilant in regulating her opinions, to desire honors, to strive for them by different means, even *unjust* and *vicious*; from whence follow lamentable falls and eternal ruin.

An historian—Religious of St. Dominic—cites a memorable incident on this subject. He had it from his own Order, and relates that, in one of their convents at Naples, several strange Religious appeared one evening after complin in the refectory, enveloped

in their cloaks, and seated round the table as if waiting the moment to make their collation. The refectorian, entering, was excessively surprised to see all these unknown Religious seated in silence; on the spot he went to seek the Father Prior, and gave him an account of what he had seen. The Prior, believing it was all an illusion, sent him back to perform his office, without giving any attention to what was told him of the vision. The refectorian assuring him that he was not deceived, and that he had really seen the Religious as described, the Father at length yielded to his entreaties and followed him. When he reached the refectory, he recognized the truth of what the brother had told him, and all in trouble, he hastened to go and find the most senior and wisest Religious in the house, to inform them of the fact, and to take counsel as to the course to be adopted on the occasion. Accordingly, he was advised to put on the sacerdotal vestments, to take the Blessed Sacrament, and go, followed by all the community, to the refectory, and conjure these phantoms to say who they were, who had sent them, and what they wished. The Father Prior followed this advice, and when he entered the refectory with the Blessed Sacrament, all these spectres rose up and made a profound salutation, after which they sat down. The Prior commanded them, in the name of Jesus Christ, whom he held in his hands, to tell them who they were and what they wanted. He who appeared the principal of the assembly, and seated in the most honorable place, spoke for the rest, and answered: ‘We are all

Religious of the Order ; the greater number amongst us have been priors, sub-priors, doctors, bachelors, regents in theology, and have held the first offices ; ambition, envy, and other sins have been our ruin. God has permitted us to show ourselves to you, in order to admonish you, as well as all Religious, to correspond faithfully with the grace of your vocation ; that for having failed in this we are *lost eternally*, and if you imitate us you will share in our punishments ; as a proof of which, behold !” On finishing these words, he made a sign to his companions to open their cloaks, when they appeared all on fire. The chief of the apparitions then gave a knock on the table, and the vision disappeared. This should teach all Religious that ambition can insinuate itself into religious houses, wherein are sought charges, superiorities, offices, and honorable employments ; that these are often obtained by intrigue, artifice, and indirect means, and retained under like circumstances : so that it is not God, but one’s passion, that is served, and consequently, far from attaining heaven by this road, we are fast tending to perdition. Therefore, to place a check on nature and to avoid fatal consequences, humility is necessary.

Humility is also needed in the various degrees of promotion that each Order observes according to its institute. It should be remarked, first, that these different degrees and honors are most wisely established in religion, and that it would be difficult or even impossible not to occasion confusion and cause many other inconveniences by not admitting

them. As all Religions are not equally competent, as they do not possess intellects of the same power, they are consequently not suited for the same duties. Thus it is both prudent and reasonable to make a distinction, and to use discernment in placing each one in such duties wherein he may be most efficient. If, for example, all were made to study theology, those who had not talent for speculative science would thus lose their time, and Religion would thereby be deprived of services which it could have, if all its members were suitably employed, and where they could render themselves useful. Then, in Religion, where there is ever a variety of mental exercises, it would be unwise that there should not be also established, for proper government, a distinction of degrees in offices. Secondly, such as are incompetent for the higher offices, nor have the requisite qualifications for distinguished employments, should consider that it is neither Religion or Superiors nor their companions who have made them such as they are, but God, who wishes to be honored and served by them in the more humble pursuits. Therefore, one should not be grieved when he does not ascend, but keep with submission, respect, thanksgiving, and even with joy, the post, however lowly, assigned him by a wise Providence. Would not an ant become ridiculous, if it were dissatisfied in not being as large or strong as an elephant? a dove, that it could not fly as high as an eagle? and a raven, that it does not sing so sweetly as the nightingale? God gives to animals, as well as to men, capacities with number, weight,

and measure. He directs all their movements, both in body and soul, with designs of His glory, and the perfection to which they were respectively created.

If it happens that some one worthy of these first honors or positions has been excluded, or that their minds have expanded only with time, and so become remarkable for prudence and virtue, rendering themselves every way deserving of the higher offices, and even more competent than those who fill them, it should, however, be recalled that when these same offices were vacant these persons in question had not apparently the requisite qualifications, and the future could not be anticipated. Besides, it is a secret conduct of God's to thus dispose of men, in order that by the example of their humility, patience, moderation, and all their virtues generally, others who bear with more trouble, though with less reason, the same state, it may soothe their vexations, render them submissive to the divine will, and thus to profit by their position. By such means, these persons thus appointed, while they lack the talents of others, have merited, nevertheless, to serve God in what is most essential to His honor and glory, and the salvation of souls. They were made for example, says Seneca, in speaking of great personages; thus, they should rejoice that they are applied by God for so noble a design and so illustrious a function.

4. Those who are promoted to eminent positions should not esteem themselves more, since they are no greater before God, but only more obliged to

greater things and heroic virtue. Nor should they convert their position into one of repose, as if their fortune was made: on the contrary, they should consider it a means for goading them to increased fervor, and as a spur to courageously advance God's glory and the neighbor's salvation.

I add, moreover, that humility is necessary in Religion to endure objections, contradictions, etc., inseparable to this state: thus, while some are advanced, others are kept in restriction; this one is esteemed, and that one contemned; they are employed and considered useful, and we are overlooked or set aside as inefficient; some are spoken of in praise, commended for all their actions, while others have not a word said of them, or meet with continual reproof; the seniors have often to see the young Religious preferred to themselves—to submit to them as their Superiors. There needs be humility to bear in meekness and silence all these varied and trying occurrences; and when this virtue is wanting, one is apt to find himself greatly non-plussed, and to commit, unintentionally, most serious faults. We have here a remarkable example of this in the life of St. Pachomius. This great Saint was every day accustomed to make an exhortation to his Religious, to animate them to virtue, and to acquire the perfection of their state: it so happened once that he directed St. Theodore to perform this duty for him; for though this disciple was then quite young, not twenty years of age, he was, however, very wise. Theodore, without excuse or demur, obeyed, and spoke as directed

to all the assembled Religious. Some of the most aged Religious, seeing this young man advancing to give the usual instruction, became indignant, and said among themselves: Truly does it become this ignorant youth to attempt instructing us; so let him seek, if he wishes, other auditors than ourselves. Thereupon they withdrew, angered, each to his cell. After the discourse, St. Pachomius had these haughty seniors summoned, when he asked them why they had left the assembly, and did not wish to hear the exhortation? They replied, still quite displeased: How is it that you constitute a child master and doctor of the old men in your monastery? The Saint, hearing these words, heaved a deep sigh, and said to them in much sorrow: Do you know from whence have arisen all the evils in the world? From whence, they asked. From *pride*, replied the Saint; the cause of Lucifer being precipitated into hell, and that also despoiled Nebuchodonosor of his purple and reduced him to the condition of the brute beast. Have you never heard, aged as you are, these words of the Wise Man: "Every proud man is an abomination to the Lord:" and also these of our Lord: "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The demon has greatly deceived you, with all your years—making you appear clearly as devoid of virtue, but possessing much pride. You are deserving of pity, for it was not from Theodore, but from God, that you withdrew, since you refused to hearken to His word. How is it

that you had so little light, as not to see that it was the demon who put these notions into your head? O stupendous miracle and strange prodigy! God abased Himself for us unto death on the cross, and we, who are so vile and abject by nature, we exalt ourselves! He who is infinite greatness and above all honors has saved the world by humility, and we, who are but dust and ashes, and less still, are inflated! Did you not see me, who am your Superior, attending with the rest to the exhortation, and listen attentively? I assure you, that I drew much profit from the discourse, which I received with the simplicity of a child. Then, with how much more reason, should not you, who are but inferiors, have listened with humility and tried to reap advantage from the instruction! Therefore, do penance for your fault, for you have greatly irritated God; and rest assured, that if you fail to ask His pardon, with sincere regret, such a sin is sufficient to draw you into others, and finally, to be lost.

SECTION I.

Of the Mutual Respect to be Shown One Another.

I will commence this subject in the words of St. Bernard, who tells us: I add to what has been said of the social life, that the very great virtue of humility is extremely necessary in order to render us respectful one to the other, not alone preventing those who are above us, and our seniors, but

even those who are less and the youngest, and to bear towards them honor.

One of the most beautiful effects of humility is to render persons respectful, and induce them to give honor to their neighbor, to signify it to him by words of civility and acts of deference. "Honor and respect all," as St. Peter advises, without considering their defects, but "as being the co-heirs of the grace of life." In like manner, should we in communities esteem and honor the very least one, remembering that we are all called to the same vocation, that we are members of the same body, children of the same Order, co-heirs of the same succession, and possessors of the same benefits. But St. Paul requires something more even than St. Peter, when he says: "Loving one another with the charity of brotherhood, with honor preventing one another," dispute, as it were, as to who will render the most honor.

This inclination honoring others, and respectful manner of acting and conversing, are quite necessary in communities to live well. It is this that nourishes and preserves charity and the sweet friendship that should exist amongst us. As oil serves to feed the flame of a lamp, so also a respectful manner, words of civility and honor in sincere deference, illumine and increase the fire of fraternal charity and domestic harmony; for he who receives testimonies of regard feels obliged to the person who tenders them, insomuch as man, by nature, takes pleasure in being acted towards with honesty, and in not being contemned. This arises

from a certain innate opinion he has of his own excellence and dignity, so to impress him with the desire of being treated with honor, which if refused causes him displeasure. Whoever, says Aristotle, wishes to be honored, asks a testimony and a proof of the opinion one has of his excellence. From whence comes that men, and generally all intelligent natures, the good and the bad angels, and first of all, God, are so sensitive as to honor and contempt. Our Lord, so patient otherwise, to all affronts offered Him by the Jews, and of which He was silent, complains of this in saying to them: "*You have dishonored Me,*" meaning, you have not rendered to Me the honor that is My due.

2. To act with too much familiarity, too freely and boldly, without recollection, produces contempt, and contempt causes all manner of evil, as dissensions, divisions, aversions, ill-will, wrongs, and outrages. It is known, the fearful evils caused in the Roman Empire, particularly in Italy, under the Emperor Justin, by the contempt his Empress showed to the great captain Narses, when writing to him that he would do better to handle a spindle than to wield a sword; and in Persia, that of the King Hormisdas for Varamius, General of the army, in sending to him, by way of contempt, a woman's gown, for having badly fought against the Romans.

A person under contempt is no longer useful. Therefore, to restrain ourselves, and not to fall into these great disorders that disfigure and ruin communities, a check is needed, and this curb is no

other than the mutual respect, the kindly deference paid to one another.

3. You should not treat your brother without civility and respect, nor contemn him in the least, for this would be to inflict displeasure and grief upon him. It is evident that by so doing you act ill, nor would you that others should so act towards you.

Finally, you know that he is your brother; that you both compose, in quality of members, the same body. Do you mock your hand or foot when covered with ulcers, when deformed or soiled? On the contrary, do you not give it more care, treat it more gently than if it was sound and healthy? Behold your example and instruction! Moreover, could it not be said to you also, that you contemn a person who is possibly unknown to you? For perhaps this one is or may be some day, before God, greater and holier and much higher in glory than yourself. Besides, this free and unbecoming manner, these failures in respect, should be considered as productive of deleterious consequences not to be easily repaired. "If you have seen," says the Wise Man, "something deserving of blame in your neighbor," do not make it known by your impetuosity, "lest afterwards thou mayst not be able to make amends," by thus exposing him to the contempt and ridicule of others, for a wound is more readily inflicted than cured: so also, is it greater wisdom to prevent your brother, though it be with difficulty, from committing an evil that will be incurable, or that will reluctantly submit to remedies.

Venerable Bede relates something remarkable in reference to our subject. He says that the Anglo-Saxons, when newly converted, having with St. Augustine, their Apostle, some difference in regard to the celebration of Easter, and other things concerning the discipline of the Church,—these neophytes did not wish to yield deference to the opinions of St. Augustine, which were certainly better and more Catholic than theirs. So they deputed some of their number to seek and consult a holy hermit, and thus learn from him what they should believe or how proceed. The hermit replied: If Augustine is a man of God, believe and do what he tells you. But how shall we know, asked these deputies, that he is a man of God? You will know it, he tells them, by these words of our Lord: "Take my yoke, and learn of Me to be meek and humble of heart." If Augustine is meek and humble of heart, you may hold for certain that he bears the yoke of our Lord; but if he is proud, pay no regard to what he tells you. How may we discover, they continued, that he is humble of heart? You will see it, says the hermit, if when you visit him, he treats you with honor,—if he rises from his seat at your entrance. Now, St. Augustine, either from forgetfulness or otherwise, failed in this outward mark of respect, and thus caused very great evil to ensue. The English people would not believe him nor follow his directions, and St. Augustine predicted that God, in punishment for their incredulity and obstinacy, would give them in prey to their enemies, who would tyrannize over them: which has truly happened.

Let us now come to the means for having this respect and civility for one's neighbor. First, there are some characters much better disposed and more inclined thereto than others. Some spirits are naturally respectful, modest, civil, and deferential: such was Plato, as related by Marcile Ficin. Others, on the contrary, are ungovernably coarse and rude, with a certain amount of *impudence*, that Aristotle decries, and who indulge this humor indiscriminately, not fearing to offend any one. Caligula was of this brutal nature. He says himself that nothing in his character so pleased him as the liberty to do and to say all he liked, without considering to whom it was addressed.

2. Early training and education serve much this purpose, for when a child from its earliest years is taught civility and decorum, he ever retains the same, and shows it in all his after conduct.

3. The principal means, and one which is in the power of every one, viz., to accustom one's self in Religion to give respect and deference to others. To understand this well, it must be remarked, first, that all civility, respect, and honor that we render to any one, so as not to be false and specious, must be founded on the good opinion we have of him; for, as Aristotle says, honor is nothing else than a mark of esteem that we entertain of a person. Second, there is not a single one of our brothers, not excepting the least, to whom we should not render honor, for he is effectively very worthy of it, on account of his excellence, being, as we have mentioned elsewhere, a most noble creature, the master-

piece of God, the living image of the divine perfections, because he is a Christian, temple of the Holy Spirit, brother and co-heir of Jesus Christ, and a *Religious*, consecrated by vow to the worship and service of the Divinity. These qualities merit, in truth, very great honor and sincere esteem. “If it happens,” said Seneca, “that I see and meet in the street the Consul or Prætor, I do not hesitate to show him respect, and I do all that is customary for rendering honor to a man: I will alight from my horse, uncover my head, yield to him the inner side of the pavement to allow him to pass. What then? Do I not in my mind but pay honor to the two Catos, to the wise Lelius, to Socrates, to Plato, to Zeno, to Cleanthe? I wish it to be well understood that I have veneration for all of them, that I respect these great names, and as many times as the remembrance of these illustrious personages returns to me, I rise *interiorly* before them to make a profound reverence.” Has not the Religious reason for saying as much, and even more, of all his companions, in each of whom he can remark such excellence and perfection as renders him incomparably more honorable than all pagans united? But we have in this to consider and follow the example of God, who confers great honor on man, since He forms his body with His own hands, creates his soul to His image and likeness, engraves upon his brow the traits of His beauty, supplies abundantly all his wants, produces in his favor the whole visible world, destines for his service all living creatures, preserves him in a most admirable

manner, so much as to give him one of the princes of His court to accompany him everywhere and never to lose sight of him. He has raised him to an infinite honor by the mystery of the incarnation of His divine Son, who procured for him by poverty, sufferings, and death, immense riches and eternal glory, giving him for the nourishment of his soul His own precious body and blood in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, and prepares for him in recompense for his good works the felicity of heaven and the enjoyment of the beatific vision for all eternity. Is there here cause for contemning any one for whom God has so much esteem? Does it not, on the contrary, teach us also to esteem and honor him? According to this, the spirit of God is a spirit of respect and honor towards man, and for which reason, the Wise Man calls it "a humane spirit:" and in speaking to Him, says: "Because Thou art Lord of all, Thou makest Thyself gracious to all: being master of power, judgest with tranquillity, and with great favor disposest of us," of man, to respect and honor him as the most noble of creatures: in like manner an artist places a higher estimate upon the most excellent of his productions, preserving and handling it with all possible care, and does not exhibit it indiscriminately, but to such persons only who have an appreciative taste. Thus we afford pleasure to our Lord by esteeming and cherishing those who are so precious to Him.

Again, the spirit of God and our Lord is a spirit of respect and esteem for man, inclining them ever to regard him with a special honor; and this spirit

they inspire and communicate to the just. Thus the Holy Spirit says of Jacob that which holy Church applies generally to all the just: "In-created and incarnate wisdom has conducted the just to his salvation and to his perfection by the way of uprightness and by the road of probity; she has discovered to him the Kingdom of God, and shown him how he should live therein: she has taught him the science of the saints and the manner of conversing with God and with men, and has made him modest and civil." St. Gregory Nazianzen, writing to Diocletian, says to him in the same idea: Where the spirit of Jesus Christ is, there is also the spirit of *modesty, civility, and respect*. The gift of piety serves much to this, for it gives an attraction for all men, making them appear as belonging to God in a very special manner. It fills the understanding with esteem for them, by causing one to consider them as divine creatures, images of God, His adopted children, and persons of very great quality, on account of their affinity to the Deity. It fills the will with affection and goodness for them, causing them to be looked upon with humility and respect, of speaking to them in terms of civility. Following these reasons and examples, it needs be that the Religious, to live well in community, should endeavor to acquire this spirit of respect regarding all those with whom he lives, studying to "prevent one another," as St. Paul terms it, in duties of civility.

Observe among you, said St. Dorotheus to his Religious, that mutual respect you owe to one

another; and when you meet, let each incline his head to his brother, in token of reverence, having thereby the intention to humble one's self before God in the person of his brother. Assuredly, it is well to conform to such a custom for giving respect to others, and preventing them in this duty. To act thus readily, we must, as St. Ignatius taught, accustom ourselves to behold our Lord in our brother, as His living and perfect image. St. Cæsarius, Archbishop of Arles, says likewise in his rule: Live all of you in a union of spirit and will, thus to honor God mutually in you, who have the happiness to be His temples. St. Augustine had said previously the same in his rule. To incite ourselves to this beautiful manner of conversing, let us call to mind the example of God, who has ever honored man, and who still honors him every day. Our Lord's great love for men caused St. Bernard to say: "When I name Jesus, when I speak of Him, I represent to myself a man meek and humble of heart, full of goodness, just, chaste, merciful, adorned with all sanctity, and exceedingly affable and civil." Let us also remember the example of the Blessed Virgin, who being perfectly well instructed by God, as well as by her virtuous parents, was sweet and gracious, giving to St. Joseph, to her cousin St. Elizabeth, and to persons of every description, that mark of respectful deference due them. Also, holy Church puts in her mouth these words of the Son of Sirach: "As the vine, I have brought a pleasant odor: and my flowers are the fruit of honor," my intercourse with

my neighbor has been perfumed with respect, probity, and civility. Let us recall, finally, the examples of the Saints, who have loved this virtue as a true off-shoot of charity and humility; who practised it to the fullest extent, and so to give evident proofs of it. Thus, when Magdalen announced to the Apostles that our Lord had arisen from the grave, St. Peter and St. John ran to the holy sepulchre to convince themselves of such joyous tidings, which they had to see to believe. The Evangelist mentions that they both ran; but that St. John being younger, and more active, ran more swiftly, and so arrived first at the sepulchre, where he could have entered directly, but he awaited for St. Peter, through respect, and as the Gloss adds, allowed him to enter first.

St. Luke relates of the first Christians, that all people had an attraction and a good will towards them, because they rendered themselves so universally agreeable and amiable, as is explained by St. Chrysostom. If asked by what means did they render themselves so agreeable to all, interpreters reply: by their virtue, particularly by the sincerity of their meekness and civility. It is known what civility and respect the two greatest lights of the desert, St. Paul, first hermit, and St. Anthony, showed for one another when having to share the bread they miraculously received by a raven. St. Paul, who had lived for a hundred years in a frightful solitude, without seeing any one, yielded, nevertheless, by a movement of the Holy Spirit, this honor to St. Anthony, as being his

guest, and St. Anthony referred the same honor to St. Paul, on account of his age: thus, the submission they evinced each other, the terms of esteem and respect they employed, and the innocent and sincere compliments that passed, caused them ultimately each to take hold of the loaf and to break it simultaneously, so that, as one did not wish to yield to the other in civility and respect, he was thus enabled to give at least one-half of the honor, since he could not bestow it all.

But the Saints are not alone civil and deferential during their lives, but are so even after death, some examples of which we here cite: When the body of St. Stephen, first martyr, was removed from Constantinople to Rome, under the pontificate of Pelagius, and placed in the tomb of St. Laurence, it is held as a true and unfailling tradition, that St. Laurence gave him through respect the right side. From thence comes also that he is styled, "Laurence the civil." When the remains of St. Martin were conveyed from Tours to Auxerre—to preserve them from the fury of the Danes—to be deposited in the Church of St. Germain, the bishop of the place, to terminate a contest that arose between the officers of Saints Martin and Germanus, had placed, by common consent, a leper between these two holy corpses, to see which of the two would cure the leper in this contact with them. St. Martin only cured the side next to him. The following day the leper, having turned his diseased side again towards St. Martin, was likewise cured. Thus did St. Martin restore him en-

tirely. Whereupon, St. Odon, Abbot of Cluny, who relates this, cries out: O admirable condescension of St. Germanus—who, by the greatness of his merits, restored the dead to life, has wished, nevertheless, to render, in his church, this honor to St. Martin, as his guest, and to appear less than he in performing miracles! St. Monegonda, Religieuse and native of Chartres, but dwelling at Tours, near to the tomb of the same St. Martin, died, after having had during her life the gift of healing all manner of disease. A blind man came to claim her assistance for recovering his sight. Then, as related by St. Gregory of Tours, when the blind man was asleep, the Saint appeared to him and made him understand that, in reward for the devotion and confidence he had placed in her, he would recover the sight of one eye, while praying at her sepulchre, but that she would leave to St. Martin the honor of curing the other, which she assured him would be effected if he made his devotions at the tomb of that Saint, and accordingly the prediction was verified. The Greeks, in their martyrology, mention for the 7th of April a Saint Theodosia, Religieuse, who, through respect, made room in her tomb for her deceased Superior.

While it is incumbent on Religious to act ever with civility and respect, many, however, fail in a becoming deference, by not wishing to mortify themselves—but rather to yield to their natural inclinations for acting with liberty and rudeness. Some offend in this, by bantering and scoffing, or mimicking the gestures, words, and actions of

every one, to render them ridiculous. Some, in being proud, haughty, and contemptuous, esteeming and approving but what they themselves do, and have difficulty in supporting the praise given to others. Some, again, blame indiscriminately and with precipitancy what they do not even understand—speaking boldly, regardless alike of age, condition, and merits of persons. Others have a coarse and rude manner of speaking and acting towards one another, even to using uncivil epithets and expressions. In a word, it is contrary to reason, that there should be less restraint in Religion with regard to civility and respect, than is exercised in the world; just as if God, whom we serve—the God of the universe, and before whose infinite majesty all princes are but as atoms,—did not merit to have, at least as much as men, servants and attendants as polite and civil, and with minds perfectly well directed.

Then, let it be remarked on this subject, that whilst we recommend to Religious to practise respect and civility towards those with whom they live, and towards every one, we do not wish to be understood as speaking of that vain civility that degenerates into useless secular compliments, nor into a multiplicity of superfluous ceremonies, both importunate and irksome, and which is no little hindrance to the sweetness of that honest liberty necessary to conversation to render it good and profitable. But we mean here to speak of a civility, respect, and esteem, which consist first in the interior, to esteem one's brother for the reasons

already given, to bear him affection, as fruit of this esteem; and then for the *exterior*, to speak well of him and to him, ever behaving towards him with civility, and to give such marks of respect and reverence as are due to the position and merits of each one, though he may have many glaring imperfections. These imperfections should not hinder us from acquitting ourselves of our obligations towards him, any more than we should cease to treat honorably the youthful princes and lords, or speak of them in any way derogatorily, but ever with great respect, independent of the weaknesses and failings in keeping with their tender years.

SECTION II.

Of Gratitude and Ingratitude.

Gratitude is a virtue that claims the obligation of returning for a benefit received something to the benefactor, by way of acknowledgment. It extends, then, to all those from whom we could receive some benefit: first to God, afterwards to our parents, to our Superiors, and finally to all men individually; and there should still be added, to our Blessed Lady, our good angels, and the Saints, who confer on us a thousands benefits, and render us an infinity of helps.

Some make gratitude to be a virtue distinct from all others, by having a particular and specified object, namely, *benefits*. However, St. Thomas does not distinguish it from the virtue of religion, as to the

benefits we receive from God,—nor from piety, for those our parents bestow upon us; nor from reverence, that is accorded to Superiors for those they grant us. But if we consider some particular individual who has done us a favor, and the necessity we are under to return him acknowledgment and affection, then gratitude is not a virtue mingled with and lost in another, but a separate virtue, that contains a special object, consisting in the obligation to recognize the benefit of some particular person: an obligation that is not of itself absolutely so strict as that which flows from the benefits that God, or our parents, or our Superiors bestow upon us. Hence, we do not here treat of that gratitude or ingratitude which refers to God, our parents, and Superiors, because such is not to our present purpose; and besides, we have elsewhere treated of the first, which is the principal. But we are to consider the gratitude and ingratitude that are exercised towards men in our ordinary intercourse with them.

We can, in some manner, refer gratitude to humility, which latter is the subject of this chapter. In truth, humble souls are naturally grateful: they are ever inclined to make return for the least pleasure afforded them. Then should ingratitude be cited as pride, for there is no greater arrogance than to evince ingratitude, says St. Jerome, quoted by St. Thomas, who also refers ingratitude to pride, which causes a man not to hold as from another the good he has received, or to believe too readily that he has well merited it. Seneca has also said, in a like sentiment, that pride and the good opinion

that each one has of himself should be classed first among the vices that render men ungrateful. There is no one to be found, he continues, who is not prone to judge favorably in his own cause, and to decide to his own advantage. From thence it comes that, whatever is done for us we always take in deduction from the actual amount due us, and thus we never believe we are esteemed as we deserve. Hence, pride is ungrateful, because it wishes neither to be under obligation, nor to return thanks. It is also pride, much oftener than generosity and disengagement, that desires neither to ask or to receive; for one must humble himself to request and to accept: that by such actions one acknowledges and declares necessity.

St. Thomas teaches that the first degree of the virtue of gratitude is the acknowledgment of the heart; the second is the thanks of the mouth, and that the third is the return of benefits. The least benefit, be it ever so small, merits recognition, and also to recognize him from whom it comes,—to have a kindly feeling for him, and to express to him good will: then it is to return him thanks with affection for himself and of esteem and praise for the good he has done: finally, that something should be given in return, as in one's power, being equal to, or even greater, says St. Thomas, in order to give gratuitously something, for not to return as much as has been received, is to give *nothing*.

It is the same with the degrees of the vice of ingratitude, but which should be taken in an opposite sense, because, says the Angelic Doctor, that

which is last in making a compound is the first to be undone when brought to ruin (or is decomposed). Thus, it is by the roof that a building is finished, and it is also by the roof that it is commenced to be demolished. Therefore, the first degree and the least effect of ingratitude is to give nothing in return for a benefit received: the second is not to thank the benefactor, and even to appear as not having been obliged: in a word, the third and worst degree, is to show no good will towards a benefactor. But, pursues this holy Doctor, as the affirmative makes the negative always understood, which is its contrary, it thence arises that, to the first degree of ingratitude, it agrees to render evil for good; to the second, to condemn by word the benefit received,—to blame and criticise it; and to the third, to hold it for an offence and an injury. The ungrateful person, says Seneca, is he who denies having received a pleasure extended him, who dissembles it, who gives nothing in return; but the supremely ungrateful is he who forgets it. In truth, if such a these do not pay, at least they are aware that they owe; for the knowledge of a benefit is imprinted on their minds, and its traces are stamped in their conscience, even though bad,—and thus it may happen that shame will ultimately warn them of their duty, or that some good impulse will induce them to discharge their long-neglected obligation. But the one who has absolutely lost the remembrance of a benefit can never become grateful.

Ingratitude is a serious and odious vice one

which is naturally held in abhorrence, and of which no one wishes to endure the disgrace, while at the same time this vice is not *uncommon*. There is no one, says Seneca, who does not agree in admitting that ingratitude is a shameful trait, since the ungrateful themselves complain of ingratitude; nevertheless, many fall into a fault that is universally blamed. In the commencement of the book of "Benefits," he says: Of the numerous serious vices that reign among men, there is none more common than that of *ingratitude*. Elsewhere, in the same book, he places it beneath all other vices, for he says: There will always be murderers, robbers, brigands, tyrants, traitors, and the sacrilegious; but ingratitude surpasses all these, for it can be said that it produces all these crimes, and that there is no wickedness committed without this abominable vice. The Persians, Macedonians, Athenians, with other nations, held it in such abhorrence, that it was permitted among them to cite an ungrateful person before justice, to take out a process against him as against a man guilty of a heinous crime, and when convicted he was severely punished. Among the Calabrians there was a law that directed him who had complaints to make of an ungrateful person, to ring a bell placed in a certain locality for this purpose. At the sound of this bell the judges presented themselves to hear his grievances, which if they found just and reasonable, they obliged the one guilty of ingratitude, under pain of a severe penalty, to make without delay some acknowledgment to his bene-

factor for the pleasure he had received. The historian relates on this score a facetious trick of an old worn-out horse. This animal, after having rendered his master good service, was driven out of his stable as useless, and reduced to seek his living where and as he could, or rather to become the prey of flies. In going along he was attracted by the scent of the hay rope attached to this bell above named; so he drew near, took hold of the rope forcibly, for he was hungry, and so by chance rang the bell. The judges arrived forthwith, and on learning to whom this poor animal belonged, how it had been driven away, they condemned the master to take it and keep it the balance of its life, just as if the horse had still all its strength.

Ingratitude being so heinous a vice, it should necessarily be banished from all communities; and since it is so common among men, as we are told by Seneca, it will not be difficult to find it sometimes in Religion, and often without its being perceived by the Religious who are infected by it.

Evil being much more universal than good, and virtue more rare than vice, there are also many more who are ungrateful than grateful. To be grateful, virtue is needed; to be ungrateful, self-love is all that is requisite. We sometimes, however, meet with noble souls, well-directed minds, beautiful and gifted natures, who have a remarkable attraction for giving and affording pleasure: these happy spirits are well disposed for gratitude, ready to evince it for the least benefit bestowed, as it is said of St. Ignatius and St. Teresa, who never per-

mitted the slightest favor rendered them to pass unnoticed.

Also, there is no benefit so trifling that a good heart does not make two-fold, by the esteem and tenderness it experiences to see itself under obligation. On the other hand, there are dispositions so selfish, close, and stingy, that it is with the greatest difficulty they give: such persons are naturally ungrateful, for they are mincing in everything—thanks, as all else; and as to benefits bestowed on them, they receive them but as their due, so never think of acknowledging them.

To exercise gratitude becomingly and to avoid the opposite vice, it is necessary to know the proper manner of giving and receiving pleasure, an acquirement of no small moment. One can never hold with a good heart that which is not given cheerfully, but as constrained and extorted. “A pleasure is due as it is made,” says again Seneca, and for this reason it should not be bestowed negligently, but with affection and care. Let us give as we would wish to receive: so give voluntarily and promptly; give cheerfully and without bargaining. We should give cheerfully and promptly, otherwise the heart will not be in it, for delay, without a just reason, supposes a want of good will. The most agreeable pleasures of all those that are most engaging are those which are found prepared, that come, so to say, in advance of one’s expectation, that are given without ceremony or delay. Care should also be taken that a kindness or favor should be accompanied by a cheerful air, a pleasing

countenance, and sweet and gracious words, thus plainly to testify that it is with a generous heart the gift is bestowed.

Now, how should a benefit be received? Some, says Seneca, do not alone exhibit pride and haughtiness in giving, but also in receiving. Receive, he continues, cheerfully, with an expression of joy, so as to afford satisfaction to him who extends the favor. He who receives pleasantly a kindness shown him, has paid his first indebtedness of gratitude. There are some who love greatly to receive, but prefer it to be secretly, not wishing to have witnesses of benefits bestowed on them: be persuaded that such persons have not a good heart; and there is as much glory for him who receives a benefit to publish it as for the giver *not* to make it known. Neither is it advisable to have shame in returning thanks for a benefit, for such a one is ungrateful, who recognizes a favor bestowed by secret thanks. Some others will accept with an air of negligence, and even with seeming insensibility, thereby causing the benefactor to doubt if he has afforded any pleasure. All such modes of receiving are of no value; nor is it better to return a pleasure instanter. There are some persons, who, on having a little present sent them, return one immediately, very ill-timed and unwisely, so much do they fear to be under an obligation. It is to give an affront to a present to return it so quickly, and to evince by so ready a retaliation, that you cannot endure an obligation, an unwillingness to owe, and he who owes not such a debt *cheerfully*, should pass for ungrateful.

Let us conclude this subject of gratitude and ingratitude in communities, by trying to become most ready to acknowledge favors bestowed, by affection and kindness both in word and manner, and to offer prayers for our benefactors. We should use all our efforts to exercise in an eminent degree the virtue of gratitude; and in order not to fail, we should fly the very shadow of ingratitude, look upon it as a great vice, that we should fear to be sullied with, and a crime that would disgrace a Religious; for the greatest affront you can offer a man is to call him ungrateful: because, says Seneca, "earth produces nothing more wicked than an ungrateful person." Learn of the brute even, not to be ungrateful, and to shun so infamous a vice. What gratitude do we not see in dogs? what testimonies of it do they not give to their masters? what caresses do they not return for a morsel of bread or a bone?

SECTION III.

Conclusion of this Chapter on Humility.

It is, then, essential that the Religious, to live well with others, should acquire a spirit of humility and respect, and humble himself greatly; otherwise, he may expect to have, as well as to give, trouble. When St. Simeon Stylites heard read in the church the Gospel on the beatitudes, he was so sensibly affected that he instantly resolved on becoming converted, and to give himself entirely to God. He asked of some one how he could

put into execution these counsels of our Lord, and render himself worthy of such magnificent promises. The reply given was, by retiring from the world, and in embracing the religious state. On receiving this answer, he went to a neighboring church, and there, on bended knee and suppliant posture, he begged God to show him the road in which he should walk to arrive at perfection. After this prayer, which was lengthy, he slept, and he subsequently related that during his repose he seemed to be delving into the earth, wherein he made a foundation, and that a man said to him as often as four times: Dig yet deeper; after which he assured him that the depth was sufficient. Acting upon this vision, St. Simeon became a Religious in a convent close by, where he commenced that admirable and extraordinary life that made him the "*wonder of the world,*" as he is called by Theodoret, and that caused him to be known, esteemed, and honored by kings and princes, as by entire nations. Thus he showed that he had dug deep, had laid a foundation of most profound humility, to enable him to endure to behold himself so venerated; for an almost infinite number of persons of every nation, rank, and clime resorted every day to his column to see him, to hearken to his instructions, to ask his counsel, to expose to him their doubts and difficulties, as also to present to him their sick to be cured. Then, on beholding him performing such great miracles, as healing all manner of disease and converting an entire people to the faith, they overwhelmed him with praise

and honor. But, in the midst of all this, he was ever modest and humble, and in heart he considered himself the least of men,—spoke of himself as such.

Once our Lord said: “When thou art invited to a wedding” (that is to say, in our version, when God has done you the favor and honor to call you into Religion, where, as we have shown elsewhere, *true nuptials* are celebrated, a contract is made by vows between our Lord and the Religious soul), “*sit in the lowest place.*” Behold the instruction of incarnate Wisdom to all Religious! But which is the “lowest place”? It is that one below which there are none. Therefore, we should at “weddings,” in Religion, place ourselves so low’ and be so humble, that in our own esteem we be beneath all with whom we live, and that we even go of our own accord to this descent, to lay so deep this foundation of humility, that there be *nothing* in the universe that we place not above ourselves, and prefer to ourselves.

Finally, if there be one single thing above which we prefer ourselves, we shall not have taken, as our Lord directs, the *last place*, the *lowest seat*. Then, let us now consider beneath what we should seek our place, and how to esteem ourselves as the least.

First, all such as are better and more excellent than we in perfections of nature, grace, or glory: as God, our Lord Jesus Christ, H’s most holy Mother, and all the blessed, evidently merit precedence. The same also can be said of the holy souls in purgatory, who are confirmed in the grace

of God; they commit no sin, and incessantly make acts of patience, humility, hope, contrition, penance, and charity.

Secondly, we should place ourselves beneath all men, of whatever nation, condition or age; for should we prefer ourselves to a single one, be he Turk, pagan, or even atheist, we do not keep the lowest place, nor fulfil the word of our Lord. But how is it possible, you will say, that I give precedence to an atheist, and esteem myself less than him,—I who am a Christian, by the mercy of God? I reply that the command of our Lord is to place yourself beneath all, and this should be executed without comment or interpretation.

2. Because this atheist, this man plunged in the abyss of vices, would have been, perhaps, better than you, more patient, humble, chaste, temperate, and charitable, if he had received the necessary graces and helps that God, by a special goodness, has bestowed on you. Thus, by well considering and examining yourself, you must suppose yourself worse, and as having committed more unpardonable sins than he. It is thus that we see daily, in point of science, that an illiterate man would make more progress in learning, if he applied himself thereto, than many who are so engaged, and yet receive but an ordinary education; because he has a keener and a more capacious intellect than they.

3. Who tells you this wicked man will not become converted, and that, by an extraordinary grace, he will not attain an eminent degree of virtue? or that it may not please God to

enlighten this atheist as to a knowledge of the divine truths and mysteries? And that you, on the contrary, will not relax, will not fall little by little, until you lose the remembrance of your sacred obligations, commit one mortal sin, deny your faith, and so cause your eternal ruin? Who has assured you that all this may not happen? Would you be the first to whom such a misfortune had occurred? Wherefore, you should ever keep yourself in humility, and then without difficulty you will range yourself beneath all persons whomsoever.

Thirdly, we should yet dig deeper this foundation, by placing ourselves beneath the demons, beneath Beelzebub and Lucifer. And how so? 1. On account of their nature, which renders them more noble and excellent than we. 2. On account of sin; they having committed but one single mortal sin of thought, whereas our sins are of all possible kinds and degrees—of thought, word, and deed, of commission and omission; original and actual, mortal and venial: original sin is at least in all, and is *essentially mortal*, since it causes the death of the soul, by depriving it of the grace of God. Their sin was single, whereas ours are almost infinite; for we have offended God in some manner, by our senses, by the members of our body, and by all the powers of our soul. Moreover, did our Lord become incarnate, did he live, and suffer, and die for them, as he has for our salvation? And, however, have we fully profited by all these advantages and graces in our favor?

Is it not then most just that we esteem ourselves less than them ?

Lastly, we should place ourselves beneath everything in the universe: below the beasts, the serpents, the toads, and the vilest insects ; below the plants, the trees, and the grass ; below the elements, the rocks, the grains of sand, the atoms of dust : in a word, there should not be a single thing, however vile, that we would not exalt through respect, and in preference to ourselves, and so fulfil the words of our Lord. The reason for this is that all these things are pure, exempt from sin, whereas we have often offended God, and still offend Him every day. Thus, you should understand that there is nothing in the universe so vile and infamous, nothing that so defiles and dishonors a creature, as sin : that all created things merit esteem and honor, as being the works of God ; but sin alone has nothing of God, and consequently contains nothing good, and therefore is the object of all and every possible opprobrium. “The sinner,” as says our Lord, “or he who commits *sin*, is *the servant of sin*”—is consequently less even than sin itself ; as the *servant* is always less than the *master*. Again, all these created things are in all times and places inviolably directed to the end for which God made them, and thus accomplish incessantly His will, and by this means honor and glorify Him in their way. “Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all ye deeps. Fire, hail, snow, ice, stormy winds, which fulfil His word,” as sings the Royal Prophet. But men on the contrary, very far from doing God’s will,

and tending to the end for which they were created, viz. : His love, honor, and service, do and propose to themselves quite opposite ends. Do we pretend to honor God in all our actions? Do we love Him as we should, and as He commands us? Do we never fail to promote His service? Be careful then, for all such reasons, from preferring yourself even to a *gnat*, a worm of the earth, for fear lest it cannot be said of you what follows in the same Gospel: "Leave the place of honor to *one more honorable than thou*,"—to this worm, this gnat,—which is in some sort more worthy than you. Behold the rank that humility suggests we should take, and the place we should be willing to occupy in religion and in the world! Then we shall deserve to hear said to us, "*Friend, go up higher*," for he who humbles himself shall be exalted.

It is the effect of humility, the recompense of the humble, to be honored with the friendship of God, and rendered capable of rising higher in gratitude, in affections, in virtue and grace. Thus humility disposes the soul, as a most efficient preparative, to receive the sublimest lights and knowledge of the mysteries of faith, the holiest affections, the purest love, strength, and courage to practise heroic virtues, and an intimate union with God. As the Almighty never works so happily nor so munificently as when upon nothingness: so also He never makes a soul greater nor more elevated than when it profoundly humbles itself. Wherefore, our Lord says in this mystic sense: "Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little

children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." You must be very small and humble, or you will never enter the kingdom of God,—of grace, in this life, and which consists, as is taught by St. Paul, in virtue, sanctity, tranquillity of soul, and in the joy of the Holy Ghost.

We should, in Religion, use the utmost assiduity to acquire and to practise this most important virtue of humility, without which it is impossible for a Religious to live well, either for himself or for others; and therefore he should employ the means given to lead to so desirable an end. One of the most proper and efficacious means is to consider ever the virtues of others and our own defects, from whence arises humility for yourself and esteem and respect for all others. Thus it was that the Saints practised self-humiliation, and set so high an estimate on the virtues of others. St. Anthony, after having visited St. Paul, first hermit, said to two of his disciples, on his return: "Wretched sinner that I am, to falsely bear the name of monk: I have seen Elias,—I have seen John the Baptist in the desert!" and on pronouncing these words, struck his breast with sorrow and compunction. St. Macarius of Egypt, on coming to Scete, to the monastery of Abbot Pambo, upon the mountain of Nytria, the day for celebrating the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the most senior fathers besought him to favor the community assembled by giving a little exhortation. The Saint replied: I do not yet deserve to bear the name of Religious, but have seen those who were such in reality. Five years

since God inspired me to go into the desert, there to consider what I beheld. In this desert I discovered a pond, in the midst of which was an islet, whereon were various animals who had come to drink; among them were two men, divested of all clothing, the sight of whom filled me with fear, apprehending lest they were spirits. But these men, perceiving my timidity, called out: Do not fear: we are human beings. We left our monastery by common consent, to dwell in this desert, and have lived here for forty years. Behold, then, my brothers, if I have not reason for saying, I do not yet merit to bear the name of solitary, in comparison with these two extraordinary beings. Wherefore, dispense me, please, from attempting to instruct you upon your holy profession.

We read in the annals of Citeaux of a lay-brother who so effectually kept his eyes fixed upon the virtues of others and his own imperfections, that after having passed the greater part of the night in thus examining his failings and bemoaning his infidelities, would, on the first occasion, speak of himself as a "wicked sinner," and approve of and praise the lives of his brothers, one of them, in particular, who was uncommonly virtuous. Once this Religious, after his usual nocturnal self-abasement, went very early in the morning to find St. Bernard, complaining bitterly to him, saying in sincere sentiments of humility: Wo be to me! Reverend Father, for I am a poor, miserable sinner! Last night, I remarked in such a brother, *thirty* virtues, without being able, with all my research,

to discover a single one in myself. Wherefore, do I conjure your paternity, to have pity on me, and to pray our Lord to show me mercy, and to grant me at least some little virtue. It was naught but his profound humility, says St. Bernard, that made him speak thus, and so readily see the virtues of his brothers, while it hid his own, which, however, were quite brilliant.

Simply remarking the good actions of others, attentively considering the humility, patience, obedience, charity, and other virtues of the Saints, is certainly a powerful incentive for humbling and confounding ourselves. Do we not see, in fact, men, women, and mere children—of the same nature as ourselves, subject to like weaknesses—nevertheless, do and suffer most heroic things, that we even shrink from in thought; and that, in comparison with such gigantic virtues, we are but novices and pigmies? This knowledge is a great remedy to vanity and to all good opinion we naturally entertain for self. To thus behold the Simeons, the Daniels, and other "*Stylites*," leading the mortified lives they passed upon their columns: to see the anchorites of the Thebais and elsewhere,—all those ancient Fathers in solitude and caverns; those Religious of the first ages in their monasteries, combating as they did with nature and the demon, should suffice to annihilate our pride. But some further reference will be made to this in the concluding chapter of this volume.

In truth, the consideration of such examples, the virtues of the Saints, and particularly of the

various members of one's Order, be they either our predecessors or contemporaries, ought to serve alike to humble us in spirit and to imprint in us a low opinion of ourselves. St. Bernard said, in the sermon he delivered on St. Benedict: "St. Benedict was Abbot, and so also am I: O Abbot and Abbot! We bear mutually the same name as to dignity; but in one, that is to say, in myself, there is but the shadow of this great title." We should, in like manner, and with much greater reason, when considering the virtues of these illustrious persons and Saints, and our own, weighing the one and the other in a just balance, say: O Religious! they were Religious and so am I; they were Religious of such an Order, and so also am I. O Religious and Religious! what a difference! They were *truly* Religious, whilst I am but the phantom of one: their patience, their humility their obedience, and all their many virtues attained the highest degree of perfection, and mine have but the appearance and the name of virtue.

Such reflections are calculated to render a Religious most humble, keeping him ever vile in his own eyes, banishing from his mind and heart, and from his whole conduct, all pride and ambition, which are alike prejudicial to Religion and the Religious. Wherefore, all possible means of ingress should be closed to pride. It was with this intention that the glorious patriarch St. Francis replied, when Cardinal Ugolin, Protector of the Order of St. Francis, said to him, that it might prove to God's glory and the good of the Church, for the

Saint to permit such of his Religious as would be, by their virtue and learning, most competent for the prelacy, to be promoted to such a dignity: My lord, my brothers are called "Friars Minors," in order that they may not think to become greater. If you wish them to produce fruit in the Church, keep them in the spirit of their vocation, and permit not in any manner that they be raised to ecclesiastical dignities. Behold what in this respect were the sentiments of St. Francis! A long time prieriously, St. Pachomius held to the same opinion, but more rigorously; for he did not wish that any of his Religious should be priests: saying it was much more advantageous for Religious not alone to refrain from seeking any preferment and honor, but even to retrench from monasteries all occasions of the same, as they give rise frequently to dangerous dissensions and jealousies. As a spark of fire that falls upon a gleaning, if not instantly extinguished, reduces to ashes the revenue of the annual harvest: so when a fatal thought of ambition glides into the minds of Religious, that urges them to wish for preferments, to hold some rank in the Church, if they do not promptly drive from their hearts this desire of glory, they will soon lose the spirit of piety that cost them much to acquire. If now it is different in Religion, clerks and priests, and those who are more exalted still, should draw no vanity from their elevation, but keep themselves lowly in their own esteem, thus to enhance the brilliancy of their honors by humility and modesty.

CHAPTER VIII.

THREE OTHER NECESSARY PRINCIPLES TO LIVE WELL
IN COMMUNITY.

FIRST, one should be blind. Cassian tells us: To live well in community, three things should necessarily be observed, in order to be able to say with the Psalmist: "I was as the deaf who heard not, and as the dumb who *uttered not a word*;" I conducted myself as one who has neither ears nor tongue. From this example, form the resolution to act towards the affairs of others in community as if you were deaf, dumb, and blind; such a course being of paramount importance and singular utility. To be yet more explicit, and to place the foregoing principles in the best light, we will first speak of the blind. Thus, we are naturally prompted to look at what is presented our sight, to gaze upon it, and to know it: that after seeing and knowing it, we speak of it, as also to listen to what is said in its regard. Such is the order observed by nature. Consequently, blindness, silence, and deafness are opposed to this natural order. It is, then, necessary for all who wish to live wisely in community, and to pass their days sweetly and usefully therein, to close their eyes to a thousand casual events, and to become blind. Democrites,

it is said, in order to excel in philosophy, and to meet with less distraction in scientific pursuits, made himself physically blind. So he who wishes to become a true Religious, to be deeply impressed with the truths of virtue, and to attain perfection, should necessarily *mortify* his *sight*, and conduct himself with those with whom he lives as one who is stone blind. Let us now see in what this blindness consists.

1. It is to have no eyes to consider the actions of others,—to give attention to their defects,—to remain undisturbed as to what they say or do : it is not to interfere with their affairs, when neither duty, charity, nor obedience obliges thereto ; but solely to be concerned with your own affairs,—your duty, of your advancement in perfection : nay, more, it is to be in the midst of a crowd as a solitary and to live as if there were none in the world besides God and yourself, in pursuance of an old adage of a Father of the Desert : “ If a Religious cannot say there is but God and myself in the world, let him not expect to possess perfect repose, nor arrive at a high degree of virtue.”

2. When a Religious cannot effectually close his eyes so as not to observe the actions of others, he should at least feign not to see them. Thus, when he is forced to have some knowledge of the imperfections and faults of others, let him not go beyond this ; let him not criticise or censure them ; on the contrary, he should be ready to excuse them, as charity demands, and watch over himself, that he may not be sullied by similar failings, as a

person who is constrained, from force of circumstances, to inhale an impure air,—to come in contact with contagious diseases,—ever employs a preservative from danger ; so, in like manner, the Religious who cannot avoid beholding some faults in others, should not permit these defects to injure him by their evident proximity, but be most watchful over his own conduct. St. Teresa gave this counsel, while she reduced it to practice excellently well. Thus, she wrote to a Religious of another Order : Before these monasteries of reform had been commenced, I dwelt for twenty-five years in a community of one hundred and twenty-four members, So great a number should not disturb you, but be serviceable for your advancement, did you but live as though there were none other besides God and yourself in the house. So long as you are not in authority, which obliges you to notice all that transpires in the monastery, do not permit yourself to observe what passes, nor to be disturbed thereby ; but think only of yourself, and endeavor to acquire the virtues that you see in each one. Acting upon this principle, I was as *alone*, though dwelling with *so many*. Such a course acquired for me a great good, because, in truth, we can everywhere love God, and no one can prevent us from it. Herein consists that holy and salutary blindness of Religious : consequently, it drives far away the spirit of curiosity, it banishes the desire to know and to examine the affairs of others, and ultimately retrenches the chief cause of suspecting and speaking of their actions, as also preventing or favoring those

private parties that are sometimes formed in communities. Thus, it causes serious evils in Religion, when any one meddles in the affairs of others. So let us not leave our own dwelling to see what is taking place in that of our neighbor. Those, says St. John Climachus, who are ready to pry into the actions of others,—to remark upon, and to cavil with their faults, show that they have no knowledge of their own, nor desire to correct themselves; for whoever knows the grievousness of his own sins does not care to see those of others; feeling he can never give sufficient time for regretting and weeping over his own offences and negliences.

Never amuse yourself, says St. Dorotheus, with noticing in the monastery whatever is done and said by others, or whence they go or come, for such knowledge will be of no avail to you; but rather turn your eyes and attention on yourself, to think of your eternal salvation. But behold some reasons why Religion obliges us to this wise and salutary blindness:

First, we came not into Religion to think of others, but to attend to our own perfection: God not having charged us with watching over the actions of others—our Sisters—but only of our own: nor will He demand of us an account of their conscience; but if we have neglected the means afforded us for acquiring the degree of virtue to which He calls us. We should consider that He addresses each one *individually* in the rebuke He made St. Peter, who asked a question concerning the death of St. John: “So I will have him to remain till I

come: what is that to thee?" it is no concern of yours, but do what I desire of you—"Follow thou Me." Here we are plainly instructed to watch over ourselves, without inquiring curiously into what regards our neighbor; for, "*He that feareth God will turn to his own heart.*" You will never be truly interior and devout, if you fix not your attention on yourself alone. If you occupy yourself with God and the care of your own soul, you will be little touched with any exterior object.

The memorable inscription engraved over the portals of the Delphic temple, consecrated to Apollo, whom the pagans held for the god of wisdom, "*Know Thyself,*" invites us to it: teaching us that to be wise, such an exercise is absolutely necessary. Moses, speaking of the creation of man and of his first employments, says that God placed him in the midst of the terrestrial paradise and the garden of delights, "in order that he might cultivate it, and take care of it." Some understand, in a mystical sense, this paradise and garden as being the soul of man. Then where is the gardener who neglects his own ground to cultivate that of his neighbor, which does not profit himself, but rather occasions his loss, to be thus occupied in the care of another's garden? He would pass for a man without sense or judgment. Then do not employ on another the care you should keep for yourself; and when you feel moved by some impulse of curiosity to regard the actions and failings of your neighbor, of whom you have not the charge, give to God this impulse—sacrifice

this curiosity, and turn your eyes and your mind, that they may rest on yourself alone, and repeat what Tobias said to his son, and St. Paul to his disciple Timothy: "*Think of thyself.*"

CHAPTER IX.

ONE SHOULD BE DUMB IN A COMMUNITY.

TO live well with others, and to find repose, it does not suffice for a Religious to be blind, in the manner we have mentioned, but he should be dumb, and understand well how to remain silent. I will tell you, said Seneca to his friend Lucillius, what you should observe in the world, and I add in Religion, so as to lead a secure life, and as it were, be sheltered from many faults and discomforts. There being nothing more useful to you for this end than to disengage yourself from the embarrassment of exterior affairs, to keep yourself in peace and tranquillity, to speak little to men and much to yourself.

A Religious who is a great talker can effect but evil, and create much trouble for himself and others. "A babbler," a man full of tongue, says the Holy Spirit, "is terrible in his city," the house in which he dwells. Wherefore it is that reserve and silence are most necessary in a community, and that the Religious who wishes to have and to preserve peace should be dumb in a thousand occurrences. It is now asked, when and how should he observe such absolute silence? I reply, first, it is never to speak of the affairs of the house,

so long as he has not the responsibility of them ; but to permit them to be directed in accordance with the orders and movements of those who have them in charge. It is to make no remarks as to the dispositions and changes made by Superiors, nor of anything regarding their government ; but to leave them to act in perfect freedom, and to receive all that they deem proper to do with respect, humility, and submission. The Carthusians have a rule expressed in these terms : “If a Religious has permission to speak, we do not understand it to be to make inquiries concerning the affairs of the house, and to discourse upon or to trouble himself in any manner with what regards its government, when he has not such orders from the Superior.” St. Basil forbids expressly in his rule all curious inquiries as to the designs of the Superior in the government of the house, and all comments upon or researches in what he does or directs. The reason of this prohibition is that the Religious cannot thus act without embarrassing the Superior, and without depriving him of the power to dispose of persons and things as he judges suitable, and without, moreover, wronging the good of the community, as well as the private good of inferiors. Nay, by his meddlesome curiosity and discourses, he often constrains the Superior to change many things he had already resolved upon, or had usefully established. After having confided our souls, that are so dear to us, to the guidance of our Superior, who has to render an account of them to God, we lack judgment and

reason, says St. Basil, and we are most impertinent, to disturb him in the administration of affairs of much less importance.

2. We should be dumb in Religion, so as not to speak evil, nor to murmur against our Superior in what regards him personally, for it is most difficult in so doing not to offend God. You certainly owe him all respect, in quality of his being Superior, and because God has not given the charge to you. Blessed Jourdain, second General of the Order of St. Dominic, a most prudent man, gave two memorable counsels for living well in community: the first was, never to murmur and speak ill of the Father Prior.

3. One should be most careful in Religion to observe silence regarding the affairs and occupations of those with whom he lives. The second counsel of Blessed Jourdain was: "Let others go as they will, but you attend to your own way;" that is to say, meddle not with others, allow them to proceed as they can, without it disturbing you, giving yourself no trouble as to what concerns them; however, it should be added, in things wherein charity, obedience, or duty does not exact more of you; otherwise be not troubled at what others say or do, but think alone of yourself, of your advancement in virtue, of performing your duty faithfully. Silence is also necessary so as not to detract others, to make reports of them to the Superior, or any one else, contrary to charity. In fact, one should refrain from all words that could possibly in any way give offence: because charity so directs it; because we

should live in peace with all ; because we are all useful to one another in some way, there not being one single member of the house who has not some dependence on the others.

4. Moreover, you should be most circumspect in speaking of your own affairs, in discovering your heart, in manifesting your secrets ; for a secret made known is no longer yours, and you know not often to whom you speak, each one receiving and interpreting the thing told him much more in accordance with the disposition of his mind, than in that of the intention of him who tells it. “Open not thy heart to every man, lest he repay thee with an evil turn,” abuse your sincerity, “and speak reproachfully to thee.” Solomon also said : “Discover not thy secret to a stranger, lest he exult over thee when he hath heard it, and cease not to upbraid thee.”

You should never speak of yourself with esteem, nor in terms of praise; for this naturally displeases those who hear you, and who may not have an equally good opinion of you, or in keeping with your own. “Let another praise thee, and not thy own mouth; a stranger, and not thy own lips.” He who acts otherwise, without urgent necessity, says St. Chrysostom, far from acquiring esteem, renders himself ridiculous and deserving of contempt.

Again, this circumspection and silence should also be observed when you are reviled, or some wrong has been done you. Cassian particularly remarked this in saying: “When you are con-

temned, when some injustice is said or done you, remain firm and unalterable in silence, thinking ever of this psalm of David's: 'I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue,' and 'I have set a guard to my mouth,' so as not to reply; 'when the sinner stood against me, I was dumb, and was humbled.' "

I know that in certain cases one may justify himself and declare his innocence; thus, when it is for the glory of God, the good of the neighbor, as we have elsewhere shown. But when this refers only to yourself, to some diminution of esteem and honor among those from whom you meet contempt, it is better to remain silent than to speak. At the same time, this silence being most difficult, it should be supported after the example of our Lord, and so learn to utter no word when insulted, as this divine Master, in whose doctrine you profess to believe, and also to imitate His life. We know that our Lord was accused before Caiphas, the priests and scribes, by many false witnesses, with all possible violence and injustice; and being able to reply easily to them, of showing clearly the treachery of their accusations, and His innocence, He would not defend Himself, but permitted them to vilify His honor, His doctrine, and His life. The high priest rising up said to Him with authority: "Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these witness against Thee?" "*But Jesus held His peace,*" persevered in His silence. And wherefore, the high-priest said to Him: "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us, if Thou be

the Christ, the Son of God." Then, through respect for the Divinity, and to make known a truth of so great importance, that He had come to bring and teach to the world, Jesus replied: "*Thou hast said it;*" not by way of self-defence, or to show that He had been wronged, or in order to reproach the witnesses for their untruthfulness and malice, but to declare simply who He was, conformably to the interrogation of the judge.

In like manner, being accused before Pilate by the chief priests and by the Jews, who reproached him with great crimes: of being seditious, a disturber of the public peace, an impostor, an enemy of the emperor and the state, that He created revolts, and tried to throw off the yoke of the law, so as not to be subject to tribute, and that he was culpable of high treason and deserving death,—He could readily have set at naught all these accusations by two single words, and thus prove His innocence: however, He uttered not a syllable; He opposed but silence to the accusations of the priests, nor would He otherwise justify himself before Pilate, who would judge Him, though desirous to acquit and save Him, because he saw in the depth of these accusations His innocence, and the wickedness, envy, hatred of His accusers, no less than by the warning given him by his wife, who bade him beware, for the accused was a "just man." Wherefore Pilate again asked: "Answerest thou nothing? Behold in how many things they accuse thee." *But Jesus still answered nothing:* "so that Pilate wondered." He pursued the same course in presence of King Herod,

“ who was desirous of a long time to see Him: because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to see some sign wrought by Him.” And he questioned Him in many words: but our Lord answered him nothing. His continued silence so offended this prince, that he called Him ignorant, stupid, madman, and all without our Lord opening His mouth to justify Himself.

Let us now ask: Why so great, so invincible a silence? Of what use to remain dumb in such urgent occasion for speaking. Was not our Lord competent to reply? He who is the substantial word of God, did He lack for words? Being truth essential, could He fail in speech? Did it not influence His life, His honor, and all that could most sensibly touch a man? Was He not innocent, and innocence itself? and could He not prove it by the strongest reasons, and a divine eloquence? Was it difficult for Him to confound the wickedness of His adversaries? He did not wish to do so. His example was needed to emulate us; we, who are before Him but as worms of the earth, being sullied with so many crimes, should learn to be reserved and silent when we are offended: it was only for us to merit grace by following Him.

Wherefore, in such occurrences, let us at once cast our eyes upon our Lord, accused, blamed, contemned, outraged, and most unjustly condemned by men: let us honor, adore, and embrace Him in this state of affliction and silence, borne for love of us; unite ourselves intimately to Him, and try by patience, humility, courage, and love, to imitate

Him. When nettled by an affront offered you, so as to feel emotions of impatience or anger rising within your heart, or when envy excites you to reply, instantly, without giving leisure to such emotions to increase, represent to yourself our Lord before Caiphas, Pilate, and Herod, accused, reviled, and loaded with every kind of opprobrium, and repeat several times these words: "*Jesus replied nothing to all this:*" hold these words to your wounded heart as a remedy, a salutary dressing, till it is healed entirely, and all disquietude ceases. Be in the disposition to bear patiently and silently, in the spirit of our Lord, the injuries you have received; add still, to the example of our Lord, that of God, which is most remarkable. What silence does He not preserve in the midst of so many blasphemies poured forth continually against His infinite majesty! What does He reply to the many crying outrages made Him, to the enormous sins committed! He utters not a word, He shows no anger, does not strike with thunder, but endures, patiently and sweetly, those who offend Him; and at the moment even that they are doing Him evil, far from annihilating them, precipitating them into perdition, as He might justly do, He but loads them with His benefits.

Behold how and in what the Religious, in order to live well in community, and to prevent much of the difficulty met with, should be dumb, and preserve silence! A silence kept not only individually, as we are keeping it, but also in general, is of paramount necessity in Religious communities.

The occasion here presenting itself to treat this subject more amply and in detail, we judge it expedient to undertake it.

SECTION I.

The Importance of the Proper Government of the Tongue.

Though the tongue is one of the smallest members of the human body, it can, nevertheless, effect great good or great evil. "Death and life," says the Wise Man, "are in the power of the tongue." When the Egyptians sacrificed to Segalion, their god of silence, they cried out: "Man owes to his tongue his happiness or his misery; it is the tongue that causes his good or bad fortune." When Pittacus of Mitylene, one of the seven wise men of Greece, was required to cut the part of the victim that was the best and the worst, he cut unhesitatingly the tongue. Bias, who was also one of these seven famous "wise men," did likewise.

St. James, in his canonical epistle, speaks elegantly of this. He says: The tongue is indeed a little member and boasteth great things, for good and for evil, for virtue and for vice, for salvation and for perdition. Wherefore he compares it to the rudder or helm of a vessel; this rudder is small, but its movements and its government are of great importance for the preservation or the loss of the vessel. If it is well managed, it conducts happily to port; if unskilfully used, the ship is dashed

against rocks and shoals, where it is injured and eventually wrecked. Then, pursuing the same subject, and employing other comparisons, he says: "Behold how small a fire, what a great wood it kindleth!" "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity," which by a spark, a word, can ruin the neighbor, taking from him his honor, his goods, and his life. "The tongue is a world of iniquity, *an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison:*" it empowers to teach, to persuade, or to command men. It is a member ever in motion, which has difficulty in restraining itself, that desires continually to be moving and spreading its venom. Wherefore it was that Satan, in afflicting the body of the holy man Job with ulcers, and torturing all his members with disease, touched not his tongue, leaving it sound and intact, knowing well that the tongue is for man a principle of sin, and hoping that Job, in the extreme violence of his ills, would employ this member in blasphemy and to inveigh against God.

Who can enumerate, says St. Bernard, the defects caused by the little member of the tongue? Who can count the impurities it amasses on the *uncircumcised* lips? or say how great and prejudicial the damage effected by words issuing from an irregular mouth?

The wise Son of Sirach says in a like sense: "*Many have fallen by the edge of the sword,*" in divers times, places, and countries, in different conflicts and battles, by sea and by land, "*but not so many as have perished by their own tongue.*"

The tongue is also made in the form of a sword or lance, but it is much more dangerous and mortal. The sword can but wound or kill the body, whereas the tongue destroys both soul and body, one's honor, wounding all generally, without hope of cure. "Their tongues," says David, "are a sharp sword:" but according to the version of the Septuagint, "their words are as the strokes of a sword." Then, since the tongue is our mortal enemy, we should hold ourselves particularly on our guard against it. Abbot Sisois, in the "Lives of the Fathers," made for the space of thirty years this prayer: "My Lord Jesus Christ, defend me from my tongue, as from my greatest enemy, who every day makes me fall into some new fault."

We can moreover say that our tongue is a ferocious beast and a demon. This was the opinion of Father Avila, who, in writing to a priest, gave him the following advice: Watch most carefully over the government of your tongue, and from which you should protect yourself as from the demon. Keep it bound as a savage and dangerous animal, and do not unloose it to speak but with the greatest caution. Lions and tigers are kept locked in iron cages, or when loosed from their enclosure, are always held by a chain to keep them in subjection, and prevent them from roaming or doing what their natural ferocity would prompt. Wherefore, wise nature enclosed the tongue in the mouth as in a prison, placing the teeth and lips as an advance guard, or as barriers to keep it in check: Wherefore Varron, in Lactance, says it is called *lingua*—

tongue—*ligula*, from the Latin verb *ligare*, which signifies *to tie*, because it should be always tied, to prevent escape.

Such is the importance of the government of the tongue. Therefore, marked attention should be given to its management; you have to live with your enemy, you have constant intercourse with him. You should treat it as if you had a lion in charge. St. James tells us: “Man has discovered means to subject beasts, birds, serpents, and such animals as are most rebellious; but he has not yet found, with all his wisdom and power, a means for keeping his tongue in perfect discipline.” For this he needs grace; nor will God refuse it to him. Thus the Holy Spirit recommends to us by Ecclesiasticus: “Watch, *lest thy tongue serve as a stumbling-block to thee;*” be very careful or it will cause you to speak some words that will sully your soul, dishonor you, make you pass for indiscreet and foolish, for a light, inflated spirit. Every one who desires to work out his salvation, to acquire virtue, to preserve himself from numerous evils, and to become wise, ardently wishes for this grace, and therefore says with the wise Son of Sirach: “Who will keep guards to my mouth, and place on my lips a cunning seal, a stamp of wisdom, in order that I may sin not by my words, and that my tongue may not lose me.” Curious rings of copper are so made that they cannot be opened excepting by the adjustment of certain letters to form a word, which holds the place of a key to the ring. By the *skilful seal* alluded to, the Wise

Man seems to say that our mouth should be in possession of a seal with secret springs, which could not open but by words of virtue and prudence, and such as relate to the service and glory of God and our Lord, according to this proverb of St. Ambrose : “ May Jesus Christ, the Word of God, be the seal to our mouth and the divine lock whereby it will be closed and opened.”

To obtain this grace, two things must be done. The first is to ask it of God and to say with David : “ Lord, place guards at the door of my mouth, and vigilant sentinels upon my lips,” who will not open them but with great deliberation, and as required. And with Ecclesiasticus, who, speaking of uncircumcised lips, and the danger of an ill-regulated tongue, makes to God this prayer : “ O Lord, Father and sovereign ruler of my life, leave me not to the power of my tongue, nor suffer me to fall by it,” to sin. And with Esther, who having to speak to King Assuerus, asked first of God the grace for so doing, saying : “ Lord, give me a well-ordered speech to my mouth,” arranged according to reason, “ and adjusted to thy will and laws.” And holy Church makes allusion to this when she says : “ Lord, make me speak as I should ; put into my mouth words delivered by the movement of Thy Spirit, *that I may not speak the works of men.*”

It is for God to govern our tongue. “ The wise man,” say Solomon, “ should think of what he says,” prepare his words with care, “ but when his tongue makes attempt to express the thoughts

of his mind, it is necessary for God to aid man anew," and govern his tongue. Otherwise, it will readily slip, misapply words, so as not to announce what the mind has conceived and prepared. Are we not taught this by daily experience? "The tongue," as Deacon Agapet said to the Emperor Justinian, "is an instrument that slips and quibbles most readily." St. Gregory of Nyssa remarked: It is so slippery that it readily swerves in turning. David elegantly compares it to a razor and to a surgeon's lancet, which, if not skilfully managed, slips and cuts where it should not. Therefore, on account of the tongue's readiness to commit faults, it is absolutely necessary that God govern it, besides the precaution used by man, to "speak little and well."

The second thing to be observed is that man must determine, on his part, to give special attention to the government of his tongue, and say with David: "I have resolved to watch most carefully over my tongue, so as not to commit faults in speaking." For this he has to think of what has been said of the good and evil caused by the tongue, and that he also reflect on these words of the Holy Spirit: "He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his soul," placing it out of reach of evil, "but he that hath no guard on his speech shall meet with evils." The indiscreet and silly man owes his loss to his tongue. Honor and esteem ever accompany the discourse of a wise man, who knows what he says. Wherefore the Holy Spirit again instructs: "Melt down thy gold and silver, and make a balance for

thy words and a just bridle for thy mouth: take heed lest thou slip with thy tongue and fall in the sight of thy enemies, who lie in wait for thee, and thy fall be incurable unto death.”

Let the man who is desirous of his good endeavor to follow this salutary advice, that he execute what has been said to him, and resolve as above with David, that he may imitate in this the holy Abbot Pambo, who, as related in the tripartite history, went to seek some more senior and learned fathers than himself, in order that they would teach him a psalm and give him some salutary advice, so that when he was told to study the thirty-eighth psalm, the first words of which were for the guarding of the tongue, “I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue,” Pambo wished to hear no further than this, saying: That will suffice for the present. The historian adds: “He was *nineteen years* studying and meditating this versicle, which he avowed, after that time, he had not yet perfectly understood nor sufficiently well practised.

SECTION II.

On Silence.

This proper government of the tongue is two-fold: viz., *silence* and *words*. Let us commence by silence, thereby imitating nature, who thus proceeds with man, who is for some time in his infancy without speaking. St. Chrysostom, speaking on silence, with his wonted eloquence says some won-

derful things to excite us to love it. "I tell you," he says, "that it will be as a wall to shelter you from many evils, that it will raise you above your passions, and will render you invulnerable to all the wiles of your enemies. Silence, well understood, united to the fear of God, is a fiery chariot, which, like Elias, carries the soul to heaven. O silence! happiness of the Religious, ladder to heaven, path to the kingdom of God: O silence! source of compunction, mirror in which the sinner beholds his sins, the principle of light, meekness, and humility, bridle to the ears, safeguard of the eyes, and the tie of the tongue: O silence! assured port, in which tranquillity of mind is found; school for reading, for prayer, for contemplation, aid to acquire all virtues, and *source of all good.*" These signal praises and these admirable advantages which the "golden-mouthed" Saint ascribes to silence, should unquestionably make us esteem, love, and observe it. But I will call attention to two or three of the above-named advantages in particular.

The first is, that silence has ever been acknowledged as one of the principal foundations, and one of the firmest, most essential supports of all religious orders. St. Bernard calls silence "the guardian of Religion," and in it resides our strength, according to this passage of Isaias: "*In silence and in hope shall our strength be,*" speaking little to men, to hope much in God. The author of the Life of St. Dominic expresses it thus: "As to what regards silence, which may be considered as

the foundation of my holy Order, it is strictly prohibited to break it, and such care and vigilance was given for its observance, that it was deemed criminal to speak without most urgent necessity." Another author, of the Society of Jesus, calls silence the most important, the fundamental point of Religion; so that all holy founders of religious orders have wisely ordained the observance of it. They knew that, without this *safeguard*, many may live together in a cloister, but they cannot live there religiously. Another one says: Silence is as the form and substance of the religious state. It is not, he adds, that it is really and effectively such; but that, without it, the form of Religion is *deformed*, its substance cannot well subsist, nor does its soul animate it, so as to cause it to produce the actions of its life. In the Life of St. Odon, we read as follows: The life of the Religious should be reputed as nothing without silence; it merits neither value nor esteem if this virtue is not practised; so much so, that whatever good action he performs will pass for worthless. Behold the doctrine and teachings of the holy Fathers, who were particularly faithful in reducing it to practice, because they regarded silence as the means that elevated them to contemplation! Wherefore it is, that while each religious order has its own particular rules and constitutions to attain its end, and is thereby distinguished from other orders, they all agree in recommending, in commanding, and in most carefully embracing silence. For this same reason, it is written in large characters in

many localities of the house, and where the other virtues are not likewise displayed.

The Pythagoreans called their schools places of reticence or of habitual silence; for their laws obliged them to learn the doctrine of their masters without saying a word during the space of five years. Certainly, with much stronger reasons, should religious houses bear the name, and be in effect "*houses of silence.*" Among the pagans themselves, silence has always been esteemed as suitable to holiness, and as becoming persons consecrated to the worship of God. Wherefore, Eunapias called it a "mysterious and pontifical virtue," thus designating it to be the special ornament of priest and Religious, and a quality that should in a particular manner accompany divine things. Also David, according to the version of St. Jerome, says: "Thou lovest, O God, silence in Thy ceremonies; and it holds place of praise to Thee in Sion." Religious houses should, therefore, be dwellings of silence, so as to praise God and to serve Him well therein. And do we not see every day that wherever the rule of silence is practically esteemed, there also the other rules are observed more exactly, the religious spirit reigns with greater purity, and a certain odor of devotion and sanctity is diffused throughout, so as to attract the admiration and veneration of seculars for the religious state, as also to incite them to virtue and piety? On the contrary, where silence is violated, where superfluous words and useless discourses are permitted, there must reign indevotion and levity.

The Abbot of St. Thierry, speaking of the silence that was observed in the Monastery of Clairvaux, in the time of St. Bernard, says: The universal opinion regarding the profound silence observed at Clairvaux made such an impression on all who visited the monastery, and produced in them so great reverence, that they not alone spoke no idle nor unbecoming word, but only such as was absolutely necessary. In the solitude of Scete, the fifteen hundred monks who lived under the direction of the holy Abbot Amos kept at certain hours so universal a silence, that strangers were wont to think the place uninhabited, till entering the depths of the cloister, where all the monks were seen, either praying in their cells or pursuing some noiseless occupation. So also Ammon, Superior of three thousand Religious in the Monastery of Tabenna, lived with them in such perpetual silence, that it could be said they were *solitaries*—each employing himself in his office, without seeing or hearing any one. Thus, I have found myself in more than one religious house in times when silence was observed more strictly than usual, as during retreats, and when I had it said to me: this house is indeed blessed, and it seems that we now commence to be Religious! So true is it, that silence sanctifies and benefits all indiscriminately, the visitor and secular no less than the happy occupants of these *abodes of benediction*.

The holy Abbot Agatho, in this belief, said that three things were essential to the religious state, viz., observance of silence, affection for prayer, and

the practice of meekness. Silence is placed first, for it produces the second, as this promotes the third. Then the Religious, not to belie his state, should commence by silence, and perfect himself therein; for according to St. Augustine, he derives his name from it: the word, *religiosus*, *i. e.*, religious, springs from *religare*, which signifies *to tie*; thus, the Religious, *to be religious*, should be most careful to keep his tongue well *tied up*, in order that it may not escape. The Apostle St. James gives us clearly to understand this by his words, which should be, in their primitive sense, understood as applicable to Christians in *general*, yet refer much more directly to Religious: such being the opinion of several Doctors: "If any one of you," says this Apostle, "thinks himself religious, not bridling his tongue, he deceives himself, *and his religion is vain*,"—having but the semblance of religion.

Silence is the foundation not only of the religious state, but it is, moreover, that of the whole spiritual life. Thus, God says by Isaias: "Justice and virtue are acquired by silence:" also, an excellent means for becoming perfect is to be attentive to silence. St. James has just declared to us that any *Christian* who aspires to virtue and has not learned to restrain his tongue, has but the shadow of virtue.

Cassian relates that the Abbot Nestorius, when directing him in the spiritual life, gave him as a first principle, to impose on himself a most rigid silence, and to esteem *taciturnity* as an introduction to Christian morality, and the way to true mental

science. Then he quotes these words of Solomon : “ *All the labor of man is for his mouth,*” the regulating of his tongue. I formerly knew a Religieuse, whom God suddenly enlightened and drew to perfection by powerful grace. He gave her silence for the foundation of the spiritual edifice by saying to her several times, interiorly : “ Speak little ! speak little.” Then, in a vision, she was made to behold “ Religion,” depicted as a delightful garden, wherein joyfully walked many persons clothed in azure blue. God told her that entrance to this charming spot was but by the way of *silence*.

St. Peter Damian, writing to the Empress Agnes, on her spiritual direction, expresses himself thus : “ Madam, you are perhaps annoyed at the rigor of too long a silence ; but you must believe and adopt it as an occasion which God presents you to secure your salvation, and to obtain great merit. For when the noise of speaking ceases on your lips, the temple of the Holy Ghost is building up in your heart by silence.” As symbolical of this, sacred history relates that in the construction of the temple of Solomon a remarkable silence was observed ; for there was heard no sound of either hammer, saw, or other tool. Thus should the temple of God (in our souls) be reared in silence ; for the soul, being shut up within the limits of a strict silence, is readily raised to things above.

A soul that advances with rapid strides to perfection can say that its “ beloved,” the holy Spouse, “ takes his delight in the midst of lilies.” The lily possesses this peculiarity, that in its early

growth it produces a quantity of leaves, but with an increase of vigor and proximity to bloom its foliage decreases in size and multitude. The leaves can here be likened to our words. In proportion as a soul advances in the ways of God,—draws nearer to perfection,—it retrenches its words to preserve better silence. St. Bernard said: There are three sorts of circumcision that cut: the Jewish circumcision cuts only the flesh, that of the Christian cuts the heart, while that of the perfect man cuts the tongue. Also St. James says: “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.” Nature likewise teaches this, for according to Pliny, the naturalist, the tongue is formed after the rest of the body; thus it receives life the last and loses it the first. When the days of Pentecost were accomplished, and the Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles, thereby to render them truly spiritual and perfect, and to fill them with Its gifts, there appeared to them tongues of fire, because the first thing they had to reform, purify, and perfect was the tongue. It is for the same reason that our Lord, in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar (which He instituted to nourish, fortify, and sanctify our souls), touches first our mouth and tongue.

If now, you are desirous to know why the spiritual life depends so greatly on silence, and that to be virtuous you must necessarily love silence, I will reply that this life disposes to two things, the first of which is, to commit no evil, to abstain from sin; and the second, to do good, to practise virtue;

now, silence is the sovereign expedient for one and the other.

1. It is readily perceived how greatly silence retrenches from the facility to do evil and to commit sin. The Holy Ghost assures us that it is impossible to speak much without faults: consequently, silence at once exempts you from these faults. This same Spirit elsewhere tells us that the mouth of the just man meditates wisdom, that he lets it fall drop by drop, whilst the fool multiplies words: then He adds "*Let your words be few.*" Words that come frequently from the mouth, says St. Ambrose, are never weighed, and thus are ordinarily sullied by some stain. St. Arsenius, a great lover of silence, often said: I have frequently repented having spoken, but *never* of being *silent*. Cato expressed the same sentiment a long time before.

As the tongue is a source of evil, as we have shown, and a world of iniquity, as styled by St. James, therefore silence is its sole remedy. But what is most wonderful in silence, and best shows its necessity, is that the other virtues cannot correct each other but in certain words opposed to them: thus, humility corrects boasting; charity, slanders; obedience, murmuring; chastity, immodest words; meekness, harsh words; and the other virtues such expressions as are contrary to them: but silence of itself, says St. John Climachus, combats and destroys them all; with a single stroke it retrenches a multitude of vices.

2. To exercise the virtues, to do good, it is certain that silence disposes thereto. St. John Climachus

says : Silence is an insensible progress in the way of virtue, and a secret ascent to God ; for the mind is better disposed for recollection, from whence it rises to God, expands to His lights and inspirations, and becomes adapted to His graces. It is this that the Holy Ghost teaches us by the mouth of Jeremiah : “ Let man await in silence the gifts and mercies of God.” Silence contributes much also to purity of heart, preserving it unsullied from communication with creatures ; for it thus quits the creature to be ravished with God by heavenly desires. Accordingly the holy Abbot Sisois replied to a Religious, who said to him : “ Father, I have a great desire to preserve my soul in purity, but what is the best means for accomplishing it ? ” Brother, you can readily do it by silence ; for how can we shield our souls from defilement, if our tongue opens the door to sin ?

Again, silence disposes to prayer, for without its aid it is difficult to elevate the heart to God ; or at best, our prayer will be disfigured by numerous distractions and imperfections. Wherefore, God says by Osee ; “ I will lead her ” the soul “ into the wilderness,” in retirement and silence, “ and I will speak to her heart.” Consequently, St. John Climachus calls silence the “ mother of prayer ” ; and the Blessed Laurence Justinian expresses this sentiment by the following beautiful comparison : As iron, the more it is solidified, compressed, drawn together, the stronger it becomes, and the greater its heat, the more vivid the flames it emits : in like manner the mind, the more retired, recollected in

itself, the greater its power to rise to God, and the more perfectly is it occupied with Him. Such are the fruits and effects of silence.

Then behold the true order of the means of acquiring the golden chain of perfection and union with God :

1. Silence produces recollection ; recollection begets devotion ; devotion leads to prayer ; prayer effects union with God ; and divine union imparts perfection. But without silence, there is no recollection ; for how can it be expected that a person who amuses himself with all and everything, regardless of time, place, and occasion, could be attentive to his interior ? Therefore, without recollection, there is no devotion, such not being compatible with a dissipated, wandering soul. And without devotion, there is no prayer ; for how is it possible for an indevout soul to meditate, to keep united to God ? Can she expect by mere human adroitness to find the door to prayer ? Then, it is evident that without prayer there can be no communing with God, since it is the acts of the virtues that the understanding and the will exercise in prayer which produce this union, and when divine union is not attained it is still clear that there can be no *perfection*, and no hopes of acquiring it, either in this life or the next. Behold this precious chain ! quite different from Homer's much-vaunted mystic chain, which he affirmed was used by Jupiter to attract and raise man up from earth to heaven. But the precious chain which terminates in perfection, must have its first link formed by silence.

Certainly, great talkers are little capable of prayer, or other exercises of the interior life ; they are seldom if ever touched with sentiments of true devotion, and when it happens that they experience some passing fervor, it is easily lost. Whoever, says St. Ambrose, is quick at speaking, easily loses the unction of piety, and thus his interior spirit ebbs away and evaporates from his mouth, as water flows from a perforated vessel.

St. Isidore of Damietta, writing to Cassian, who had become a Religious, said to him among other things : I understand that you have left the world to enter Religion, and that nevertheless you have not corrected your fault of talking to excess. Are you conscious of how you have acted ? You have built a good and strong wall as a defence against your enemies, but you have omitted to close the principal door by which they will enter. Wherefore, if you desire that your *wall* be effectually serviceable, and prevent your enemies from molesting you, close to them the way of ingress, and use every effort to become master of your tongue ; for so sure as you allow it freedom, it will soon produce great evils, and cause you to commit serious faults.

Pelagius, deacon, relates that some Religious, with a design of visiting St. Anthony, went aboard a vessel, where they found a venerable old man among the passengers, who seemed to be a stranger to every one. On the voyage, these Religious discoursed much concerning Scripture, the instruction of the Fathers, and similar topics, but

without this old man ever saying a word, though he was an attentive listener. When all this company had arrived and presented themselves to St. Anthony, this latter remarked: I consider you blessed, my brothers, for having had this good father for companion on your voyage; and you likewise, father, for having met these pious Religious. The old father replied: It is true, Reverend Father, that these brothers are good, but alas! for them, they leave the doors of their house too open, and whoever wishes can enter and take away whatever they find. He wished thereby to intimate that they talked incessantly, and of all that came to their minds.

SECTION III.

Other Reasons to Cause Silence to be Loved.

To cause silence to be still more loved, esteemed, and observed, we should recall that it is the type of prudence, the effect of wisdom, and the virtue of all intelligent minds. "The prudent man is silent," says the Holy Ghost by Solomon; as proof of his prudence he says nothing. Elsewhere, he again says: "He that refraineth his lips," regulates his tongue. "is most wise." And also: "*Speak little; for the mouth of the fool bubbleth out folly.*" "Hast thou seen a man hasty to speak?" one who could not command his tongue, "*then folly is rather to be looked for than his amendment.*" The thoughtless man is betrayed

by his tongue ; he says much to no purpose ; hence the proverb, "Many words and little wisdom." The talker is like the vine that spends its vigor in producing leaves and bears no fruit. For this reason, holy Job reprov'd his friends who talked much to him, saying : "I wish you would hold your peace, that you might be thought to be wise men."

The holy Abbot Agatho, from his earliest youth, knew so well how to be silent, that he ever bore the name of "*Abbot*," and "*old man*." Certainly, it is most difficult for him who speaks much, not to commit many faults of the tongue ; and since the mind of man is not an inexhaustible source of good and desirable things, to utter none but wise and prudent thoughts, he must necessarily examine his stock of ideas, then ponder them well, and express them carefully. From whence it arises that the most sensible men speak little, and never without considering what they are going to say. Wherefore, St. Diadochus called silence the source of wisdom and of elegant thoughts.

All these potent reasons should oblige us to place great value upon silence, and to observe it with all due exactness. "In silence and in hope shall your strength be :"—then let your weapons and your buckler be "silence," to defend yourself from, as also to attack your enemies. Love to speak little ; by such means you will at once avoid numberless faults, both before God and man ; also, you will be enabled to practise much virtue and to perform numerous good works. Remember that when St. Arsenius took the resolution to give himself unre-

servedly to the care of his salvation and perfection, he prayed to God thus : Lord, show me the way by which I may secure my salvation. And he heard a voice in answer : Arsenius, fly men, and thou shalt be saved ! Thereupon, leaving court and the society of men, and retiring to a desert, he continued still the same prayer, when a voice again said to him : Arsenius, fly men, keep silence, and live in peace. Behold the principles of salvation and the assured means for not sinning ! Moreover, accustom yourself to speak little and with discrimination, as being absolutely requisite to advance in the spiritual life, which is no other than a life of silence and recollection. Therefore, if you do not observe silence and learn to love it, you need never aspire to become perfect. The holiest, the wisest, and the most exemplary persons have ever been those who have spoken the least.

God never uttered in His interior but one expression, which is His Word, and which He retained for a whole eternity enclosed within Himself, producing it not till it became incarnate. When our divine Lord appeared on earth, to teach man by his example, He passed thirty years of his mortal career in silence and contemplation, and spoke but some hours each day for three years, though being incarnate and incarnate Wisdom, He could not err in speaking. Again, what lessons of silence are not given us by this divine and incarnate Word in His sacred Passion, as has been mentioned. His first and most perfect imitators were His holy Mother, St. Joseph, and St. John the Baptist ; therefore, we

should consider them as our models and strive to imitate them.

Silence was ever most carefully and scrupulously observed by the ancient Religious, as may be clearly seen in the history of their lives. Cassian, speaking of the Religious of Egypt, says: None of them dared to say a word to one another. They had none of their exercises in community, but each said his prayers in silence, or mentally recited some psalm or other passage of Scripture while employed in manual labor, as directed. Thus, very far from amusing themselves in private conversations or any useless words, they kept their mouths and hearts continually occupied in praising God. Abbot Agatho, for three whole years, carried a pebble in his mouth, to enable him the better to preserve silence.

Once a Religious visited Abbot Pastor during the second week of Lent, to manifest to him his interior; and after having received the desired counsel, as well as peace of mind, he said: Father, I was almost deterred from coming to see you to-day. Why so, my Brother? asked the good Abbot. Because I feared, replied the young man, that you would not like to open your door to me, in this holy season of Lent. Ah! my Brother, we have not here learned to close the portals of our cells, but only the door of our mouth, and to keep our tongue well disciplined.

Abbot Macarius the elder, who dwelt in the desert of Scete, said one day to some other hermits: My Brothers, please retire so soon as the masses have

been said. One of these hermits addressed very simply inquired: And where to, Father, should we go in this vast solitude, that already so separates us from men? Then the Saint placed his finger on his mouth, and said: It is from this, I mean, that we should fly. After this he entered his cell and closed the door.

It would be too tedious to relate one-half of all that the primitive Religious have done and repeated, to recommend the practice of silence. It is alone necessary for those of the present age to enter into their sentiments, and tread in their steps, particularly those who have made it the special virtue of their profession; and who, by their rule and the spirit of their institute, are obliged to observe strict silence, should study to imitate these beautiful models.

But I find two classes of persons who have in this a special obligation, and who should cultivate this virtue with all possible care. The first are Religious women; because, on the one hand, they love naturally to *talk*, and on the other they are mostly wanting in the requisite prudence to know how and when to speak. Wherefore, they should watch over themselves very closely, and be well persuaded that the infraction of silence is one of the causes why they do not make much progress in virtue, and are so long acquiring only one degree of true perfection; that they are dry, distracted, and experience so many other miseries during their exercises of piety; that after their death they suffer the most rigorous punishments, and are detained a much longer time in purgatory.

Besides, Religiouses should speak little; for modesty and silence are the ornaments peculiar to women, and still more to the spouses of Jesus Christ; wherefore, He says in the Canticles: "Thy lips are as a scarlet lace," to ornament and to close the mouth in a good and wise silence. St. Ambrose also says: It is no ordinary virtue in a woman to be able to preserve silence.

Modesty, ornamented and strengthened by silence, is what renders virginity commendable and enhances its brilliancy; for we know that the glory and the beauty of holy Church consists in her interior spirit, and not in a multitude of words. The holy Spouse, continuing the praises of his spouse, as to the silence required of her, adds: "Thy cheeks are as a piece of a pomegranate, besides that which lieth hid within."

I much prefer that words be wanting to a virgin, that they be exhausted in her mouth, says St. Ambrose, than that she be of a fluent tongue. The Holy Spirit, instructing the spouse, in the forty-fourth psalm, and teaching her how she may acquire great beauty, and by this means merit the love of her Spouse, our Lord, says to her, what is also repeated to the Religiouse at her reception: "*Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear,*" in order to *listen*, but not to *speak*.

The first gift that Eleazer presented to Rebecca, the future spouse of his young master Isaac, before giving her the necklace, the costly robe, and the vessels of gold and silver,—was the jewelled earrings. These ornaments of the organ of hearing

teach the virgin that to render herself a worthy spouse of the *true Isaac*, our Lord, she should think of adorning her ears, by disposing herself to *listen*, and consequently to be *silent*. She should also place in her heart His love and the desire to imitate Him so as to be faithful in observing silence.

We know that the vestal virgins, religieuses of the pagan Romans, were, by command of their institute, the first ten years of their service, obliged to keep silence, in order to acquire the requisite knowledge of their duties; and the following ten years to reduce it to practice; and the next ten years to impart their knowledge to the youthful neophytes, to initiate them in the sacred mysteries.

The women of Upper Guinea, to accustom themselves to preserving silence, take, very early in the morning, water in their mouth, keeping it there whilst performing their domestic duties, till breakfast time, and even till noon, in order to prevent themselves from speaking, and to think but of their occupations.

The second class of persons who should most carefully watch over their tongue, and to speak little, are the young. They cannot possess much knowledge, owing to their youth and their position as novices or pupils; therefore, they should listen attentively, to learn, and in learning should remain silent. The Holy Ghost tells them in Ecclesiasticus: "Young man, hear in silence, and scarcely speak in thy own cause." "If thou be asked twice let thy answer be short. In many things

appear ignorant," and be not self-sufficient, but show yourself more disposed to learn than to teach. Listen to what is said to you, and take no occasion to speak but what you should ask for the sake of instruction. Be careful not to speak much in the presence of persons to whom you owe respect, on account of their age or position.

Behold the instructions imparted to the young, that they may speak becomingly. St. Bernard so strongly recommended silence to young Religious, that he forbade them speak in the presence of their seniors, unless these at the same time gave them permission.

Let us then conclude, and take a general resolution—young and old—to esteem silence greatly, and love to speak little. Let us consider and imitate God, who is our first and greatest model, since we are His image. Reflect over and again, that our Lord, in the adorable Sacrament, touches our mouth to purify and sanctify it; that He is placed on our tongue to take possession of it—to consecrate it to the Divine service. Then, can it be possible, that the tongue, so often touched by the sacred Host, for so many years in frequent communions, has not yet become well regulated—is not imprinted with the practice of our Lord's silence, and learned of Him when and how to speak? Or that, on the same day, and a little while, perhaps, after having received Holy Communion, your tongue is let loose, and permitted to speak with as much immortification as on any other day? In acknowledgment of the infinite benefits we have

received, the boundless love our Lord shows us, and the incomparable honor He confers on us, in coming to us so often in Holy Communion, let us become more recollected, speak less, and esteem, love, and honor His silence by a practical demonstration of it in ourselves.

SECTION IV.

Of Interior and Mystical Silence.

Though the exterior silence of which we have been treating be most profitable and necessary for salvation and perfection, as we have shown, the interior and mystical silence, of which we are about to speak, is of much greater importance. Without it, exterior silence loses much of its value, and cannot be effectively useful. Of what profit is solitude of body, said St. Gregory (which also implies silence of the tongue), if not accompanied by mental solitude? In a like sentiment, St. Francis said to his Religious: Wherever we go, we carry with us our cells: that is to say, our bodies; our soul dwelling therein as a *solitary*, to think but of his salvation and of being united to God. If we remain not quiet in this cell, the enclosure of the monastery will be of little service. Wherefore, the pious Thomas à Kempis gives this advice: "He who desires to serve God in spirit and truth, should seek and love interior solitude, which is so necessary to the soul that without it exterior solitude becomes almost useless. Learn to despise exterior

things, and give thyself to the interior, and thou shalt see the kingdom of God will come unto thee." Thus, we should have much greater care for solitude of the soul and interior silence than that of the exterior.

If now asked, in what consists interior silence, and of how many kinds or grades? I reply: First, that one of the noblest exercises, and one of the most effectual operations of that sublime and perfect life called *mystical*, is the silence that therein prevails. For in this silence the soul works wonders, even when seemingly it is inactive: it says much, in uttering *no word*: in removing from creatures, it approaches to God, thereby contracting a strict and intimate union with Him.

Secondly, we should discourse of the silence and the language of the soul, as of the silence and speech of the body, and enter by the latter into a knowledge of the former. The body speaks, when the tongue forms sensible and articulate words, and when we converse with some one: it is silent when we say nothing. In like manner, the soul speaks when discoursing with creatures, and is silent when it communicates with no one, but leaves all, to think of God alone, applies itself to Him with so great abnegation, so profound a forgetfulness of all created things, that it is able to say that there is but God and itself in the world; and still better, to think as if God had created none but itself. Then, as there would be neither angels, nor men, nor animals, nor trees, nor elements, nor aught else, she would necessarily have communication,

neither by word nor thought, with any person or thing, animate or inanimate; she could not even reflect their image or form an idea of them to herself: in this manner she would have neither occasion nor thought of speaking, but would observe a universal silence in regard to all things, and could think but of God and *herself*. Behold how the soul is speechless as well as voiceless, and in what consists its silence!

Thirdly, this silence of the soul differs from that of the body, inasmuch as the body cannot be silent, nor speak promptly, but in a certain manner: namely, with the tongue, and not with the eyes, the ears, or hands; whereas, the soul can speak or be silent in four different ways: that is to say, with the understanding, the will, the imagination, and the passions. Thus, it speaks with the understanding to a creature, when it thinks of her, and discourses with her interiorly; it speaks with the will, when it produces an act of love or other affection for her; it speaks with the imagination, when it represents some image to itself, and when this faculty is filled with the image; it speaks with the passions, when the concupiscible or irascible appetite is awakened in her regard, and when it is borne towards her by one of the *eleven* passions. Thus it is that the soul speaks to creatures; and on the contrary is silent when it performs none of these acts, and that the understanding does not converse with them, that the will entertains no affection for them, that the imagination does not represent them in order to retain them, and the appetite is without

passion. Then, being thus unoccupied with all creatures, the soul is alone with God, to praise, bless, adore, glorify, and thank Him, devoting herself to Him by acts of virtue, and principally by the acts of faith, hope, and charity.

This mystical silence is *still better* exercised, when, not speaking even to God, the soul listens with great attention and in profound respect in her interior, where He dwells as in His temple, to whatever He has the goodness to say to her—the instructions He imparts in this secret school of wisdom. It is for this reason these words of David are addressed her: “Hearken, O daughter, and incline thy ear:” do not speak, but listen attentively. To dispose the soul thereto, she replies by the same prophet: “I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me; for He will speak peace unto His people, unto His saints,” and to those who are recollected in themselves, such things as will bring them peace, joy, and all manner of good. Then it is that the soul makes truly the prayer of silence, and which was that of Mary reposing at our Lord’s feet, where she remained solely intent on watching Him, in listening to Him, wholly absorbed in the object of her love.

This silence is most excellent, being of more intrinsic value than all the words one could possibly utter. It honors God in an exalted manner, according to these words of David, in keeping with the version of St. Jerome, as above quoted: “One of Thy greatest praises, O God of infinite majesty, is to remain silent before thee,” etc. . . . It is

honoring Thee to be mute before Thee, to attempt saying nothing of Thy greatness, thus acknowledging our inability to say aught (not only equal to, but even approaching Thy sublimity) is truly the most magnificent eulogy Thy creature, *man*, can offer Thee. Also St. Dennis, the great doctor of mystical theology, remarks that we honor by our silence what we would fain express by our words.

St. Ambrose has also said: There is nothing more suitable, nothing which approaches so near to the ineffable mysteries of religion, as *silence*. The pagans ignored not this silent worship; wherefore, the Egyptians consecrated to God, in a special manner, the crocodile, as this animal is without tongue, and they wished hereby to denote that it is by silence the Divinity should be praised, and that the tongueless victim is the meetest worshipper. It is for the same reason, as is remarked by Eusebius, that they delineated on the walls of their temples the god of silence, Harpocrates, who held one finger on his mouth, to signify that in the temple there should be no word spoken. Also, St. Chrysostom says that over their door-ways they engraved, in large letters, the word *silence*, which they considered as being the most appropriate mark of esteem, and of rendering glory to God.

Moreover, this interior silence is an infinite good to the soul, by detaching it from creatures to apply it to God, who is the principle of its purity, its sanctity, its strength, its perfection, and its every good. It exalts it above itself, according to these words of Jeremias: "The solitary remains sitting

in silence," because this state will raise him above himself, above his vitiated nature. St. Gregory remarks that this silence was typified by the sleep of Adam, from whose side was formed Eve, during his slumber : because, continues this holy father, whoever enters his interior, to consider spiritual and divine things, withdraws from and closes his eyes to all exterior and sensible objects. Thus he learns and studies within himself to command and to obey; ever preserving this wise discretion in his conduct, and so to cause, as it were, all to go out of him, *to leave him*, that is in any way prejudicial to his spiritual well-being, or that would prevent his acting generously towards God.

The holy spouse, in the Canticles, slept this sleep ; therefore, her divine Spouse expressly forbids her companions to awake her till she pleases. St. Gregory, St. Bernard, and others understand these words as regarding contemplation and the prayer of silence ; for he who sleeps speaks to no one, sees and hears nothing, and holds no intercourse with others. Besides, God in ordaining sleep for man, to benefit the body, to provide during that time for the pressing wants of his animal faculties and senses, by affording them the requisite repose after the toils of the day, has also given it for the greater convenience of the natural and vegetative faculties, that become weakened by too long vigils, and which have their strength repaired by sleep. The same economy is pursued in the sleep of prayer, and that interior silence requisite to the soul that is occupied exteriorly with the care of

the neighbor : it being essential that it should, for a time, cease to speak, to hear, and perform its other exterior duties, however good, that by such a cessation, it may receive a remedy to its debilitated powers, and acquire renewed strength to perform more excellently the actions of the spiritual life, as also to meditate with a keener relish the word of God, by which the soul is nourished and advances in virtue. Though a man should partake of wholesome food, without the necessary sleep and repose that nature demands, he will soon grow languid, dull, listless, and in imminent danger of exhausting his brain ; so also a person incessantly engaged in exterior works, be they ever so holy, if the sleep of prayer is wanting, and he does not employ interior silence, he will readily become enfeebled, languish in virtue, and thus run the risk of being lost eternally.

Holy Job links this sleep with the silence we mention, and says in person that those who sleep thus are rich and powerful ; that they converse with kings and persons of eminent quality, who *build themselves solitudes*. David, speaking of the same silence, says : “ When God shall have given sleep to His beloved, behold the inheritance that will follow.” Then what is this inheritance of our Lord ? In this world, it is His grace, virtue, sanctity, and perfection ; and in the other it will be glory and the enjoyment of eternal felicity. Behold the rich inheritance that this mystic sleep and silence procure for the soul ! Wherefore it is, that Father Baltazar Alvarez, S. J., when giving an

account, as directed by the Father General, of his method of prayer, says, among other things: Sometimes in my prayer, I discourse mentally on some words of Scripture; sometimes, again, I neither speak nor meditate, but remain in silence and repose before God. Such mute repose is verily a priceless treasure! All these reasons show the great esteem in which we should hold interior silence, and how carefully we should observe its practice. But, unfortunately, we do quite the contrary. We are ever ready to give attention to creatures, with whom our soul talks, prattles, and sports unremittingly,—occupying itself first with a person, then with an affair, an employment, then with a room, a piece of furniture, some passing word, and other vain and futile things. Thus, a straw suffices to occupy the mind, this divine substance, this great soul, the living image of God,—made to think of Him alone, it permits itself to be tied to or linked with the thought of a trifle. By so acting, we are no wiser than little children playing among themselves, who pursue their puerile sports with as great ardor as if they were performing affairs of moment.

Behold how it is we entertain ourselves with creatures, in lieu of the prayer of silence we are invited, solicited to make! Our prayer is oftentimes no better than conversation and prattle. Hence, let us endeavor to keep silence interiorly towards creatures, so as to listen to God when He speaks, as one single word He may tell us in our silence is worth more—effects a greater good for

us—than *ten thousand* that *we* might speak to Him. He tells us, in this mystical silence: “Listen, O Israel, and speak no word.” Then the soul should reply with Samuel: “Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth.”

SECTION V.

Of the Practice of Silence.

Let us now speak of the practice of silence and the acts to be produced. They are of two kinds, the interior and the exterior. The interior acts are: 1. To conceive a high esteem for silence, founded upon its necessity, its utility, and the other reasons we have adduced. 2. In consequence of this esteem, to love it. 3. In virtue of this esteem and love, to make a firm purpose to observe it with care, and not to speak, excepting when words would be preferable to silence. Then, when on different occasions, as in meeting certain persons, and in particular localities, your tongue itches, and you would be tempted to speak, you should attentively watch over yourself, do yourself violence if needs be, in order not to relax or betray your resolution. Fail not to petition God for the grace you need, saying to Him: My Lord Jesus Christ, divine Word so long silent! infinite and incarnate Wisdom, who spoke so well, so usefully, and so perfectly, yet who nevertheless hast spoken so little! impress me with the necessary esteem and love of silence; impart to me the grace to

practise it after Thy model and in Thy spirit. When, too, Thou hast the ineffable goodness, in Thy adorable Sacrament, to touch my lips, purify them, sanctify my tongue, so that it may never be moved to utter a misplaced or useless word : grant me great interior recollection, and the grace to speak but when and as I should. Finally, persuade yourself that your tongue is one of the most dangerous enemies to your salvation and perfection ; then, in keeping with this conviction, use precaution to employ it well.

The exterior acts of silence are to keep effectually and inviolably the resolutions made regarding it, particularly in such times and occurrences as you foresee there is the greatest peril to its observance. When enduring wrongs, meeting sharp reproofs, and other similar trials, let silence be your safeguard ; practise it after the example of our Lord, caluminated, outraged, condemned : recalling these words of David : "Thou hast immolated me to the scoffs of the wicked ; but I am dumb," I have not opened my mouth, reflecting that all things are as Thou hast ordained, or permitted. Knowing yourself to possess a naturally affable, courteous disposition, and feeling your want of strength to resist temptations, when such and such persons address you, those whom you love, esteem greatly, perhaps a senior or one who has authority in the house, and there is all the more difficulty to refrain from speaking to them, it is for you to retire adroitly from the peril, without attracting attention, and so to avoid occasion for a

breach of silence. But if some one speaks to you, without your being able to withdraw, or to avoid rudeness, then answer as briefly as possible, while raising your heart to our Lord, whose silence you firmly purpose to imitate: remembering that you should not offend Him to satisfy a creature, and instantly call to mind the words of the Apostle: “Did I seek to please men,” contrary to my duty, “I should not be the servant of Jesus Christ.”

When you are forced to speak, you should not multiply your words without necessity; nor use *fifty* where *ten* would suffice: thus you approximate to silence, to which all that is beyond necessity is contrary. It is even requisite to be demure and recollected when speaking of such things as are useful and good, and not to say all one knows or could advance on the subject. In like manner, to abstain more readily from illicit pleasures, it is good sometimes not to indulge in such as are permitted; so, again, to acquire facility in keeping silence when speaking is interdicted, it is expedient often to decline saying what one could prudently speak: thus, by this silence which is not forbidden, one acquires that which is commanded.

St. Diadochus adds another reason, by the following simile: As the heat of a bath evaporates and is lost if the door is often opened; so also is the soul dissipated and its fervor destroyed, when it speaks much, even of things purely spiritual. Wherefore, if one desires to increase in virtue, to remain recollected, to be in the disposition to receive the operations of the Holy Spirit, he must

speak *little*, even of good and holy things. Our Lord, who could commit no faults in speaking, and all of whose words were oracles and instructions for our guidance, was herein a most remarkable example; for His words were ever few.

Theodoret relates that several illustrious Bishops went, accompanied by some of the chief municipal authorities to visit St. Marcian, the celebrated solitary. Being all assembled, and awaiting in silence for their host, the Saint, to say something, he like themselves remained silent. Then one of the company, who was on more social terms with the Saint, having been under his guidance, ventured to address him: Father, all these illustrious prelates whom you behold, are thirsting for your holy doctrine, awaiting anxiously for you to speak; do not, then, I beseech you, keep them longer in suspense, nor refuse them what they await from your lips. The Saint, after heaving a deep sigh, replied: "The God of the universe speaks to us continually by His creatures: He instructs us by the Holy Scripture; He teaches us our obligations; He shows us what to do, and what to avoid, for our salvation; He restrains by His threats; He encourages us by His promises; and nevertheless, all seems useless, since we do not profit by them. How, then, can Marcian, who abuses of these means as well as others, and who neglects to use them for his salvation, be useful to you by his discourse?" Thus spoke this holy man. It is most certain that often the discourses made upon pious subjects are less profitable to devout persons than silence.

Again, silence should be most strictly observed in certain times and localities, and we should be more scrupulous about its infraction. It should be faithfully adhered to everywhere in religious houses, but more strictly in some places. Cassian, speaking of silence in the church, in choir, and during office, as kept by the Religious of Egypt, says: So great was the silence they observed, that you would think, in this vast multitude of men there assembled, there was but the one in the middle of the choir, who chants aloud the psalms. Nor is there heard, he continues, any coughing, yawning, sighing, or other breach of silence; and such as transgressed the usual silence were not left unpunished. St. John Climachus relates that in the monastery near Alexandria, if the holy Abbot perceived any one speaking during the time of prayer, he was penanced to remain the whole week at the door of the church, without entering, and to ask pardon of all who passed in and out; nor were the *senior* Religious of the house exempted from this penance. St. Pachomius exceeded this, for he directed in the first clause of his rule: "If during prayer, lecture, or singing of the Divine praises, any one speaks or laughs, he shall in penance lay aside his cincture, and with bowed head shall present himself before the altar, where he will receive from the Superior the correction he merits, and will do the same in presence of all the community when assembled in the refectory." Besides, silence was as strictly recommended in the refectory as in the church. The monks of Egypt, specially those of

Tabenna, kept such rigorous silence in the refectory, that although there assembled in great numbers, no one dared, however, to speak to his neighbor, even in a whisper, excepting the one who presided over each table, and only when obliged to have something brought or removed, which was signified rather by sign than by any articulate words. Cassian adds, moreover, that these Religious when at table lowered their cowls, so that they were prevented from seeing either to the right or the left. St. Pachomius says in his rule: Should any one chance to speak or laugh during the meal, let him be instantly reprov'd and compelled to stand whilst the others eat, and till they leave table. St. Isidore, in his rule, thus expresses himself: Whilst the brothers are taking their meals, let no one speak, but obey, in all simplicity, the Apostle, who says: "Eat your bread in silence." Also, St. Jerome mentions that the Religious in his time were accustomed to observe a profound silence during their meals.

Josephus relates of the Essenes, who dwelt near Alexandria, that they proceeded to the refectory with as great modesty and recollection as to the temple, and they there observed an unbroken silence: also, that no noise, or clamor, or laughter was heard in their dwellings, even when socially conversing together. When out of the house they still observed silence, from a sentiment of veneration.

The silence of the evening and night has always been strictly recommended in well-regulated Orders.

Divine office being finished, says Cassian, the community is at liberty to leave choir, but no one is permitted to loiter about or to speak a word to another, but to withdraw to his cell. St. Benedict, in keeping with this, says in his rule: "Silence is observed after complin." Religious should at all times observe silence, but more especially at night. Wherefore, in some Orders, this silence being observed from complin till after prime the following day, it is called the "*great silence*," and during this time they must have no tongue but to praise God, either silently in their cell or in presence of the Blessed Sacrament. They are to give their whole attention to their interior, to their reading, to preparing themselves for meditation the next day. Thus they are forbidden to think of any external or temporal affair, at least if it is not absolutely necessary, and could not have been anticipated, or cannot be deferred. It is not even the time to confer with Superiors concerning matters of conscience, for while these should be disposed ever to listen with charity to their subjects, and to give them needed consolation, they have to manage so as not to infringe on this time in order that they also may enjoy the benefit of retreat and recollection, and be an example to others. Inferiors, on their part, should not place obstacles to this design without necessity.

Again, care should be taken to observe silence when in winter we draw near to the fire, out of time for recreation. For nature revives with the heat, and thus more readily disposes us to talk.

Wherefore, in many Religious Orders, as in that of St. Benedict on Monte Cassino, and also among the "regular clerks," a special command is given, *not to speak when near the fire*. At Clairvaux there was written on the door of the furnace, as on a tablet: *Let the Religious warm themselves here in silence*. A person is naturally less recollected when near the fire, therefore he should keep a stricter guard over himself. It is an ordinary thing for our enemy, the demon, wisely remarks St. Bonaventure, to tempt men whilst warming themselves; and it was in such time and place that he caused St. Peter to deny our Lord.

There is still another species of silence that should be observed in Religion,—namely, that of action: causing care to be taken to walk softly, and to close the doors noiselessly. Silence is not broken merely by words, says the constitutions of the Camaldolese, but by any noise whatever without necessity.

Here recurs what St. John says of Martha, who being the first to see our Lord when He honored her house with His presence, after the death of her brother Lazarus, went to call her sister Mary, and said to her "secretly" (in silence): "The Master is come and calleth for thee." If Martha called Mary and spoke to her, how could St. John say that she spoke *in silence*? It means that she spoke in a low, subdued tone of voice. In a like sense, it is said of our Lord, in Isaias: "He clamored not, and the sound of his voice was not heard." Let us imitate Him, for love of Him, by

observing silence in all its varied ways ; and, moreover, let us labor to acquire *interior* and *mystical* silence, which is the principal.

SECTION VI.

Of the Exercise of Words.

Having treated of the tongue's first office, which is to be silent, let us now consider the second, which is to speak, and thus in what manner it should practise so important a function.

It is related of a rabbi (a Hebrew doctor) named Jehuda, that he betook himself one day to the public square, and cried out that he had in his dwelling the veritable potable gold and the invincible "waters of youth," adapted to repairing lost strength and bestowing a long and prosperous life. The announcement of such a promise sufficed to attract a multitude of merchants, who presented themselves at the appointed place, and Jehuda, opening the Bible, read from the thirty-third Psalm: "Who is the man that desireth life ; who loveth to see good days?" Do you desire it? "Then keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile." Behold ! he added, my drinkable gold, the "water of youth !"

St. Augustine says something similar, in a discourse he once delivered: Who amongst men desires a long and good life? We all reply: It is we! it is we. If so, then let us listen to the means of obtaining it: "Restrain your tongue," that it

may not speak evil, and deceive your neighbor. Say now: It is I. Let some one answer, "*It is I who thus restrain my tongue,*" and I will forthwith say to him: Await, then, with certainty, a *long and happy life*. Thus, St. Mark relates that when our Lord touched the tongue of the mute who was brought to Him when near the Sea of Galilee, "the string of his tongue was loosed, and *he spoke right.*" Then, to speak well, it must doubtless be our Lord who touches and looses our tongue, and imparts the grace to perform well so difficult an action. But, for this, our co-operation is necessary: First, we must resolve to speak little. Thus, the Holy Ghost, in a multitude of passages in Sacred Scripture, has endeavored to warn us to take great care of this small member, which can do much evil, if it does not do any good, and separate us from the path to happiness, which cannot exist with sin. It is impossible, says the Holy Spirit, "that great talkers should not commit great faults." He elsewhere tells us: "that the man who hath understanding moderates his words; that the mouth of the just man meditates wisdom; that he lets it fall drop by drop; while the fool multiplies his words;" then adds: "*Let your words be few in number.*" It was also the counsel which a holy Religious gave to St. John Climachus. "Put," says he, "a bridle on your tongue, for fear it may carry you away; and fight a thousand times a day that you may not be enslaved to its intolerable tyranny."

2. We must speak with much consideration. The difference which exists between a wise man

and a fool, is that the fool speaks much, and the wise man very little; the fool speaks without reflection and judgment, and the wise man says nothing without having maturely reflected upon it. "The just man," says David, "will regulate all his words by prudence." The mouth of the just man speaks none but words meditated and studied in the school of wisdom; he is careful of all he says, because the law of God is engraven in his heart. Solomon gives another reason in these words: "The heart of the wise man instructs his tongue, and shall add grace to his lips;" and not one word is uttered without being considered.

As words are the images and representations of our thoughts, as our thoughts the production of our understanding and reason, consequently our words should be wise and prudent. Wherefore, in the Greek, the word *logos*, which signifies speech, means also *reason*; because our words should be filled and animated by reason, and to appear as such, expressed and rendered *exteriorly* sensible. To make this yet more lucid, our Lord is called the *Word*,—signifying *speech*; and this "word" was a *first reason*, an *essential*, a *personified Wisdom*. Wherefore, Ecclesiasticus tells us: "When you would wish to speak, place all your words in a balance; consider to whom you are to speak, before whom, at what place, and at what time." Recall to mind that it is by his words that a man's soul is reflected,—that a person is known by his words: "Honor and glory are in the mouth of a wise man, but the tongue of an imprudent man is his ruin."

Thus, Socrates said one day to a young man who expressed desire to be known to him : Friend, speak, so that I may readily know you. And according to St. Bernard : It is a rare thing to meet a man who speaks with a correct judgment, and who commits no faults against prudence in speaking. But to speak in this perfect manner it is necessary to put into practice the teaching of the Holy Ghost, which is, "We must speak at the proper time."

3. "The patient man," says the Holy Spirit, "will wait till the time marked for speaking. Wise men will keep their own secrets, and the mouth of the fool is always ready to cover itself with confusion. The wise man will be silent until the fitting time, but the frivolous and the imprudent man will attend to *no time*. A wise word will be a reproof in the mouth of the fool, for he dares not say it at the proper time ; words uttered in season are like apples of gold in vessels of silver."

But if you ask when it is the time to speak, I reply : When necessity, charity, obedience, or any other just reason obliges you to it. Besides, I say with Pythagoras : "Be silent until you have something to say which would be better than silence." St. Gregory Nazianzen recommended the same in one of his discourses, when he said : "Speak, if you have something of greater value than silence ; but observe silence where it is wiser than words." He then adds : Did you but know what a gift of God silence is, its great sublimity when there is no necessity for speaking. The same Saint, writing to Palladius, tells him : I could wish to have a

paralyzed tongue, to prevent me speaking save after the manner of Jesus Christ ; and the secret of my silence is, that as I have sacrificed to Him a mind not talkative, I likewise offer Him a pure word.

Here must be imparted the instruction the Holy Spirit gives us for observing another medium in talking, which is never to interrupt the person who speaks. Nevertheless, we often fail in this particular, whereas, the Holy Spirit tells us: "Answer not before you have heard, and speak not in the middle of a discourse."

4. We should speak in a manner to give pleasure to our neighbor, avoiding all that can wound or distress him. The Holy Spirit desires not only that a wise and virtuous man should have a guarded tongue ; He wills likewise that his speech should be sweet and gracious. "The lips of the wise man," says He, "will blend grace with truth ; but the mouth of the wicked devastates ;" the wicked caring little if the words he utters should hurt or not. Also: "A mild word multiplies friends and appeases enemies, and grace abounds upon the lips of the good man. The flute and the harp form a sweet melody, but a tongue full of sweetness is better than both one and the other."

The Spouse in the Canticle says that the "speech of His spouse is sweet," and "her lips are as a dropping honey-comb." Then the spouse says also of her Spouse: "His voice is most sweet, and he is all lovely."

St. Augustine in his rule strongly recommends

this sweetness in words; and he directs accordingly, if sometimes a harsh word escapes, there should be immediately an emollient, a soothing word spoken. He adds: Speak no harsh or sarcastic words; if by chance such have escaped you, spare no pains to cause a remedy to proceed from the same mouth that inflicted the pain.

Our words should also be profitable: "The mouth of a just man is a fountain of life," as none but useful words flow therefrom. "The tongue of the wise man brings health;" it fortifies the weak in virtue, it instructs the ignorant, it cures mental maladies, it consoles the afflicted, and performs many other charitable offices. Wherefore, the Holy Ghost calls it: "Tongue of *healing*, of *alleviation*, and of *mercy*;" keeping good order in these three words: for healing at once declares the end we should propose to ourselves in the discourses addressed to our neighbor, while the other two, "alleviation and mercy," point out the means for so doing.

Finally, to make proper use of the tongue, we should never speak evil, but good. The mouth should never be sullied by any unbecoming word, for it is made to praise God. We should watch, so that all our words be civil, Christian, and religious: that they be scented with virtue and the good odor of Jesus Christ. "*The mouth of the just*," says David, "*shall meditate wisdom*," meaning, according to Origen, St. Ambrose, and others, that the wise or just man takes ordinarily for his meditations and discourses the incarnate

Wisdom, our Lord ; and thus he speaks voluntarily of Him. In like manner also Apollo acted, he who is mentioned by St. Luke, and of whom St. Paul makes so honorable a reference when writing to the Corinthians : he says of him : “ Being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught diligently the things that are of Jesus.” St. Luke says the same of the Apostles in general : “ And every day ” he says, “ they ceased not in the temple, and from house to house, to teach and to preach Jesus Christ ” to make Him known to all.

Again, our Lord, clothed with our nature, and speaking to men, traced out to us the method we should observe in speaking. Three things should be remarked in our Lord’s words, viz. : the matter, the form, and the power. The matter was ever good, because He spoke of holy and useful things. “ He spoke to them of the kingdom of God,” says St. Luke. The form was most excellent, because He never said anything but for the glory of God and the salvation of men. Our Lord remarks of Himself : “ I say nothing of Myself,” by my own inclination, “ but by my Father ;” and according to the instructions and commands He has given Me. The strength or power was wonderful, for the two disciples who were going to Emmaus said to Him, without knowing Him : “ That He was mighty in work and word.” St. Peter also said to Him : “ Thou hast the words of eternal life.” And St. Luke : “ His speech was with power,” and He effected wonders. Also, He says of Himself : “ The words I have spoken to you are spirit and

life." Behold the beautiful models on which we should form our words, so as to give to them the first two qualities, the matter and the form of excellence: while the third, which is that of strength and power, will readily follow, with the blessing of God.

Socrates compared the mouth of a wise and virtuous man, when speaking, to the door of a temple when it is open, thereby displaying what is beautiful, holy, and divine. We could add that it may be likened to a close-covered vase of precious perfumes, which, when the lid is removed, exhales so exquisite, so delicious a scent, that the whole surrounding is embalmed.

CHAPTER X.

THE RELIGIOUS SHOULD BE DEAF.

THE Religious, in order to pass his days sweetly and peaceably in his community, must stop up his ears, and render himself deaf to much that he might hear. The Royal Prophet declares this to be necessary and important, when he says: "A thousand and a thousand things are spoken of me; *but I, as a deaf man, heard not.*"

Then, in what should a Religious appear not to hear, and how exercise this wise and virtuous deafness? Cassian tells us, in these words: If some disobedient and rebellious one, a slanderer or a violater of the rules and the established customs, comes to speak to you, and with an excited mind and unbridled tongue, commences to complain of the Superiors, accusing them of being wanting in charity, condescension, and other things; or if he attempts to entertain you with the faults of some brother, wishing to incense you against him, or if he commits any other fault contrary to what you know to be right, do not become offended thereat, nor permit yourself to believe or to imitate him, but be as one who is *deaf*, and to whom all this has been said, but without any of it penetrating his ears or his mind. "Hedge in your ears with

thorns, and hearken not to the words of a wicked tongue." Reply to this slanderer what our Lord said to the demon when he tempted Him: "*Be-gone, Satan.*"

O you, says St. Augustine, who receive sound doctrine and instructions of true piety, in a well-disciplined house, surround your ears with thorns, so that he who would wish therein to intrude his evil words be not alone repulsed, but be even treated harshly and be pricked. Drive such a one far away from you, by saying to him: I am a Christian as well as yourself; you are a Religious and I have the blessing of being one likewise; then, what you now relate, we have not learned in holy Religion, which is a school of virtue under a divine Master, whose throne is heaven, the abode of perfection and sanctity. If you wish to speak to me, tell me not such things; or if you desire to make me your confidant, do not seek me.

A readiness to complain, murmur, and speak freely of Superiors and others, is one of the most ordinary and most pernicious faults where virtue is not well established. For instance, a Superior has simply refused something to an inferior, has given her, perhaps, some penance for a fault committed, or an equal will have said or done something to another, who thus considers herself affronted; nature is instantly aroused to resentment. In place of suffering this little displeasure in silence, of having recourse to prayer, of asking our Lord, in a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, to heal our wounded self-love, as should be done by a spouse

of Christ, is not the course pursued by the tepid and weak soul, who prefers to follow the bent of her natural vivacity and her undisciplined spirit, to seek out some person to whom she can relieve her mind : nor does she try to find the wisest and most virtuous in the house, but on the contrary, those who she thinks will enter into her views, approve of her complaints, and espouse her interest : thus she unburdens her heart in the height of excitement, and when consequently her words are tinged by exaggeration, if not altogether untrue. Now, how should the person act to whom a similar discourse or such complaints are made? What should she reply? First, it is evident we commit a fault, and a most serious one, if in place of trying to remedy the evil, or at least of ameliorating it, we enter into the imperfect sentiments of the murmurer, and give approval to her anger, and thereby excite and increase her fault, causing her to adhere to her resentment, and to be more irritated against her Superior, or whomever she deems to have wronged her. But quite an opposite course should be pursued when we have to treat with such miserably imperfect souls. Then behold what should be done : First, there should be neither warning, reproof, nor blame given to this discontented spirit, because such a course would at once provoke her and she would be incapable of remedy ; but she should be listened to with patience, charity, and compassion. Then she should be reminded that she has herein an opportunity of practising patience and solid virtue, to merit much, and that

her fidelity will be eventually crowned. If necessary, employ the means as pointed out by St. Augustine, and if she does not yield to such remedies, but persists in her excitement and anger, let increased severity be shown her: let her be repulsed, spoken to with great firmness. Too frequently, in similar circumstances, one pacifies from timidity, or from a misplaced complaisancy, and nothing is said or done in keeping with charity and one's duty.

St. Jerome, instructing a lady on this score, said to her: Fly the sin of scandal, so that you speak no evil of your neighbor, nor believe those who detract. Do not give encouragement to detractors by your silence, nor nourish their vice by a *tacit* approbation. Holy Scripture warns us to have no intercourse with a detractor, and think not of the sin attributed to the neighbor. And again elsewhere, "Hedge in your ears with thorns," to defend them against all evil reports, "and listen not to the tongue of the wicked." David, in enumerating the different species of innocence and justice, did not omit this one, when he said: "He that speaketh truth in his heart, who hath not used deceit in his tongue, nor hath done evil to his neighbor, nor taken up a reproach against him," the same is an upright man, he takes the road heavenward.

But some will object and say: The one who comes to make complaints to me, to confide to me her trials, is a senior, a person of authority in the house, while I am her inferior, in every sense of the

word ; and besides, she is a person to whom I am much indebted for the condescension and affection she ever bears me ; how, then, can I close my mouth so as not to speak and give expression to my regard for her, and close my ears and not to heed her ? The reply to this is given by St. Jerome, when writing to Nepotian : “ To say that you cannot vex those who come thus with their reports, is not a just and acceptable excuse ; for no one will voluntarily make them to him who evinces an aversion to listen. An arrow can never penetrate a stone, but will be repelled by it, to pierce him who directed it. Let the slanderer learn from your forbidding manner not to blame his neighbor readily. Fly, therefore, as much as possible, the company of calumniators, because the misfortune of the detractor will be speedily followed by that of the person who listens.”

Again, the Religious should be deaf as to many things that are spoken of in the house regarding the affairs of others, be it of the Religious, or seculars, or worldly news, and of the variety of occurrences that take place and are discussed daily : for all this can only serve to disquiet and occupy him—turn him from God and cause distraction in prayer. Our Lord tells us : “ Be ye therefore wise as serpents.” What does the serpent, that is so worthy of imitation ? The asp, a species of serpent, is deaf, according to David’s words ; “ Like the deaf asp, that stopped her ears ; which will not hear the voice of the charmer, that wishes to ensnare it.” The Religious should imitate this

prudence by closing his ears to enchantments of vanity, grandeur, ambition, worldly things, and to all idle reports that cannot concern him, but which can easily dissipate him, deprive him of liberty of spirit, whereas His one study and endeavor should be to attain the degree of perfection to which he is called.

St. Ambrose relates what the ancients tell of the wise and renowned Ulysses. When his vessel, it is said, approached the place where sirens, by the sweetness of their song, enticed and deceived those who listened, to effect their entire destruction, Ulysses prudently stopped with wax the ears of all who were aboard the vessel, and fastened himself to the mast. By such means they heard not the enchanting melody, and they escaped the threatened peril. We should do as much in our voyage on the sea of life, so as to arrive safely at the port of our salvation. Let us close our ears with the design of preserving the purity of our soul; let us attach ourselves to the cross of our Lord, so as not to hear the sirens, who alone chant the allurements and attractions of a deceitful world to cause our ruin; and let us be deaf to those fascinating and dangerous tongues that relate much that can but serve for our embarrassment and trouble.

Finally, the Religious must practise this prudent and holy deafness in the greater part of the things said of him, which he should seem not to hear or to know, if not to correct them. How necessary on these occasions is the device of the Emperor Frederic

I., that King Louis XI. had so often in his mouth: "*He who cannot dissemble, knows not how to reign.*" Surely, this should be understood more Christianly than it was by these princes, and should not consist in a mere *politic* dissimulation and a human prudence, but a dissimulation by patience, humility, and a spiritual prudence which is said by the Apostle to be "life and peace," because it brings one and the other to the soul. This wise deafness disposes us to a true interior life, causing us to enjoy solid peace in all occurrences of this world, as are met with in communities, where there are so many different spirits and such opposite temperaments.

"A fool," says the Holy Ghost by Solomon, "immediately showeth his anger," as soon as he is blamed, ridiculed, or is the least tried, "but he that dissembleth injuries is wise." Again, the Holy Ghost tells us: "The wisdom of a man is known by his patience, and his glory is to pass over wrongs;" not to notice any of the vexatious incidents that occur daily. The wise man soars above all trifling obstacles, which in divers manners present themselves in the way of his salvation. Verily is it a praiseworthy prudence that dissembles after this manner, never to be moved by events that pass with time and patience. Besides, to act thus is both quicker and easier, and costs much less pain to nature, than to show resentment, to be angered, to cause disquiet to others as well as to yourself. Therefore, be deaf and learn how to dissemble when necessary. The Wise Man says:

“God dissembleth the sins of men,” to attract them to penance; if the infinite majesty of God feigns the offences offered Him, certainly man, that worm of the earth, can and should dissemble the injuries and insults offered himself.

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE LIFE OF THE ANCIENT RELIGIOUS.

HAVING treated of the necessary qualities for living well in community, I wish ultimately to cause these characteristics to be viewed in a clearer light by considering the lives of the ancient Religious, and by a recital of some of their many praiseworthy actions, which will serve as instructions as well as incentives to us; and thus fill us with confusion on beholding the contrast.

Wherefore, it should be remarked that when St. Anthony (who flourished in the early part of the fourth century) had re-established and invigorated monastic discipline, which St. Mark the Evangelist had founded, but which the wars of the empire and persecutions had overthrown and almost abolished, laid the first foundation of community life. In fact, his own exemplary life, as well as the sanctity of his precepts, attracted such a concourse of persons, that in a very short while the deserts of the Thebais and of all Egypt were inhabited, built up with monasteries, which were filled with men and women. St. Athanasius, in the Life of this Saint, speaks as follows: There were upon these mountains monasteries, like so many temples, filled with choirs of *divine chanters*, who employed

the day in singing the praises of God, in meditating Sacred Scripture and in praying. The powerful remonstrances of the Saints had inspired all with great fervor for watching, fasting, and placing their consolation in the hope of future goods ; in employing themselves in manual labor, so as to have the necessary means to bestow alms, and to live together in perfect charity and strict union. Thus, a large country was inhabited, as it were, by people of another world, who had no conversation with those of this, and whose every thought and solicitude was given to exercises of piety and the practice of virtue. On beholding all these monasteries, this vast number of Religious, living in profound peace, in heroic sanctity, in an inviolable mutual concord, not one being found among them who wronged another, or knew what it was to slander or murmur ; all, on the contrary, rendering mutual services of a sincere and cordial charity ; at the sight of so admirable a spectacle, we ask who would not cry out : “ How beautiful are thy tabernacles, O Jacob ! and thy tents, O Israel ! ” They are as tufted bowers, as umbrageous valleys, delightfully fresh ; as fertile gardens, and as cedars planted by running brooks.

St. Chrysostom, speaking of these same monasteries, says : If any one would now visit the solitudes of Egypt, he would find them more beautiful than the terrestrial paradise, or any garden of delights ; he will behold them brightened by innumerable choirs of angels in mortal bodies, serving God. The heavens glitter not more brilliantly with

their countless stars, than these gloomy deserts, filled as they are with choral bands of innocent men and virgins.

St. Epiphanius also says: They toil as the industrious bee, in the acquisition of virtue,—making the wax of their office by their hands, while they bear in their mouths the praises of God as drops of honey.

Theodoret, commenting upon the Religious of his time, remarks: As the prince of darkness, man's capital enemy, has maliciously invented divers species of vice and means for his destruction: so also the children of light, nourished with true piety, have devoted themselves to seek out as many different methods of serving God in the varied exercises of virtue, as a ladder for mounting to heaven. These holy *athletes* combat in companies and in troops, and their number is *legion*: thus they bear off signal victories and immortal crowns. Others embrace the solitary life, renouncing all human consolations, to discourse more freely with God, and so as to rise superior to nature. Others again, dwelling in huts and cells, there pass their lives, glorifying God in prayer and penance. Still others, having no shelter but caverns and subterraneous retreats, apply themselves to the same exercises; whilst others still have neither cavern, nor cell, nor hut, nor other shelter, save the canopy of the heavens, and in this complete abnegation, far removed from all human abodes, endure the vicissitudes of season, the inclemency of the atmosphere. at times stiffened with cold and again

scorched by the insupportable heat of the sun. These latter pursue among themselves different modes of living ; for while some stand erect incessantly, others sit and stand alternately for half a day. Others keep enclosure in some manner, and so avoid seeing and entertaining visitors ; whilst others, without separate retreat or barrier, expose themselves to the view of every one.

St. John Damascene causes the holy man Barlaam to speak to Prince Josaphat of Religious in the following terms : These excellent men, consummate in every virtue, lead a quiet, retired life. Some, dwelling in the depths of the wilderness, are continually exposed to the severity of the seasons and to all the inclemencies of the atmosphere. Others seek temporary shelter beneath some ruinous wall, or in caverns and dens. Thus, they renounce all sensual pleasures and all the delights of life, contenting themselves with vegetables, roots, and dry bread, which are partaken of moderately, and after an austere abstinence. Some among them fast for entire weeks, eating but on Sundays : some others take food but two or three times during the week ; others again, but every second day, towards evening, and then most frugally, so occupied are they in prayer, watching, and with thoughts of eternity : so closely do they approximate the angelic life, and become oblivious to the wants of men. Neither envy nor vainglory is known to them. The less advanced in life, or the novices, are never jealous of the authority or the virtue of their seniors, nor do these exalt themselves in their own estimation ;

but all have the one design, of referring to God the glory of their actions and to reserve to themselves alone the practice of humility. Whoever is, on account of weakness or sickness, less austere than his companions, draws from thence cause for humbling himself more profoundly, considering he is not worthy to observe the common life in all its rigor, and thus attributes this failing in austerity rather to want of courage and to a certain tepidity, than to true necessity. Some withdraw into the depths of the desert, so that, being removed from all intercourse with men, they will be better disposed to approach to God,—to enjoy divine union. Others, having their cells separated one from another, assemble but on Sundays in the church, to participate in the sacred mysteries and to receive Holy Communion. After these religious duties, they would for a short time discourse together on pious subjects: exhorting one another to the practice of virtue, and particularly to guard against temptations; then each returned to his cell to devote himself to divine contemplation and to a more intimate knowledge of the science of the saints. Some live in community, under the guidance of a Superior, whom they acknowledge for their spiritual father, and honor as their prelate. They sacrifice their own will by the sword of obedience, and become slaves by this renunciation of their liberty; thus they live no longer to themselves, but to him to whom for the love of God they have submitted themselves, or rather, it is Jesus Christ who reigns within them, and for whom they have renounced every-

thing earthly. These admirable men dwell on earth as angels, always occupied in praising God, in mutual concert. In this manner do mortals in their fasts, prayers, vigils,—their meekness, silence, chastity, humility, peace, and perfect love of God and man,—imitate the actions and virtues of the angels in heaven. Behold how they pass their mortal career in exercises approximating to those of the blessed! Wherefore, also, God honors them with the gift of miracles, and He causes the good odor of their sanctity to extend over the earth.

To this eulogium, Barlaam added: Our support in life is obtained ordinarily from the spontaneous productions of the earth, such as fruits and vegetables, with which solitude furnishes us, without their use being disputed by the avarice or envy of any one. As to our clothing, it consists of a rough hair shirt and sheepskin already much worn and hardened, whereby to subdue our flesh. Our habits are made of many pieces, and we wear the same summer and winter; nor is it ever permitted us, when once invested in them, to lay them aside day or night, till they leave us in tatters. Thus do we suffer both from cold and heat, and by this mortification we endeavor to merit the robe of a blessed immortality.

St. John Chrysostom speaks at length, and with his wonted eloquence, particularly in three paragraphs, concerning the same Religious, of whom he relates: They rise considerably in advance of the sun, and after a brief repose. It is without difficulty they arise, as neither heaviness of head, nor robust health, nor good cheer, nor care, nor ennui,

nor aught else, requires them to indulge in much sleep ; therefore, they leave their beds promptly, and even joyfully, to proceed to choir, where all, in purity of heart and unison of voices, chant the praises of God with gratitude and love. They pray ever with great fervor and in profound reverence ; kneeling erect, with hands raised to heaven, like so many suppliant angels. In their monasteries is heard neither noise, confusion, nor clatter ; but all therein breathes prayer, recollection, and the balm of devotion. After the allotted time for prayer, they devote themselves to reading and the study of Sacred Scripture, so that while one discourses with Isaias, another communes with the Apostles, and others read the works of the holy Fathers ; or in occupying themselves with considering the wonders and beauties of the universe, and in making all creatures serve as so many ladders whereby to mount to the Creator. Then, also, in contemplating the shortness and the miseries of this life, they conceive a disgust, a holy contempt for all that men usually seek after, desiring future beatitude alone. Again, others are employed in the offices and in such manual labor as may be assigned them, but all performing their various avocations, of whatever nature, in perfect silence, and without any one loitering about or passing his time uselessly. The conversations they hold together are sweet and full of sincere fraternal charity, keeping therein a beautiful order. All slanderous, sharp, or offensive words are alien to them ; they never discourse on worldly news and affairs, but invariably and

spontaneously of good and holy subjects, as if they inhabited another sphere from ours, or as if they had already made their abode in heaven, where their thoughts and their hearts are continually: caring no more to speak of the things of this world, than we would think to comment on the *wee ants* and their occupations. Consequently, they bestow little time and attention on their food, and whatever could gratify their senses. Their table, far from offering any luxury or superfluity, bespeaks only sobriety and temperance, as all their food and delicacy are reduced to bread and water, to which some few add salt, and others oil. If occasionally they wish to regale themselves, and to feast, it is with a few wild fruits and nuts, whereby they receive a sweeter pleasure than can be had at the festal board of kings; and they enjoy better health and longer lives, in consequence of their abstemiousness and their simple fare. Some among them have no cells, nor other roof than the firmament, nor other light during night save nature's lamp, the moon. Their raiment is not soft or effeminate, but necessarily in keeping with their interior mortification and the pre-eminent sanctity of their lives: they being clothed with the skins of beasts, mostly worn and hardened. In the evening, after partaking of a slight refection, they resume their prayer and the chanting of the divine praises, then retire for a brief rest, lying down in their clothes. They watch much during the night, as true children of light, taking no more sleep than merely requisite for the support of nature, and never by the way of

comfort; so that their dreams must partake of the sobriety of their lives and the purity of their actions. After having so lived, they pass from earth, but quite differently from ordinary mortals, not beholding the approach of death with fear, but as an inestimable gift, considering it as the portal to true and eternal felicity. Thus, when they learn of the demise of some of their brethren, they evince great joy, and a universal rejoicing is exhibited throughout the house, for no one can feel or express himself otherwise than happy at the deceased brother's blessing in having consummated his earthly pilgrimage. Then, from joy, they pass to thanksgiving to God for His infinite mercy extended to the departed, while each one reflects on himself, asking for the grace to have a similar death. They accompany the corpse to the tomb with hymns and canticles of rejoicing. During their sickness, no complaint or murmur is heard, no impatience or sadness evinced. They are seldom attended by physicians, for they make their strong faith in God constitute their remedy: as they have led supernatural lives, so also do they look for cure alone from the God of all physicians.

Behold St. John Chrysostom's eulogies on Religious, whom he also styles saints and angels; crucified men, who have their eyes, their ears, their entire body, and the soul with all its faculties, attached to the cross of their Divine Master. He again calls them the ornaments of earth, the beacon lights to the world, and more illustrious, more truly noble than kings. Though their life is

seemingly much more painful and trying than that of men of the world, who seek sensual gratifications, it is nevertheless much sweeter and more delightful than the brightest enjoyments of the greatest princes of the earth, whose lives are as opposed to that of the Religious as is a stormy and rough sea to a quiet, secure harbor. Finally, having forsaken the busy scenes of life, and the tumult of the world, to retire to the mountain and desert, far removed from all commerce with men, consecrating themselves entirely to God and their perfection, they must necessarily have no fellowship with or knowledge of any of the goading cares common to mankind. Thus, their houses are without noise, and their souls free from passion. Contentment rules their state, which, though restricted to the compass of a cell, and most poorly clad, they would not exchange the former for a princely palace, nor the latter for the purple of kings, any more than a monarch would barter his regalia for the rags of a beggar.

This assured and joyous contentment springs from the firm conviction they have that their god-like state is more exalted, secure, sweet, and in every way advantageous for eternal beatitude, than is that of the potentates of every earthly grandeur, and this causes them to contemn worldly pomps as the webs of a spider. After this account, St. Chrysostom concludes: What men are those? What are we doing? Why do we not cast off this miserable servitude in which we are enthralled, burst asunder the bonds that hold us captive, to

fly away to that innocent life and to that blessed state? Why not rank ourselves among those terrestrial angels, rather than desire to dwell in our misery like the mendicants, who, all disfigured with ulcers, warm themselves by the sun in the public square, and, from door to door, beg for a morsel of bread to support their wretched existence? Why, I ask, do we act like these? Nay, we are even worse, with our ambitious desires for the goods of earth. Why do we solicit creatures for a meagre and paltry pleasure?

SECTION I.

Of the Life of the Religious in Some Particular Monasteries.

After having spoken in general of the admirable life of the ancient Religious, we shall now speak of some particular monasteries.

St. Gerasmus, who is mentioned in the Life of St. Euthemias, Abbot, had under his government seventy Religious, who dwelt in rigorous silence in their cells five days of the week, eating but bread and drinking only water. On Saturdays and Sundays they ate in the refectory, where they were served to cooked food and a little wine. They never had fire in their cells. They embraced a life of the profoundest humility, and observed so strict a poverty as to place all their wealth in possessing *nothing*. They were perfectly disengaged in affection from all things of earth; on absenting

themselves from their cells, they left the doors open, so that any one could enter freely, and take whatever he saw, or that might suit his convenience. Besides, they lived together in perfect harmony, having but one heart and one soul.

In the *Life of St. Mary of Egypt*, written by Sophronius, Bishop of Jerusalem, there is mentioned a monastery, admirably built, near the Jordan, where St. Zozimus was divinely conducted, and from whence he had the blessing of beholding this Saint, of discoursing with her, and of administering to her the holy viaticum. In this house of benediction there was no hour of night that the Religious did not chant the psalms, which during the day they were accustomed to recite in ejaculatory prayer, whilst toiling ceaselessly with their hands; thus beautifully uniting to the service of God the soul and body,—action with contemplation. They banished from their midst all useless discourses, and never cast a thought on mammon, which they scarcely knew by name. One thing only appeared to them important, and made impression on their minds, and that they labored arduously to acquire: namely, to consider themselves dead to the world since becoming Religious, and to increase in contempt for themselves: for while they nourished their soul with a divine food,—the word of God,—their emaciated body received but bread and water. St. Zozimus reflecting, as he afterwards made known, upon this noble and heavenly life, was so much edified and attracted as to be incited to a rapid progress in the way of

virtue and perfection: beholding men toiling so courageously to acquire the same, and by the sanctity of their lives making their houses resemble a new paradise upon earth.

The first Sunday of Lent, the sacrifice of Mass was celebrated as usual, and all the Religious approached Holy Communion. After this they partook of some food, served to them in the refectory, previous to assembling in the oratory, where they first devoutly prayed, then exchanged the kiss of peace, and prostrated themselves for a few minutes; on arising they embraced their Abbot, when again kneeling, they asked his blessing and his prayers for a happy success in the combat they were about undertaking (meaning the rigorous Lent they were preparing to observe.) After these preliminaries, the doors of the monastery were thrown open, and all the community went out chanting the psalm: "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is my defence and my life: what do I fear?" Only one or two brothers remained in the house, not to guard its contents, for they had nothing of value, but in order that their oratory might not be entirely deserted and that the praises of God might still resound therein. The Religious who so desired took with them such small provisions as the house afforded, namely, figs, dates, or pulse steeped in water; but some few preferred to rely on divine Providence, carried nothing away with them for when they would be pressed with hunger, but ate of the herbs that grew in the desert. On leaving the monastery,

they all passed over the Jordan, and kept at a great distance from one another, even shunning their former solitude as they would a populous town. Therefore, when they saw at a distance some one of their brothers advancing, they instantly turned out of their way, taking another road ; thus literally living to God and themselves, frequently singing the divine praises, and eating but at intervals of days. After this austere manner of observing Lent, many of them returned to the monastery during Passion Week, and all by Palm Sunday : each one came back laden with the spiritual fruits of his toil, with his merit augmented by his retreat, though no one, according to their rule, asked another how he had passed the time of separation and solitude. Behold the rule of this house, and with what exactness it was observed ! See how solicitous these Religious were to be more strictly united to God, and to achieve which they shrank not from offering nature every violence !

St. John Climachus gives some edifying accounts of the celebrated monastery near Alexandria. I will speak, says he, of the holy life of these Religious, and of their usual practices, which I considered at leisure, and which soravished me with delight that I can never cease being amazed at the courage with which mortal men endeavored to imitate the actions of immortals. Evidently charity was the band that united them inseparably together, and that which is most wonderful is that it was a charity abounding in honor and respect, without ever being jarred by a single insolent or inconsiderate word. They were

particularly careful not to disturb the conscience of their brothers: and when the Superior perceived one of them to have aversion to another, he would instantly dismiss him as a criminal,—exile him to some other monastery,—saying he could not suffer two demons, one visible and the other invisible, in the same community. I have seen among these venerable Religious what was not alone calculated to edify, but to excite admiration and wonder: behold a community assembled and united in the spirit of God, Jesus Christ being the sacred and indissoluble tie between the active and contemplative life. Their exercises were regulated by obedience, and they gave themselves with so much fervor to acts of virtue that they needed not the warning of a Superior to incite them thereto, while they mutually encouraged one another by their example. If, in the absence of the Abbot, some one spoke ill of another, or made an indiscreet remark, or uttered an idle word, he who would be within hearing, would make a sign to the speaker in warning of his fault, and thus try to correct him unperceived by others. But if the delinquent continued to speak, or seemed not to understand the admonition, this charitable monitor would fall on his knees before him, as when penance is requested, and then silently withdraw. During their recreations all their conversation was upon subjects purely spiritual, and frequently upon their last end. I must not pass over in silence the singular virtue of the cook of this house. Noticing him to be ceaselessly occupied in his duty, nevertheless always recollected, and with

tears in his eyes, I entreated him to tell me by what means he obtained of God such a grace. Being unable to resist my earnest appeal, he candidly acknowledged the truth, by saying: It never comes into my thoughts that it is to men I give the toils of my duty, but to God; wherefore, I greatly esteem my ounce, without ever seeking repose; while the fire that I am ever beholding animates me the more, because it reminds me of the fires of eternity. Another remarkable virtue of these exemplary Religious was that nothing ever interrupted their attention to the Divine presence. Even when assembled in the refectory, or when they met passing through the monastery, they employed secret means to excite themselves to interior recollection and prayer. Also, when any one committed a fault, the others would beseech him to allow them to accuse themselves of it to the Superior, thus to receive the penance thereof: such a request was sometimes granted, being urged with much earnestness; but when the Superior perceived the charitable ruse of his disciples, and that he who would make the accusation was not the true delinquent, he would not impose much of a penance, nor would he inquire who was the real offender.

Let us now speak of the monasteries of Religious women. The monastery of the Thebais, in which St. Euphrasia resided, consisted of one hundred and thirty cells, wherein the Religieuses lived in strict observance and eminent virtue. Not one drank wine or ate fruit. Some of them even abstained from oil. Some fasted from one evening

till the next : others for two or three days consecutively. They all slept on the ground with a small mat for a bed. Their habit was of coarse hair-cloth. They performed their appointed duties with great fervor and constancy, never relaxing while sufficient physical strength remained. When taken sick, they had recourse neither to doctor nor medicine, but accepting their maladies as blessings, they looked to God alone for cure. When a sister was disturbed by some temptation during the night, it was customary for her on the next day to make it known to her Superior, who would instantly pray for her, and command her to carry stones all day, to mortify her body, and to sleep seven nights on hair-cloth strewn with ashes.

Numerous other things could be related to show the virtue and sanctity of the ancient Religious. What were not the austerities, fasts, prayers, the patience, poverty, humility, obedience, and the other virtues of the Orders of Saints Benedict, Romuald, Bernard, Dominic, and St. Francis, in their commencement? The author of the *Life of St. Romuald* says of the Saint and his Religious, that they all had a most mortified appearance, being pale, emaciated, and barefoot, yet ever content with the excessive dearth they experienced in all things : dwelling in their cells as in tombs : never tasting wine even in sickness, when it would seem most necessary. But what is particularly remarkable, is that even the domestics of the monasteries, those who tended the flocks, were influenced by the virtue of the Religious they served.

for despite the toils and fatigues they endured, they fasted, observed silence, and took the discipline; and if perchance an idle word escaped them, they would readily ask for penance.

After this recital, St. Climachus exclaims: O golden age of Romuald! O golden age of Religion in its primitive fervor, its sanctity and regularity! But all of which, in course of time, gradually decayed, to be succeeded by tepidity—which is styled the silver age, to be followed by that of copper, and lastly of *iron*: so that of all this pristine *éclat*, there remains but little more than the name and habit of Religion; and the same complaint can be made as by Cassian, who says: We have seen some who have fallen in such excessive tepidity, and in so great relaxation from the primitive fervor of their Order, that it is necessary to use indulgence towards them, for fear they would not persevere. How sad the change! What a deplorable metamorphosis is the present from the primitive condition of the institute,—of the beauty of its commencement with this hideousness of its modern life.

All that has been related of the heroic virtue and eminent sanctity of the Religious of by-gone days ought, in truth, tend greatly to confound, as well as encourage us. However, though we should practise many austerities, and observe great regularity, we should not permit ourselves to be surprised by vainglory; for who are we, in comparison to those noble, self-sacrificing men? How our humility, our patience, our obedience, shrink to

nothingness when viewed in the light of their transcendent virtues !

St. Macarius of Egypt, after having seen some of these solitaries, renowned for their sanctity, said with confusion : I am no monk ; but I have seen those who were in reality monks ! Let it also be remembered, what has already been related of St. Anthony, who on returning to his monastery, after his visit to St. Paul, first hermit, said while striking his breast, and when some of his brothers asked him from whence he came : Wretched me ! miserable sinner ! who so unworthily bear the name of monk ! And St. Barlaam, after the account he had given Prince Josaphat of the Religious of his time, concludes thus : Behold the life and virtues of men truly holy and admirable, that we, all unworthy and miserable as we are, try to imitate ; but there is a vast difference between us, and we are far from reaching the summit of their exalted perfection—of their celestial life. Nevertheless, we endeavor, as much as our weakness will permit, to follow them, though at a distance. We wear even the same habit as they, but we do not perform their penitential works. Doubtless, we of these latter times can say this with much more reason than those great saints quoted above. When I consider (each can say) those who have preceded me, and who lived in the commencement of the Order ; when I cast my eyes on their exactness in observing the rule, on their fidelity in fulfilling their vows, their simplicity, their innocence, their fervor, their charity, their zeal for the glory of

God and the salvation of their neighbor, their mortification, and their other shining virtues,—I feel that I am not a Religious. I am only the phantom of one, and I do not merit to bear the name or to wear the habit of a Religious.

“Son of man,” says God to the prophet Ezechiel, “show to the house of Israel the temple, and let them be ashamed of their iniquities, and let them measure the building, and be confounded of all that they have done.” This explains, as observed by St. Gregory, the shame and confusion we should experience when comparing our lives with those of the Saints; and I add, our actions with those of our forefathers: God wishes us to behold the temple, that is to say, the Religious Order to which we have been called, and to measure its extent; its depth and height; to contemplate in amazement the beauty of its proportions, the regularity and solidity of its columns, its rich paintings, its precious ornaments in gold and silver, its vases and other sacred vessels: meaning, the sanctity and perfection of this mysteries temple; the solid virtue of the foundation stones of this noble structure,—and we blush to have by our tepidity and immortification, sullied, profaned, and all but ruined so holy a place, and to have so sensibly degenerated from the virtue of our predecessors. Let us strive, by a true and permanent change of life, to repair the evils we have committed, to restore to Religion some of its primitive beauty and lustre, and to imitate, as closely as possible, the brilliant virtues of our ancestors.

This ought to be our design and exercise, thus to prevent the Order of which we have the honor to be members, from becoming relaxed, and from perishing finally through our own fault.

TO THE
GLORIOUS VIRGIN MARY,
THE MOST WORTHY MOTHER OF GOD,
THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN AND EARTH,
MY SOVEREIGN LADY.

VIRGIN MOST HOLY,—As thou hast the goodness to be the Protectress, the Refuge, and the Mother of all Religious Orders, even to confer on them this honor: to whom can I more justly dedicate and consecrate this work, than to thee; and into what better hands place it, than thine? I then present it to thee, offer it to thy Majesty with all possible affection, respect, and humility, praying and conjuring thee to regard this poor offspring of my feeble intellect with a propitious eye, and to take it under thy protection, as also to extend still, over all Religious, the rays of thy benevolence and the effects of thy power; to procure and obtain for them, of thy Son, the blessing and the grace to imprint His knowledge, His esteem, His love, and His service on the minds and wills of all men. Amen.

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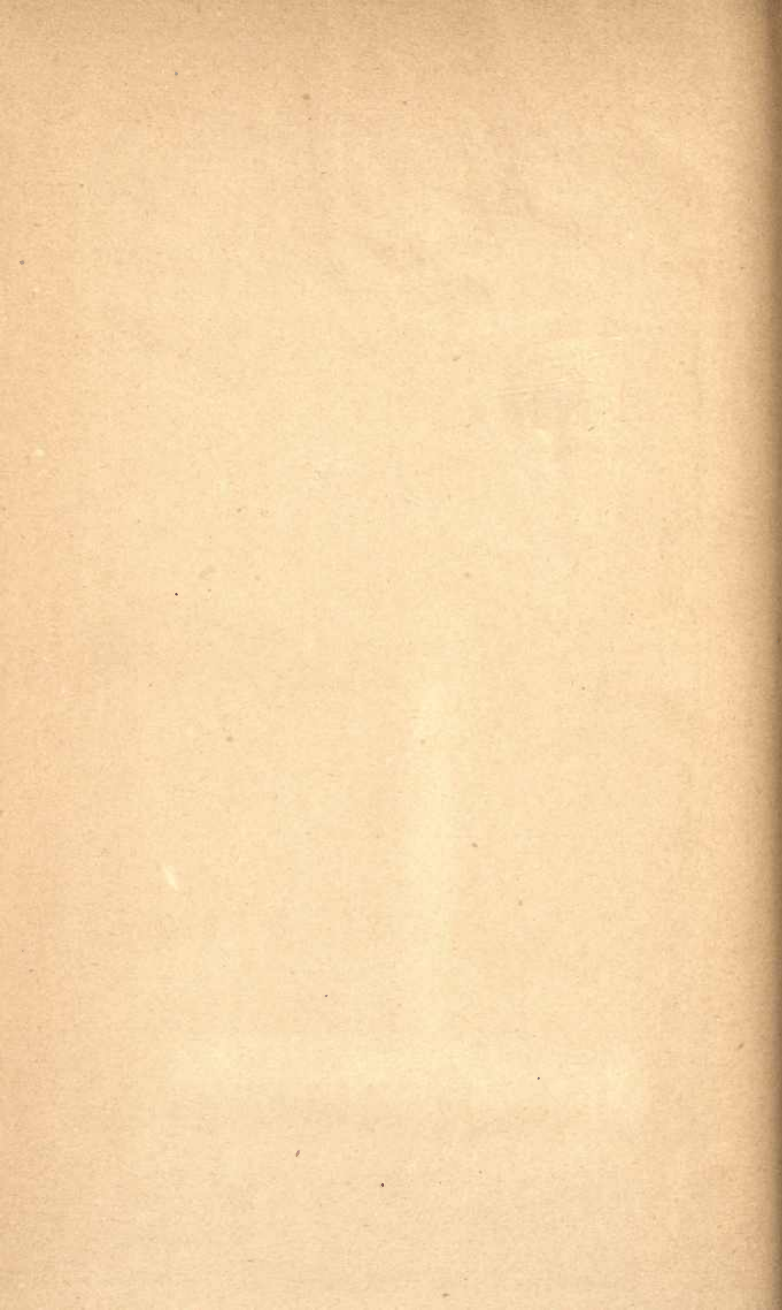
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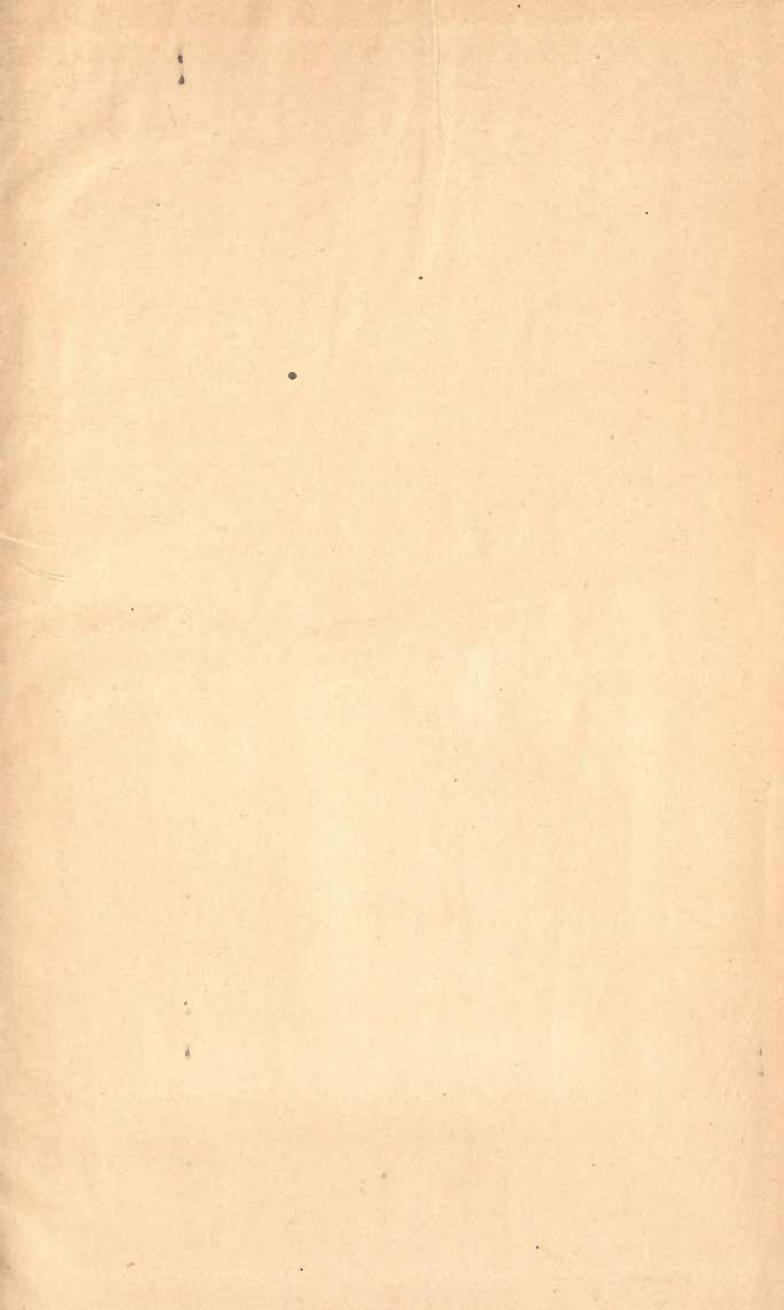
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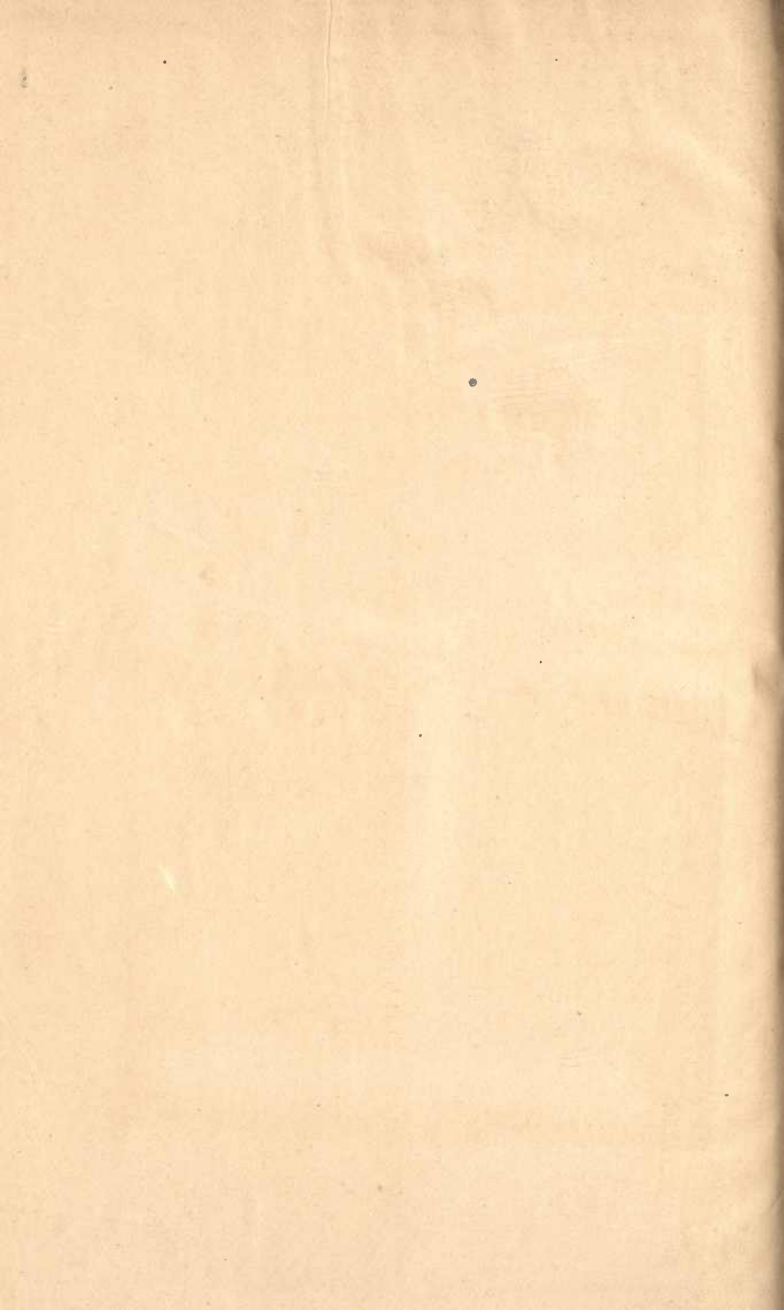
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