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THE  
SPIRITUAL EXERCISES  
OF  
SAINT IGNATIUS

EXPLAINED BY  
FATHER MAURICE MESCHLER, S. J.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

SECOND EDITION

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PHYSICS 309

LECTURE NOTES

BY

ROBERT H. COHEN

1962

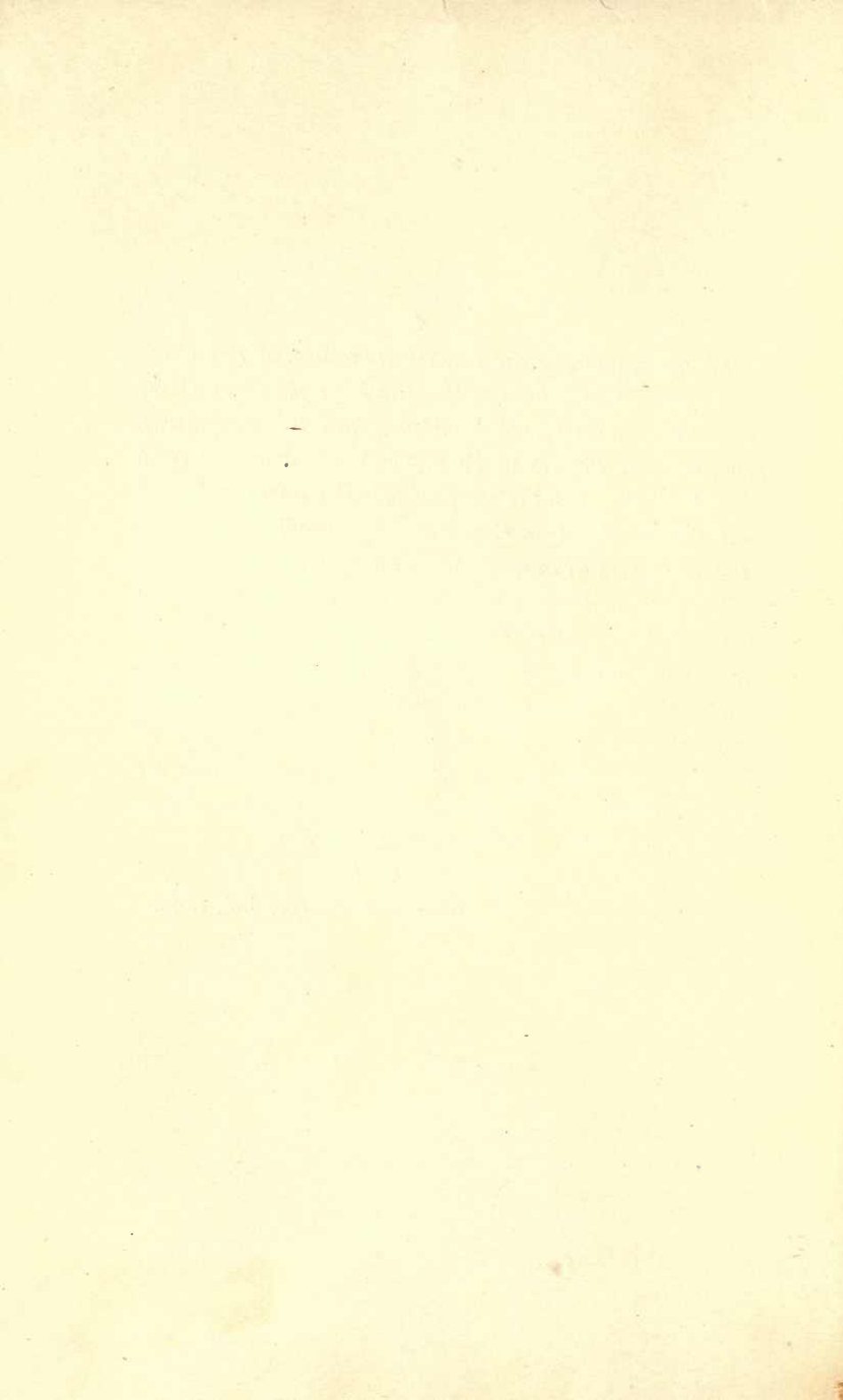
*It is ten years since the English translation of this Commentary was first printed at Woodstock for the use of Ours. Some years after a French translation from the original was printed by our Fathers in Paris, which is now in the second edition. Father Meschler's work is as highly prized in France as it is in our American Provinces. It has taken its permanent place in the literature of the Spiritual Exercises.*

*When, about a year ago, a new edition of our translation was called for, the author, now Assistant of Germany in Rome, was informed of it, and, renewing his former kindness, sent us again a considerable number of notes, thereby enabling us to make this edition a "revised and improved translation." For his great kindness we offer the Reverend Father our sincerest thanks.*

*The book is for the exclusive use of Ours.*

*Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady,*

*Woodstock College, Md., 1899.*





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## THE NATURE AND DIVISION OF THE BOOK OF THE EXERCISES

1. The Book of the Exercises in its nature and scope is not a mere guide for the time of the Exercises only. *It is rather a complete, practical course of instruction in the whole spiritual life for all persons in general; for us in particular it is the hand-book or spiritual directory containing the asceticism of our Society stated with legislative precision.*<sup>(1)</sup> And in fact, the spiritual actions of which the book treats, such as meditation, vocal prayers and many others, are not peculiar to the time of the Spiritual Exercises, but belong to the whole life. He, consequently, fails to understand the practical scope of the book who would restrict its use to the time of the retreat, and make no account of it afterwards. The Exercises themselves are in reality only a training in the actions of the spiritual life or an acquiring of ease in their performance.

2. We may conveniently distinguish two parts in the Book of the Exercises: 1) the connected series of meditations which make up the frame-work of the Exercises and, presented in great variety, are distributed into four so-called weeks; 2) Instructions, precepts and rules of the spiritual life. To these belong first of all the *annotations*, which may be called an introduction to the Exercises; then the *additions*, primarily intended as directions for meditation and the particular examen; next *rules* for particular circumstances and needs of the spiritual life; lastly *notes* (notæ) containing occasional and incidental remarks of various kinds.

Another division arranged for a systematic series of conferences will be found in the appendix.

(1) "Exercitiorum libellum quidam dixit novitiatum esse toti generi humano propositum." Suarez de Religione Soc. Jesu l. 9, c. 5, § 2.—"Opus hoc ex instituto non est ad tradendam doctrinam theologiam . . . continet magis practicam, quam speculativam doctrinam, traditam per modum artis magis, quam scientiæ, ideoque in eo magis practica utilitas spectatur, quam speculativa." l. c., c. 5, § 4.—"Mens fuit B. Ignatii brevissime comprehendere omnia, quæ ad spiritualem instructionem et interiorem animæ salutem conducere possunt." l. c., c. 6, § 4.—"Nihil ad instructionem spiritualem desideratur, quantum per brevem methodum tradi potest." § 11 in fine.—"Nihil quod in consultationem ordinariam venire potest, omisit." l. c., c. 7, § 1.—Cfr. Roothaan, nota 36 to the Additions.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUR WEEKS OF THE EXERCISES

### THE ANNOTATIONS

#### THE TITLE

1. The Annotations are nothing else than *an introduction to the Exercises*.

2. This introduction contains first *the definition* of the Exercises (annot. 1); secondly hints and *means* to insure success both for him who gives the Exercises, and for him who makes them (annot. 2-20). As the title beautifully puts it: "ad capiendam aliquam *intelligentiam* . . . . ut *juvet* se is qui . . . . ." Mark the expression "*juvet* se." Both the director and the exercitant do little more than *help*. "God alone gives the increase" (I. Cor. iii. 6); then too the word, "*juvet*" at the outset draws attention to the need of self-exertion.

3. In these preliminary remarks are given from time to time, both for the Master and for the Disciple, very important suggestions and principles for the spiritual life.

**The First Annotation** gives the DEFINITION of the Exercises—*first, from their NATURE, and secondly, from their AIM.*

1. In their nature they are, above all, spiritual actions, i. e., not merely operations of the *natural* spiritual life, but of the *supernatural* spiritual life; hence they are operations which have for their object the attainment of the supernatural end for which man is created (ad salutem animæ). For as the vegetative, sensitive and spiritual faculties of the natural life are exercised in running, wrestling, reading, studying, etc., by means of which man fits himself for his natural end; so also the supernatural life has its spiritual exercises. Now these operations can only consist in knowing God, loving him, and becoming like unto him after the example of our Saviour, by means of the contemplation and practical application of the truths of salvation. St. Ignatius therefore defines the Exercises in the concrete by enumerating some of these spir-

itual operations, as meditation, vocal prayer, examination of conscience, etc. He does not enumerate them all: for instance, the rules for the Election, and many others which are found in the Book of the Exercises. Spiritual exercises, therefore, are everything that, by means of our own activity, helps us on to our supernatural end, the vision of God. Here again self-exertion is insisted upon (*operatio*). We must act for ourselves and not merely suffer ourselves to be acted upon. Hence, the Exercises are pre-eminently asceticism (*ἀσκησις*, exercise) in the primitive sense of the word. What has just been said suggests the first beautiful motive for setting a high value on the Exercises, and for making them well. They are exercises which relate to God and our eternal salvation, and are therefore of a higher order than anything else that we might do in the natural order, were it ever so sublime and necessary. In asceticism so understood lies strength for all else.

2. In the mind of St. Ignatius the aim of the Exercises in regard to the attainment of our supernatural end is practical rather than theoretical or speculative; and is threefold. The first and immediate aim is to uproot what is inordinate in our passions; the intermediate aim is to learn to know the will of God in our regard, in order to regulate our lives in accordance with it; the remote aim is to attain the salvation of our souls.

The immediate object, therefore, is mortification (self-denial, self-conquest), which consists in crushing and removing whatever is inordinate in our natural inclinations. But what is inordinate? That which does not further the end, goes beside or against the end or is likely to go against it. Whatever is useless, aimless, dangerous, sinful—in a word, whatever we cannot justify before faith and reason is inordinate, and consequently matter of mortification. And why ought this to be the immediate object of the Exercises? Because it is most necessary for us. Ours is a fallen nature, full of inordinate appetites which, sooner or later, lead us into sin. Because, furthermore, it brings us most securely to our remote and last end, union with God. Without an earnest endeavor to rid ourselves of all inordinate affections, (*omnes inordinatas affectiones*) everything else is self-deception. The Fol-

lowing of Christ says : "The greater violence thou offerest to thyself, the greater progress thou wilt make" (1. xxv. 11). Mark well, however, that mortification is not the last end, but the immediate end—hence, only a means.

The intermediate end is to know the will of God and to order one's life in accordance with it. True and essential union with God and real perfection is to be what God wills us to be. Now God reveals his will not by his commandments only, but also by the duties of our state of life and by special inspirations. To know the will of God with regard to each of these points, to endeavor to order (*præparare*) one's life in accordance with his will, is the aim of the Exercises as well as of all the practices of the spiritual life. To seek wholly to obey the will of God in one's state of life, is true spirituality, because it is the spirituality which God demands of us ; it is practical spirituality, because it answers the needs of practical life and enables us to be what we ought to be ; it is solid spirituality, because it comes from a solid principle—the will of God—and really advances us ; it is easy spirituality, because everybody is able and willing to practice it, and God surely gives his grace ; it is safe spirituality, because it is not exposed to self-deception.

The final aim of the Exercises, as of all other actions of our life, is the attainment of eternal happiness, which will be the greater, the more perfectly we shall have attained our more immediate ends.—Cfr. *Roothaan*, nota 4, § 2.

The practical result of the Exercises, then, is the ordering and the reform of our life or state of life according to the mind and will of God ; that is to say, choice of a state of life or self-reformation in our state of life (*electio*). Here St. Ignatius goes down to the heart and reaches the highest point and the ultimate aim of the Exercises. How simple, how necessary, how sublime this object is ! And here we have a second motive for thinking highly of the Exercises, and for making them with earnestness.

3. But can this object be attained through the Exercises and what is their efficacy in making it attainable ?

That there is extraordinary virtue in the Exercises is proved first by experience (*Direct. Procem.* § 7), and secondly from their nature. For whether we consider them from the ob-



jective or from the subjective point of view, they are an aggregate of the most efficacious means of salvation to be found in our religion. The objective efficacy of the Exercises lies in the grace of God, in the power of supernatural truths, and in the psychological arrangement of the meditations and other prescribed actions. Their subjective efficacy consists in the co-operation which the exercitant under the director's guidance must add, and which, as to its substance, is contained in the following Annotations (Dir. Procem. § 8).

And how do the Exercises attain this object? what is their principal efficacy? The Exercises do not at once bring about complete perfection; they only pave the way to perfection, by preparing and disposing us (*præparare et disponere*) for it, as St. Ignatius says. This they accomplish, and no more! How well and how correctly this is said! For we can indeed do no more in the spiritual life. So true is this, that even an act of contrition itself is only a disposition and not the formal cause of justification (Direct. c. 39, § 1). The Exercises, therefore, prepare the way for perfection by making known to us the will of God as to the choice of a state of life or our reformation in the state in which we live, and also by showing us how to remove the obstacles that arise from our inordinate passions.

But what is the meaning of "*postquam eas sustulerit,*" *i. e., inordinatas affectiones?* It is clearly not to be understood in the sense of a complete uprooting of our evil passions, which is often the work of a whole lifetime; but rather of such a mastery over them that they shall not hinder us from following the will of God in the choice and ordering of our state of life. How this can be done is shown in the 16th Annotation. We must in the matter of our inordinate passions distinguish between the simple inclination (*habitus*) and the act (*actus*). —(Cfr. the title of the Exercises and Roothaan, *ibidem* n. 1). Against both, of course, much can be done during the Exercises and by means of them. The act of our evil passions —which is sin—is cast out, and, if it may be, made impossible by the Exercises, *i. e.* by the meditations on sin, by penance, confession and holy Communion. In so far, at least, our passions cannot actually hinder us from doing the will of God. Assuredly, the Exercises can and ought to effect this much in

every case. As to the evil inclinations themselves we first of all receive light which shows their existence and nature ; secondly, we are enabled to take a firm resolution to struggle against them — and this is the chief point, for occasional vacillations and relapses are not so very injurious as long as this resolution stands firm ; thirdly, the Exercises furnish us powerful motives, efficacious means, and the best method of using them ; and lastly, great and especial graces are prepared for us, which may be called *the grace of the Exercises*, and which has often proved itself so marvellously powerful. Certainly, God is most willing to impart his graces to us, provided only we remove the obstacles. And this is precisely what the Exercises accomplish to such a high degree. This efficacy of the Exercises is the third great motive why we should esteem them highly and have great confidence in them (Dir. c. 2, § 3, and Roothaan, not. 4, § 4).

4. The Exercises consequently are a closely and logically linked system of supernatural truths and practical instructions and means, containing everything which enlightens, purifies, strengthens and moulds the soul, and makes it capable of that degree of Christian perfection, which, according to God's plan, it is destined to reach.

The other Annotations (2-20) contain suggestions and helps some of which are for the exercitant and others for the director.

**The Second Annotation** *contains first, A SUGGESTION FOR THE DIRECTOR, secondly, while giving the reason for it, throws out AN IMPORTANT HINT FOR THE EXERCITANT, and lastly, gives A RULE FOR PRAYER, which is important at all times.*

1. The director is admonished to explain to the exercitant what it means to meditate (*modum meditandi, applicandi facultates*), and then to propose to him the subject-matter of the meditation distributed into points and in logical order (*ordinem*). The former makes meditation possible and easy, the latter fruitful. And how should the director propose the points? First of all, faithfully, that is, in accordance with truth and not after his own invention, without exaggeration,

etc. ; and next, briefly (*cum brevi et summaria declaratione*), without discursive developments of considerations, applications and affections. Why? In order that the exercitant himself may meditate, i. e., that he may be active and not merely passive. The director gives only the pattern and the wool, each one must weave the texture for himself. The director fastens the nail, the exercitant himself must drive it home. Here St. Ignatius gives us a hint that we must prepare our own points and shows us how to do it (Cf. Heb. 4, Notandum 3). The preparation of the meditation is properly speaking the first *addition* and as such the most important of all. How many meditations come to nought through want of this preparation! Here the words of Holy Writ are strikingly true: "Before prayer prepare thy soul; and be not as a man that tempteth God" (Eccli. xviii. 23). The preparation of the points, nevertheless, should not itself be a meditation. St. Ignatius himself in many meditations of the Book of the Exercises, shows us by practical examples how the points ought to be given.

2. The exercitant, therefore, is bidden to meditate himself, and not to have the meditation made for him. And why should he make the meditation himself? First, because thereby he learns to meditate, and comes to like it, which is no slight gain drawn from the Exercises for our spiritual life. Secondly, we experience greater pleasure from what we find ourselves—it is fruit of our own raising. Thirdly, it comes home to us more forcibly, suits us better and makes a deeper and more lasting impression. Lastly, it begets a desire to make like efforts another time. Does not the bird that roams at liberty get more enjoyment from the food it has to search for, than the captive bird from the dainties offered through the bars of a gilded cage? We must bear this in mind, whenever we give the Exercises. He who is at all able to meditate, ought to meditate; one must be a little bold in this respect and rely upon the grace of God (Roothaan, nota 7 ad 3<sup>um</sup>).

Two things, according to St. Ignatius, enable us to reap profitable fruit from meditation. The first of these is our own activity in personal meditation, which the Saint describes with a master's hand in two or three words: "*sumere fundamentum*"—and this is the work of the mem-

ory, the hand, as it were, that grasps and holds fast the mystery; then, "*discurrere, ratiocinari, quod magis declarari et sentiri facit historiam*"—this is the work of the understanding and of the will and the result of their activity. Such is briefly the whole theory of mental prayer. In the second place, the grace of God must help us, which, even in our own action, must do the best part. St. Ignatius touches upon both these points. For by the words "*intellectus virtute divina illustratus*" he understands the so called *lumina* or special illustrations which fill the soul with a brighter light and greater consolation than we could obtain by the greatest self-exertion (*per propriam ratiocinationem*). We pray for this divine light in the preludes as well as during the meditation; we may pray for it then especially when our efforts are unsuccessful, saying: "O Lord, surely some beautiful truth lies hidden in this mystery, do thou graciously unfold it to me."

3. At the end St. Ignatius takes occasion to lay down an important general principle as to prayer:—It is not the wealth of thoughts, that does good to the soul and satisfies it, but the interior relish by which the heart is moved. A flood of beautiful and ingenious thoughts disturbs, chokes, and distracts the mind and often merely satisfies one's curiosity. Whereas a single idea, thoroughly grasped, frequently gives not only food for a whole meditation, but also brings consolation and fruit. Days of glory are not always the fairest and most enjoyable days. He who would little by little acquire the art of mental prayer will find this a very valuable hint. We must not, then, make a restless chase after a multiplicity of novel and beautiful thoughts, but dwell upon a few and try to relish them fully. The gift of wisdom will enable us to do this (*Dir. c. 8, § 1, 2*).

**The Third Annotation** *is intended for the EXERCITANT, and contains two points: first it tells us again, briefly and in passing, in what the WHOLE WORK OF MEDITATION consists, and secondly it gives a SUGGESTION WITH REGARD TO OUR OUTWARD BEHAVIOR during meditation.*

1. Meditation consists simply in the operations of the intellect and the will. The object of mental prayer is to have

the intellect examine closely and penetrate the truth, in order to procure for us light and clear principles, and to bring about resolutions which may serve as a prop and stay for our will (Cfr. Roothaan, explan. fund., § 1). The will is exercised by attuning and bending it to the known good, by inducing it to desire this good, to propose to do it, and especially to pray for these dispositions. For every good desire and every good purpose is like a tiny plant which the gardener has just set out; in order that it may take root, it needs moisture, and hence the gardener waters it. The water is the grace, the petition is the work of watering. Prayer therefore is an operation of the will—nay the highest operation of the will.

2. During acts of prayer particularly, St. Ignatius recommends great outward reverence. First, because during prayer proper we converse with God, whereas while reflecting we converse, as it were, with ourselves; hence it is becoming that we should assume a more reverent attitude. Not to do so, would betray a want of good manners and courtesy. Good manners are to be observed not only towards men, but also and especially towards God. For good manners are nothing else than the agreement of our outward behavior with our own condition and the condition of him with whom we have intercourse. Secondly, because a reverent attitude keeps us attentive and fervent; whereas a careless attitude distracts us and begets dreaminess and inaction. Thirdly, because God blesses our humility by visiting us with consolations. He acts like ourselves. We rebuff one who treats us disrespectfully; the modest man we receive with kindness. God acts in like manner. "*Humilia respicit, alta a longe cognoscit*" (Ps. cxii. 6). We often unexpectedly feel an interior impulse to prayer, or receive some sudden consolation; and if we are then too indolent to assume the outward attitude of prayer, the consolation passes away, for the merest trifle is wont to disturb and drive it away. Hence we ought to be always careful to keep ourselves in a becoming attitude. This applies also to the breviary, in which there is a frequent alternation of lessons and addresses to God. This Annotation holds good at all times.

**The Fourth Annotation** is meant for both the DIRECTOR and the EXERCITANT. It tells us THREE THINGS.

1. The Exercises are divided into four so-called weeks or parts, each of which embraces about seven or eight days. This distribution very nearly corresponds to the three degrees of the spiritual life: the purgative, illuminative and unitive way (*via purgativa, illuminativa, unitiva*). Hence we said above (1st Annot. § 4) that the Exercises are a system of spiritual practices which contains everything necessary for the cleansing, strengthening and perfecting of the soul. In their logical sequence, then, they are linked together in the following manner: the destination and last end of man; the turning away from it by sin;<sup>(1)</sup> and the return to it by penance and amendment of life, and by the imitation of our divine Saviour, who shows us by his example what we have to do here below, and what in consequence awaits us in eternity. It is plain that the first week corresponds to the purgative way. The second may rightly be called the illuminative way, because from the example of our Saviour we receive an abundance of practical light on the nature and the practice of the virtues; and chiefly because the object of this week consists in learning to know the way in which God wishes to lead us (*electio*), and the best means of walking successfully therein. The third week, through the contemplations upon the Passion of Christ, powerfully strengthens the resolution already taken; as also does the fourth, with this difference, however, that in this week strength is drawn from the reward which our Saviour holds out to us in his glorified life. And since the effect of this week is love and joy, it partakes of the character of the unitive way.

2. St. Ignatius observes that in fixing the duration of each week we must not act by routine; but must always keep in view the end of each week, and see whether it has been suffi-

<sup>(1)</sup> St. Ignatius does not here make explicit mention of the Foundation or last end of man. He only says, "*de peccatis*;" but sin being a turning away from the end, presupposes the end and implies it. Perhaps another reason why he did not mention it by name is that it is proposed as *consideratio*, and not like sin in the form of a regular meditation (*exercitium*).

ciently attained or not—and we should not go on until this end has been sufficiently attained. Thus only shall we do serious and solid work. On the other hand, it would be no less a mistake to detain one on some matter—for instance, the purgative way—after the object has been attained according to the exercitant's needs, as this might even prove harmful to him. The director must always keep in view the needs of the individual exercitant (Cf. Roothaan, n. 9, § 2). St. Ignatius is not a man of mere routine; he frequently repeats: "*Quærendo res et fructus.*" He shows a like spirit in other regulations of the Society: thus, he does not fix a certain duration for the time of probation. The same direction holds good for the particular meditations. In making them we should not go on to the following meditation until the fruit we are seeking has been obtained. Especially is this true in the case of important matters, such as the Foundation, the meditations on Sin, on the Kingdom of Christ, on Two Standards, on Three Degrees of Humility, etc. In fact, what good would be attained by passing hurriedly over things of such importance? It is for this reason also that the Saint prescribes such frequent repetitions of the more important meditations. When many make the Exercises together, the needs and dispositions of the greater number must, of course, be consulted. The individual can meet his own wants by repetitions and reflections during free time. It is consequently a great advantage to make the Exercises alone; one can tarry where and as long as one chooses.

3. St. Ignatius assigns the causes why in many cases we do not immediately obtain the fruit that is sought for. He recounts three such causes. The first is a slowness of apprehension (*tardiores*). This is more or less the case with all beginners in the spiritual life. The objects are as yet unknown and beyond their mental range—hence the necessity, in the beginning, of real study and of a more protracted employment of the intellect; and that such should be the case is naturally to be expected. The second cause is a lack of earnestness, diligence, and exactness in observing the prescribed directions, especially the Additions, and a want of self-exertion. The third cause is the influence of the evil one, who endeavors to throw obstacles in our way, and to

prevent us from obtaining the desired fruit by distractions, desolation, temptations, weariness, disquiet, despondency, and like troubles. We must, therefore, take heed of these three causes of failure, when our success is not as rapid and easy as we desire. During the course of the year also, when our prayer does not succeed, it is good to remember these hints.

**The Fifth Annotation** *is for the EXERCITANT, and first describes the DISPOSITION OF HEART in which he ought to enter upon the Exercises, and secondly gives incidentally MOTIVES for it.*

I. St. Ignatius demands two things of the exercitant. First, courage:—above all, the exercitant is not to make at the outset any reservations or refuse anything to God, is not to be afraid of difficulties or of the sacrifices that God may demand of him. We must present ourselves to God as a blank page, in order that he may write upon it what he wills. —“*Totum velle et libertatem . . . ut tam de se quam de omnibus, quæ habet disponat . . .*” says St. Ignatius. The absence of this frame of mind would be decidedly hurtful to the Exercises. It were almost better not to begin them in this case. Let us say frankly and in good earnest with St. Paul: “Lord, what wilt thou have me do?” (Act. ix. 6.) Besides courage, St. Ignatius demands of us — at least in a general way — magnanimity, readiness, and initiative (Cfr. præamb. ad consider. status: *investigare et petere*). We must at the outset have the wish to gain great profit from the Exercises and to mount a new step in the spiritual life; and it is precisely this the Exercises ought to effect for us. As in the cross-section of a tree you can count the rings that mark the growth of each succeeding year, so likewise in the spiritual life the Exercises made every year ought to mark a new start and the growth of a new ring, so that you can say with fair accuracy: “This year I have rid myself of such a fault, last year I acquired such a virtue, etc.” For want of this disposition the Exercises often remain barren of result. We mean to do just what we are obliged to do according to custom, and the upshot is, that nothing is effected beyond the bare mechanical observance of the rule.



There are some who anxiously ask in the beginning of the Exercises to what point they ought to direct their efforts. The answer is: If there exist an unmistakable fault, a well-declared inordinate passion, you cannot, of course, overlook it. But apart from this, the above-mentioned disposition, so noble and so all-embracing, is quite sufficient. For we cannot know beforehand what God may demand of us during the Exercises. But when with such readiness we approach God and follow him, he will certainly make his will known to us. This generous disposition therefore, which makes no reservations, is sufficient; at any rate, it is indispensable, if any considerable result be expected.

2. The motives for this frame of mind are contained in almost every word of the Annotation. It is "our Creator and Lord" toward whom we ought to have these sentiments. As such he can demand anything . . . he knows our strength, knows what we are able to do, and will not ask of us more than we can accomplish . . . he desires our welfare, and the sacrifice which he demands, he demands for our own good . . . in return he will give himself to us . . . besides, we are not to work single-handed: his grace will be with us. Moreover, it is the "divine Majesty." How are earthly masters served? Even their whims are obeyed. "According to his most holy will" . . . It is his will to make saints of us (Dir. c. 2, § 1, 4, 5). We should make this act of generous surrender from the start, renew it often and earnestly in the course of the Exercises, and be habitually governed by it to the end.

In the following Annotations St. Ignatius treats of the means to be used against the principal obstacles met with in the Exercises, such as temptations, negligence in attending to the various points prescribed, distraction, weariness, indiscreet fervor, and inordinate attachment.

*The Sixth Annotation is for both the EXERCITANT and the DIRECTOR. We are told it is a BAD SIGN if the exercitant experiences NO INTERIOR INFLUENCES during the Exercises.*

1. What is here meant by interior influences? Not the influences of the good spirit only, such as light, consolation,

encouragement ; but those of the evil spirit as well, such as disgust, sadness, discouragement, temptations, dryness. When therefore we are visited by the latter, we must not grieve and lose courage, for their mere presence is not a bad sign. To experience the influence of neither the good nor the evil spirit would be a bad sign.

2. And why is it a bad sign to be thus becalmed ? Because we are not then doing our duty. If we earnestly do our part, God usually rewards us with consolation and encouragement ; or at least the evil spirit tries with might and main to put obstacles in our way. A breeze will be stirring from one direction or another ; if there is not a breath of wind, it is a sign that we are in a state of tepidity.

3. What is to be done in this case ? The director should diligently (*multum*) inquire how the exercitant goes about the Exercises ; whether he takes pains to be faithful in every point, in the prescribed time, method, and particularly in following the Additions. St. Ignatius, therefore, takes it for granted that either the exercitant visits the director, or the director the exercitant ; in short that there is a mutual communication between them by manifestation and instruction. To be willing to accept teaching and guidance is always a beautiful act of humility, is thoroughly Catholic, and will be rewarded by special graces from God (*Roothaan nota 1, § 3*). The hint, here given by St. Ignatius, we ought to make the rule of our whole life. To experience nothing at all in our soul is not a good sign : we should in that case make use of the means suggested and have recourse to the spiritual Father. This mutual and living intercourse with our guide is one of the best means of keeping up our fervor (*Cfr. Summ. reg. 41*). We may notice here, by the way, what importance St. Ignatius attaches to the Additions (*Dir. c. 7*).

**The Seventh and Eighth Annotations are for the DIRECTOR and instruct him how to act when the exercitant is in desolation.**

1. He is told what he must guard against. He should not be unsympathetic and harsh toward the person whom he directs. For to think oneself forsaken by God is hard ; it is

certainly too much for poor human nature to get consolation neither from God nor man. Harshness and coldness would make matters only worse and who knows where it would end. A father, and especially a mother would not act in that way. The latter at least takes the child's hurt finger and blows on it. Neither does God act in that way. He does not quench the smoking flax and the bruised reed he does not break. Let the director reflect how he feels himself in similar circumstances. All directors of souls ought to heed the lesson which St. Ignatius here gives as to the treatment of penitents.

2. He is told what he must do. He must be kind, gracious and helpful. He must endeavor to encourage the exercitant, strengthen him by dissipating clouds, by setting wrong ideas right, by reducing exaggeration to the measure of truth; he must give him motives of encouragement, especially by calling attention to the deceits of the evil one and by unmasking them. And indeed, all the power of the enemy consists in lying and deceit. For he is, as St. Ignatius says, "the enemy of human nature," and cannot bear to see us prosper. If he fails in seducing us to sin, he is content to trouble us or rob us of our joy in the service of God. These things the director must explain to the exercitant and show him ways and means of regaining consolation. But, of course, the exercitant must dispose himself for it. The means are contained in the rules for the discernment of spirits (Dir. c. 5, § 2; c. 6). Here again self-exertion is insisted upon.

**The Ninth and Tenth Annotations** are for the DIRECTOR and tell him what rules for the discernment of spirits he is to apply to the VARIED NEEDS OF THE EXERCITANT. Here the distinction is made between the rules for the first week and those for the second. Those for the FIRST WEEK are more appropriate to the purgative way, when the evil one comes unmistakably forward seeking with gross obstacles to hinder us from serving God. These rules are from their nature more easily understood. Whereas those of the SECOND WEEK are more subtle and calculated for a state of soul, in which the enemy finds opportunity to do harm by impulse to good. In any case the director should be guided by the condition of the soul of the exercitant (Cfr. Roothaan, nota 17).

**The Eleventh Annotation** is for the EXERCITANT and treats of INTERIOR RECOLLECTION. *This interior recollection of the exercitant must be such as to keep him from wilfully busying himself with anything useless, even though it be of a spiritual nature and interest him greatly. St. Ignatius makes two suggestions in this matter.*

1. He tells us not to think of the meditations to come. Why not? Because it is useless, a loss of time and a yielding to curiosity. Besides, it causes the mind to relax in its attention to that with which it is at present concerned and weakens the efforts of the will; and thus a certain good is lost for what is uncertain, as the fable relates of the dog with the piece of meat. In fine, such useless thoughts only beget weariness and temptations (Cfr. nota 1<sup>a</sup> diei 1<sup>ae</sup> hebdom<sup>ae</sup> 2<sup>ae</sup>).

2. The exercitant ought to be wholly taken up with the present, as if the future held out nothing to him. This is the way to bring about solid results (Dir. c. 3, § 2, 3, 4, 5). It is a hint which holds good for our whole life. If you are taken up with the music of the future, you will become a virtuoso in imagination only, not in practice; a dreamer, not a man of action.

**The Twelfth and Thirteenth Annotations** are for the EXERCITANT and forewarn him against weariness in meditation, and against carelessness in observing the time prescribed for meditation. *We are taught THREE THINGS.*

1. St. Ignatius fixes the length of each meditation at one hour; and, in general, we are rather to exceed this limit than fall short of it. But why does he fix the time at all? Because then one does not run the risk of being moved by fickleness and distaste to shorten the time of meditation. If we were to make the time of prayer depend upon the mood of the moment, we should often find the result a failure. Any how, order ought to reign in all things, and to have kept this order is in itself a great gain. But why a whole hour? Because the meditation of a mystery, after the method laid down by St. Ignatius, which occupies less than an hour can hardly be thorough. What may be said of a good Mission sermon, is

true of a good meditation. Hence our practice of an hour's meditation ; hence too we should, as much as possible, avoid dividing or interrupting this hour. Else the meditation will not get well under way, and as a rule will be attended with but little success.

2. We need not wonder at finding it hard to meditate a whole hour, and at being tempted by the devil to shorten the time. It is well to know this ; for thus we shall avoid discouragement, when meditating is tedious ; and vanity, when we do not experience this tediousness. Naturally it is quite difficult for us to persevere in prayer for such a length of time ; if then the hour appears short to us, it is only owing to consolation. In time of desolation the hour seems interminable. Even St. Teresa felt this, and often, as she herself relates, shook the hour-glass in her impatience. Once we know that this weariness is something quite natural, we remain calm and content ; as on the other hand, we feel consoled if in spite of difficulties, we have struggled through the hour—and this is what St. Ignatius desires. This is, it is true, a merely natural means, but it strengthens us against the devil, who uses every endeavor to withdraw us from prayer, because he knows that by prayer we elude his snares. Hence he tries to make us shorten our prayer. He deals with our spiritual exercises and especially with our meditations as Jews deal with gold coins. They file them ; and though each time only a very little dust comes off, that little is gold. Let us take this lesson well to heart in our daily life, and let no business or trifling occupation shorten the time of prayer. It is a temptation of the enemy, who is trying to make a little profit. We should under no pretext omit our accustomed prayers, even though it seems to us that God is more offended than served by our prayer. It is most assuredly an illusion. If we do not perform our prayers well, let us endeavor to do better ; this is at all events more profitable than to omit or to shorten them.

3. St. Ignatius gives us a radical cure against temptations to shorten the time of meditation :—we are not only not to yield to it, but to persevere in prayer even somewhat beyond the prescribed time. Such is the strategy of St. Ignatius ;

hence he so beautifully says : “ *Is qui exercetur, ad agendum contra desolationem et ad tentationes vincendas, debet semper durare aliquantulum ultra horam completam.*” Not to be satisfied with having repulsed the enemy, but to assault and overthrow him ; not to wait for an attack, but to assume the offensive and carry the war into his territory — that is the way to become a hero and conqueror in the spiritual life. Unless we carry on war in this fashion, the enemy will only jeer and laugh at us. On the contrary, by following the rule of St. Ignatius, we show that we are able to cope with our enemy, we become formidable to him and reduce him to helpless despair. But only thus shall we succeed. These tactics of spiritual warfare appear again and again in the Exercises (Cf. de Regno Xti. : “ *agere contra.*” Reg. 8, ad temp. victum. Nota ad med. de Binariis).

**The Fourteenth Annotation** *is for the* DIRECTOR : TWO THINGS *are recommended to him.*

1. He should make himself acquainted with the exercitant's character and frame of mind. To effect this he should have intercourse with the exercitant and should have him give a personal account of himself. An important hint for directors of souls and especially for the training of Ours.

2. The director must warn the exercitant against making rash vows during times of consolation. Vows and the religious state are good in themselves, but in individual cases we must examine what is suitable to the character (subjectum) and to the conditions (conditio) of each person. Characters with an element of levity and fickleness, says St. Ignatius, must especially be warned against rash vows.

3. St. Ignatius explains also, on this occasion, in what case a vow is rash. It is rash, when we do not consider whether under all circumstances, even after the time of consolation, its object will be a help to our soul rather than a hindrance and danger. For we must not draw conclusions as to the future from our frame of mind during the time of consolation. Vows made in such circumstances often become occasions of great anxiety and a real check to progress.

The same warning holds good, in a less degree, of hasty,

exaggerated, and unpractical resolutions. We must undoubtedly take resolutions. For what fruit would autumn yield, if spring did not put forth blossoms—nay, a superabundance of blossoms? None worth speaking of, since so many blossoms are blown away and perish. Resolutions then are good and necessary, but they must always be reasonable and practicable, that is, their accomplishment should be within our reach (Dir. c. 5, § 2, 5, 6; c. 8, § 3).

**The Fifteenth Annotation is likewise exclusively for the DIRECTOR.**

1. He is counselled not to influence the exercitant to make vows or to choose a state of life. He is to remain neutral, and, like the needle of the balance, incline neither to one side nor to the other. This applies chiefly to the time of the Exercises. At another time he may speak more freely, although he must at all times hold to the principle, that his will should not have a determining influence upon the exercitant.

2. And why not during the Exercises? Through reverence for God. He himself has now taken his creature in hand, in order to mould it according to his will; consequently man should stand reverently aloof. To act otherwise would be, indeed, not merely want of reverence but of prudence as well. God alone, and not man, as St. Ignatius so beautifully and so truly says, is the Creator and Lord. He gives both the vocation and the graces, and knows infinitely better than man the various ways in which he can communicate himself to his creature and prepare it for the service he requires of it.

Out of the time of the Exercises the exercitant is not so immediately under the influence of God and is left more to himself. In this case the director may and ought to proffer him every aid. Should the exercitant ask for counsel and assistance, it ought to be given, but always with prudence. This whole Annotation contains an important lesson for the conduct of every director of souls. He must not over-master the person whom he directs, he must not obtrude himself between God and the soul, nor seek to interfere at

every occasion. His only care should be to see, as St. Ignatius says, that the soul remain in a state of readiness towards God (*ut anima devota sit et maneat*), and that it swerve neither to the right nor to the left; as regards the rest, he must not meddle. A good spiritual director is like the atmosphere which encompasses man, but does not weigh upon or incommode him.

**The Sixteenth Annotation** *concerns the EXERCITANT.* *St. Ignatius in this Annotation forestalls the danger which arises from INORDINATE AFFECTIONS, and which might wreck the success of the Exercises.*

1. How may an inclination be inordinate? In three ways. First, owing to its object, which is in itself displeasing to God and hurtful to ourselves — sinful therefore; secondly, owing to the motive which impels us to seek the object; and lastly, owing to the manner in which we strive after it.

2. What is to be done in such a case? We should by prayer and other good works, such as penances, obtain from God the grace to straighten what is crooked in our inclinations, nay, if it be his will, to go contrary to our inclinations and renounce the object; in short, we must not rest, till the will of God and his service is the only motive of our will. Here again we see the masterly tactics of the 13th Annotation applied, and a practical application of the Foundation also.

3. And why should we do this? To make sure that God will act within us; for otherwise it is to be feared that Satan or our corrupt nature will give the decision. If in any point we need security, we need it in this. Lack of indifference is our own and God's greatest enemy; it combines the power of self-love with that of the evil one (*Dir. c. 2, § 5*).

**The Seventeenth Annotation** *is for the DIRECTOR.*

He is again reminded of the principle, "not too much and not too little." In the first place, he ought to know what passes in the soul of the exercitant, so that he may suitably direct the course of the meditations and instructions. To this



end it is sufficient to know, in a general way, how the exercitant is succeeding. Consequently he must not, in the second place, thrust himself unnecessarily into the secret thoughts, still less into the conscience of the exercitant. This last matter, particularly, belongs to confession; and out of the confessional one ought not to provoke disclosures about sins and affairs of conscience. This is a general rule to be observed in our intercourse with those to whom we wish to be useful. Confidence is given and accepted; it cannot be commanded (Dir. c. 2, § 6, 7).

**The Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Annotations** are meant for the DIRECTOR, and give suggestions as TO WHOM and HOW the Exercises are to be given. St. Ignatius draws attention to the following points: THE AGE of the person who wishes to make the Exercises, his CHARACTER AND HEALTH (*complexio*), his DISPOSITION OF WILL and his INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY. *There are therefore four classes of exercitants.*

The first class is made up of those who are deficient in an understanding and comprehension of the higher spiritual life, and have besides no will to do more than merely regulate their conscience and their lives in things essential. Such persons should be taught only the two examens, prepared for Confession and Communion, instructed in the three methods of prayer and then dismissed. We can see from this that St. Ignatius attaches great value to these three means in the spiritual life, and that we accordingly fail to do our duty, if we do not impart them to everybody. Observe, too, that he insists on the frequent and regular reception of the sacraments.

To the second class belong those from whose intellectual capacity a great deal is not to be expected, but who nevertheless are not unable to meditate. To such as these the first week is given, in addition to what those of the first class receive. Educated men are usually reckoned in this class.

The third class are those who give grounds to expect much, but have not time and opportunity to withdraw entirely from daily occupations. In this class are those who make their

meditation in the morning and evening, but during the day attend to their affairs. The whole course of the Exercises may be given to them.

The fourth class, finally, consists of those who not only have excellent dispositions of will (*qui desiderat quantum possibile proficere*) and intellectual capacity for the whole spiritual life, but can, moreover, wholly withdraw themselves from their ordinary mode of life, as to dwelling, society and occupation, and have it in their power to give up the whole day to the Exercises. In their case St. Ignatius insists upon a complete withdrawal and separation from their surroundings. "*Eo plus proficiet, quo magis se segregaverit ab omnibus.*" He mentions three advantages which will accrue from this. First, it is of great merit before God thus to cut oneself off from everything else for the love of his service (*ut serviat et laudet*). Secondly, such a one has his natural faculties more completely under control, simply because he seeks, thinks, and wills but one thing. And thirdly, he will find God more surely. Zacchæus is a beautiful example in proof of this. He made but a few steps beyond the city walls and climbed into a tree, yet how splendidly was he rewarded! (Dir. c. 1. § 7; c. 9, integr.; c. 10.)

Such are the Annotations. Grouped in their logical order, they may be classed as follows:—

The director is told in the Annotations: 1) what the Exercises are (Annot. 1); and 2) how he is to give them, i. e., to whom, and in what manner. He is told "in what manner" they are to be given in two suggestions: not too much and not too little; they are contained in Annotations 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17. He is told "to whom" they are to be given in Annotations 18, 19, 20. Further information will be found in the Directory, or may be obtained by inquiry and by experience.

Of the exercitant are chiefly demanded, besides a proper idea of the Exercises (Annot. 1), four points:—1) Solitude, interior and exterior recollection (Annot. 11, 20)—this is a *conditio sine qua non*; 2) Self-exertion, fidelity in keeping the Additions and the distribution of time (Annot. 2, 4, 6,

12); 3) Generosity (Annot. 5, 13, 16); 4) Frankness and docility (Annot. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 17).—(Dir. c. 2).

From the Annotations are taken the points for the opening instruction or meditation, as, e. g. : the scope of the Exercises, the means and the motives to make them well.

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### TITLE OF THE EXERCISES

It contains first, the definition of the Exercises drawn from their end, and secondly, an incidental and preliminary remark for any one who opens the book.

1. St. Ignatius gives the Exercises this title: "Spiritual Exercises by which man may learn to overcome himself and order his life, without suffering himself to be determined by any inordinate affection." St. Ignatius here goes back to the first Annotation, and with great clearness and precision explains the nature of the Exercises by telling us, that their immediate purpose is to learn to overcome oneself in order to arrive at a well-regulated mode of life. This well-regulated mode of life consists simply in such a mastery over self that in our will, in our actions and omissions we shall not be ruled by inordinate affections, but only by reason, conscience and faith. Right order demands that the affections of man be governed by his reason, and his reason by God. Here then we see clearly, in what the essence of self-conquest consists. Evidently not in repressing and impairing what is good in nature, but rather in conquering what is bad and inordinate, and thus fitting ourselves to lead a life in keeping with the dignity of a man and a Christian.

We see, moreover, that both with us and with others whom we direct,<sup>(1)</sup> self-conquest should be the first and immediate end of all spiritual exercises, and in general of all asceticism, if we wish to obtain solid results. How the Spiritual Exercises bring it about, we have seen in the first Annotation.

2. In the preliminary remark we are told, that every good Christian ought to be ready to take the words of his neighbor

<sup>(1)</sup> Compare what St. Teresa says in her autobiography of the manner, in which she was directed by Fr. Alvarez; ch. 24, and especially ch. 26.

in a good sense rather than in a bad one, and in case the words taken literally will not bear this interpretation, he ought to enquire what sense the words bear in the mind of his neighbor. Should the sense in which they were meant really contain error, he ought, in all charity, to endeavor to instruct his neighbor; and failing in this, to use other suitable means, to clear his neighbor's words from error (Root-haan, n. 3).

Now what can be the purpose of this remark in this place? What occasion was there for putting it at the head of the Exercises? The remark was probably suggested by the unpleasant experiences which St. Ignatius had had with his book, and by the manifold mis-interpretations and prejudices with which it had been received and decried as a work of darkness and heresy. He means, at the very outset, to obviate all this by a simple rule of Christian prudence, charity and justice. And in fact, he seems to hint at this intention by the words: "*ut magis se juvet is, qui . . .*" For an unbiased and trustful mind is the best and most necessary disposition for entering, under the guidance of another, upon the work of the Exercises.

But apart from this, the remark contains a most valuable rule of universal application in the spiritual life, the observance of which would choke in its first growth many a misunderstanding and many a breach of charity. Very often the simple question: What do you mean by these words? is the best defense, the happiest attack and, consequently, the simplest means of obviating or ending disagreements.

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## THE FIRST WEEK

1. The aim of the first week is to consider our last end seriously and to understand it fully, to know how far we have wandered from the way to it and to retrace our steps by penance and a change of life.

2. This week contains therefore two parts. The first is wholly positive, and leads us to consider our last end and to be deeply impressed by it. The second is partly negative, partly positive; it is negative in so far as it teaches us how we have wandered from our last end by sin; and positive, in as much as through penance it repairs the effects of sin, and directs man again to his last end (Dir. c. 11).

### THE END OF MAN

1. *The nature and importance of the Foundation.* St. Ignatius calls our last end "*principium et fundamentum.*" In these words he expresses the whole nature and importance of the subject. The Foundation is the first and most important truth for the theory and practice of the spiritual life; it embodies the highest truth and the only right and tenable view of life.

Our last end is called the Principle (*principium*), i. e., the first truth and supreme maxim in the practical science of salvation; everything else is derived from it, reduced to it, and decided according to it. Even the highest demands of the spiritual life and of sanctity are but conclusions flowing from the simple truth that we are God's creatures. Indeed, St. Ignatius refers to this truth in every important question.<sup>(1)</sup> It is a principle, since like the first principles of knowledge it is self-evident; for the Christian it needs no proof. We merely recall it and take our bearings from it; at most, we

<sup>(1)</sup> Cf. de Regno Xti towards the end, de 2 Vexillis, de Binariis (prælud. 3), de 3 Classibus; Reg. de Electione, and even at the end of the Foundation itself. Everywhere "the praise and service of God" is the principle of decision.

explain it by contrasting it with its opposite (*ex absurdis*). Hence St. Ignatius does not develop it strictly in the form of a meditation, but rather in the form of a simple consideration, which setting the practical intellect mainly to work, lies midway between a strict meditation and a mere examination of conscience. We simply fix our eyes upon the self-evident truth, until we are filled with a flood of light and warmed by it. In this light we view our own life and the drift of the world around us, without insisting at this stage on particular applications and resolutions.—(Cf. Roothaan, *Explanatio Fund.*, § 2.) Nothing prevents us, however, from treating this principle as a strict meditation: this method is even preferable for persons that need more explicit and thorough instruction, such as are always found on missions.—It is a principle, and should, therefore, leave a deep and lasting impression. (*Dir. c. 12.*) Cfr. Roothaan, *Notæ ad Annotationes*, n. 9, § 2.

On account of its relation to practical life, St. Ignatius also calls our last end the Foundation (*fundamentum*). It is, indeed, the necessary basis, the only broad and enduring one, upon which our practical life must be raised, and upon which should rest our intentions, resolutions and actions, the practice of virtue and of every good work. Whatever is built on this Foundation and stands firm thereon, endures for eternity; everything else falls to hopeless ruin. Without this foundation we are in the spiritual what men without principles and aims are in the natural life: triflers.

2. *The development and division of the Foundation.* The Foundation has two parts: the end and the means; hence, first, the end and destiny of man; secondly, the end of creatures. The second is to the first as means to the end. Both parts are again subdivided.

A. *The end of man:* In the text of St. Ignatius we may distinguish two parts: 1) a supposition, viz. the truth that we are creatures of God, or the fact of our origin; whence follows, 2) the end and destiny of man himself: a) the proximate end which is derived immediately from our origin and consists in the service of God; b) the remote end, which lies in the attainment of our beatitude, or the salvation of our souls.

a) Since the service of God is the first and proximate con-

sequence of our origin, St. Ignatius develops it first. By nature and origin we are God's creatures; therefore, we are bound to live as God's creatures, and the law of our physical life should become the rule of our moral conduct.—St. Ignatius expresses our relations toward God as creatures, or the service which we owe him, in three words: "*laudare, revereri, servire.*" These words briefly but fully express that relation to God which we call religion. In "praising" God, we acknowledge him as the Supreme Good in himself and as our Creator; in "reverencing and honoring" him, we fulfil the duties of internal and external worship, which directly follow the acknowledgment of our relations to him; in "serving" him, we practically subject our will to his will, whether made known to us by his commandments, by the duties of our state of life, or by divine visitations.—Here we have a summary of religion in which nothing is wanting, nothing superfluous.

*b)* The remote end of man is, in the words of St. Ignatius, "the salvation of his soul," which consists in reaching the beatitude, for which God created him. Now God created him for the supernatural beatitude of heaven. All the proofs for the natural and supernatural beatitude of man may serve to confirm this truth.—But why does not St. Ignatius here touch upon the honor and glory of God, which properly is the last end of creatures, and the end of all God's actions *ad extra*? He does speak of it indirectly, for God's honor and glory consists first in God's service and secondly in man's eternal happiness. Let man but attain this twofold end, and he will glorify God, as God himself wishes to be glorified.

B. *The end of creatures*: In the development of the end of creatures there are four points: 1), the origin of creatures; 2), their end and the way of attaining it; 3), rules concerning their use, that is to say, we should look upon them only as means and use them as such, selecting or rejecting them according to their fitness for our end (*tantum-quantum*); and 4), two means, or two dispositions on our part indispensable for the right use of them; *a)* indifference toward creatures considered in themselves; *b)* a firm determination to choose those most conducive to our end.

*a)* We may observe that there is an essential as well as a

non-essential indifference, an indifference of will as well as an indifference of feeling or inclination.

a) The essential indifference is a constant disposition of will which, in the choice and use of creatures, guards it against the influence of pleasure and pain, against natural inclination and aversion. This indifference keeps the will undetermined and the act of election suspended, as long as we are under the mere influence of the pleasure or pain caused by creatures.<sup>(1)</sup> Indifference, then, is purely negative in its nature: not to choose, not to accept, and not to reject; in short, not to come to any decision regardless of our last end and simply because creatures are agreeable or disagreeable.—That this and nothing else is the meaning of St. Ignatius may be seen from the words: *velimus, ex parte nostra, in quantum permissum est arbitrio nostro, facere nos indifferentes etc.*—This indifference, therefore, necessarily lies in the free will and must be under our control. The same is clear from the parallel passages which treat of indifference. (Cf. Annot. 16; 2<sup>ns</sup> mod. Humil.; Reg. de Elect. 2<sup>um</sup> punctum 1<sup>o</sup> modi.) In the second degree of humility, St. Ignatius connects indifference with the habitual avoidance of venial sin, for which, he intimates, indifference is as necessary as it is for peace of soul and freedom and vigor of will.

β) We now come to consider the non-essential indifference, or the indifference of feeling. This indifference does not consist in feeling or not feeling the likes or dislikes of nature, but rather in being able, by degrees, to moderate and check the exuberance and excess of our feelings, that they may not cause any serious difficulties and dangers in the election and in the use of creatures. Unlike the will, our feelings are not always under our control, hence we must be satisfied, for the most part, if we succeed in disregarding our feelings and in

<sup>(1)</sup> In another place St. Ignatius rightly and strikingly compares the disposition of the will in its indifference toward creatures to the tongue of a balance, which should incline neither to one side nor to the other. This is indifference of will. (Primus modus Elect. 2<sup>um</sup> punctum.)—R. F. Root-haan explains the nature of indifference by the way every reasonable man would answer the question: "Had you rather a long life than a short one?" "I do not know," he would say; "either might be conducive or hurtful to my salvation; therefore I do not choose till it is made clear to me how the one or the other influences my salvation. (Expl. Fundti. IV. Concl. practic. paragr. 2).



not being influenced by the difference between creatures. If we are at all in earnest, we shall be able to achieve this much, nay it is necessary that we should do so. There are excellent motives to induce us and powerful means to aid us thereto, as will be more fully set forth in the points of the meditations. What is of more importance here is that we try, or are willing to try.

It is of great importance to pay attention to this distinction between indifference of the will and indifference of feeling, and to know what each requires for its attainment. Else there is danger of fancying that by indifference is meant a degree of exalted virtue, which is calculated to frighten us and bring us to the verge of despair. But it is plain that indifference as above described is attainable by any one of good will.

b) Not less important is the second condition, or the second means of making a good use of creatures, namely the will and resolve to employ only those most conducive to the end, or, as St. Ignatius has it, "*unice desiderando et eligendo quæ magis conducunt ad finem.*"<sup>(1)</sup>

In fact, this resolve is absolutely necessary for making a good and perfect use of creatures; because precisely in this lies the practical application of the *tantum quantum*, which St. Ignatius lays down as an indispensable rule for making a right use of creatures. Hence this condition is nothing new, seeing that it is already implied in the rules for the right use of creatures. It is only emphasized here as a positive means, because it is in itself of the highest importance, nay simply decisive for the success of the Exercises. Once we begin to consider creatures in their connection with the end, and as possessing greater or less fitness as means of attaining it, indifference to them is no longer possible; we must either choose them or reject them; we must set upon them a value higher or lower, precisely in proportion to their fitness as means. Hence the proviso in St. Ignatius' explanation of the second degree of humility: "if God's glory be the same in both cases." Whereas, therefore, in the practice of indifference we consider creatures in themselves, and apart from

<sup>(1)</sup> The text of the common version suffers by the omission of the words "unice" and "magis." But the construction is more expressive.

their relation to the end, and, maintaining a passive and negative attitude towards them, are not biased in our choice of them by their influence upon our natural inclination; we now advance a step further, we consider creatures not in themselves, but as means to the end, and we proceed to the choice and use of such creatures as are better, nay such as are the best, means of reaching our end. And thus the Foundation closes with a point of the most highly positive character.<sup>(1)</sup>

Now this firm resolution must be made sure of at the very outset, and if anyone is indisposed to take it, he had better not think of proceeding further in the Exercises, for he would not reap from them the fruit which is "pleasing to the Divine Majesty." He must therefore bend all his endeavors to the attaining of this one object, and not rest till he has brought his will to make this resolve. There is no need, however, at this stage of the Exercises, of inquiry what creatures in particular are the best as means. It suffices to know that they are such as will most securely, readily, and thoroughly, enable us to attain our end, and firmly to resolve to choose and employ them when we shall have learned what they are. Later on, in the meditations on the Kingdom of Christ, Two Standards, Three Classes of Men, and still more in the meditation on the Three Degrees of Humility, we shall acquire a more detailed knowledge of the best means to the end. At present, a more particular inquiry would be useless, and perhaps harmful. A general resolution suffices, and it is indispensable where there is question of an end that is absolutely necessary, that is so great and noble in itself, and the attainment of which with the grace of God, depends upon ourselves. Further on, in the meditation on Three Classes of Men and the Three Degrees of Humility, we shall return to the subject of this resolution.

We see, then, that this point is of the highest importance. We find in it the connecting link of the whole series of the Exercises. The most important of the meditations that follow only develop and illustrate this last point in the Foundation.

<sup>(1)</sup> Rev. Fr. Roothaan holds a different opinion. According to him the Foundation ends with indifference. Cfr. Roothaan II. Hebdom. de Regno Christi, nota 5 § 6, "Ex dictis."

Here we find all the rest in their germ. This is one of the points that reveal to us the logical and psychological arrangement of the Exercises. We now see that the Foundation with this positive conclusion is really the ground-work of the whole Exercises. The whole range and reach of God's demands upon man as well as of man's generous response to these demands lies within the compass of the Foundation. The following weeks only determine more definitely what are the best means and add new motives, nothing more.

Such, then, is the Foundation. It is a system of truths which are so clear, so simple, so forcible, so irresistible, and withal so noble and sublime, that we can never sufficiently admire them, and shall never be able to fathom their depths. The Foundation is the shortest, but most comprehensive epitome of all natural Christian philosophy. It gives the most complete solution to the question of the destiny of man, and of everything on earth. In a few brief sentences it discloses the whole mystery of the creation and, exhibiting a view of the different orders of created things, shows how they stand related to one another, and how beautifully they harmonize together in the plan of the almighty Creator, thus developing the truth so tersely and pointedly expressed by St. Paul: "Omnia vestra sunt, vos autem Christi, Christus autem Dei" (I. Cor. iii. 22).

#### THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

1. The Examination of Conscience is in its nature an exercise of the practical part of the spiritual life, in which, so far as the testimony of conscience avails for the purpose, we inquire into the state of our souls, in order to find out our faults and correct them.

2. The importance of this spiritual exercise is evident: first, from the place which St. Ignatius assigns it, here in the first week, and immediately after the Foundation, and from the manner in which he recommends it to all, in the 18th and 19th Annotations; secondly, from the care and diligence with which he would have us practice it,<sup>(1)</sup> and with which

<sup>(1)</sup> Cfr. what will be said later on of making the Particular Examen on the observance of the Additions.

he himself practiced it during his life-time ; thirdly, from the purpose he intends it to serve—" *ad purgandum et confitendum*,"—the examination being an excellent means of exciting sorrow for sin and of cleansing the heart from the stains produced by unruly passions. What the brush and broom are in housekeeping, the pruning-knife in gardening, the balancing of accounts in book-keeping, the examination of conscience is in the spiritual life, for by it are to be regulated all the other spiritual exercises. In the fourth place, the importance of this exercise may be gathered from its very nature, inasmuch as it is a practical prayer, embracing all the acts of the sacrament of Penance, save the accusation and the absolution. Fifthly, its importance may be seen in the value attached to it by the Institute (P. 3, c. 1, § 11 and P. 4, c. 4, §§ 3, 4.), and lastly, in the results of experience, which show that whenever the progress made is not what it might and even should be, the fault lies in a careless use of the examination (Direct. c. 13).

3. St. Ignatius lays down two kinds of examination, particular and general.

#### THE PARTICULAR EXAMEN

What has just been said of the importance of the examination in general, is especially true of the Particular Examen. This exercise, we may add, is one that belongs peculiarly to the Society, for St. Ignatius is generally regarded as its author, or at least as the first to reduce it to system and to promote its practice throughout the world.<sup>(1)</sup>

2. The main feature of the Particular Examen is that it deals with only one thing at a time, either the correction of some particular fault or the acquisition of some special virtue. In this matter we can follow either a negative or a positive method, that is, we can bring the examination to bear either upon the faults committed against a particular virtue, or upon the positive acts of the same virtue. It is well to know this in order to give variety to the exercise and

<sup>(1)</sup> "Animadvertere libet Patres solum obiter attigisse conscientie examen . . . , particulare autem . . . sapienter fuisse a B. Ignatio excogitatum." Suarez, de Relig. S. J. l. 9, c. 6, n. 5.

so prevent our zeal from slackening through routine, and in order to add greater zest to its practice, for we generally find more pleasure in recording our virtues than our faults, while the profit derived is just as great, if not greater. Of course there is no advancing in any virtue without correcting the faults opposed to it; but if one confines his whole attention to the correction of faults, the chances are much against his ever acquiring any virtue in its perfection, or ever attaining to a high degree of spirituality. The positive method is especially advisable whenever the faults have been reduced to a few, or whenever they occur only at a particular time in the day: in this case unless the positive method is used, the Particular Examen will not apply to the whole day, and fervor and vigilance will come to a stand-still.—Further directions concerning the method to be followed in the examination are given in detail in the Book of the Exercises, in what are called the “three times proper for recalling the Particular Examen,” and in the Additions given to secure the fruit of the examination more easily.

3. The Particular Examen is not, however, without its difficulties. The first among these is the choice of a subject, that is, of a fault or a virtue to which the examination may be applied.

Rev. Father Roothaan in the first of his notes on the Particular Examen draws up a list of offences in the following order: first, sins (*peccata*), whether venial or mortal, that is, deliberate faults, committed with our eyes open and despite the warning of conscience; next, faults of words, looks, or actions (*offensiones*), committed without full advertence; finally, imperfections (*negligentiæ*), which dim the lustre of our virtues, and mar the perfection of our actions, as, for example, the lack of perfect or actual intention, etc.—The first subject, then, of the Particular Examen should be deliberate sins. A spiritual person should never commit the slightest sin with full knowledge and consent. This is the first requisite in the struggle for perfection. The same holds true of standing difficulties as to office, superiors or brethren.—We should, moreover, discriminate between interior and exterior faults. Exterior faults that occasion harm to our neighbor

or the community should be made the first subject of the Particular Examen: after these, interior faults, though the latter are generally of more consequence than the former. But it would be the veriest trifling to spend a long time upon exterior faults that with a little good will might be corrected in a few days, as, for instance, breaches of silence, or of punctuality. —Of interior defects the most important are those of character, because they are the most deep-rooted, and because, affecting as they do the whole man and giving shape to all his actions, their correction is attended with the greatest difficulty. Let these be removed, and peace and order will reign in the soul. But how are we to find out these defects of character? From our confessions, that is, by observing the faults of which we accuse ourselves most frequently; at times, by observing also our good qualities which often have, so to speak, their dark side. Meekness, for instance, is often accompanied by indolence, weakness, faint-heartedness; strength of character, by severity, pride, self-will. We shall also have a clue to these defects in actions which we find ourselves doing from instinct, or from preference, in things which disturb us, or throw us into a state of excitement, or in which we seek comfort and consolation when untoward events occur. Another safe guide will be the judgment of our spiritual director and of those about us.

With regard to virtues, we ought, above all things, to be practical in our choice of a subject. We should, therefore, select a virtue we stand in need of, whether the need arises from circumstances peculiar to ourselves, or from the obligations of our state of life, in which latter case the virtue we select will contribute to success in our calling. The virtue chosen should also be genuine and solid, not one having the mere semblance of a virtue, but one that is wholly and entirely supernatural, one that will bear the stress of trying circumstances, and will not be given up through weariness. Finally, it should be a virtue excluding no possible degree of perfection, and hence a virtue that will unite us closely to God, and make us instruments in his hands. In short, the subject of the Particular Examen should be something of great moment, something involving great spiritual interests and showing very clearly one's aim in the spiritual life.—A

last remark on the subject-matter of the Particular Examen is, that we should always employ it to obtain what we most need, and turn it in the direction from which danger is threatened. A soldier in battle makes ready to parry a blow where he sees the flash of a sabre. We should take pattern by him.

The second difficulty of the Particular Examen arises from the strenuous efforts needed to persevere in it. In accordance with the directions of St. Ignatius the exercises connected with it ought to extend over the entire day. In the morning we take the resolution; at noon and at night we examine how it has been kept, and then renew it. In the course of the day as soon as we break the resolution, we are to make some sort of satisfaction. To prevent frequent relapses it would be well to think frequently of the subject of the examination, and to fortify ourselves by renewing the resolution, by prayer, and by other means. Unless we do this, we shall forget the Particular Examen, and be taken unawares when the occasion to practise it presents itself. Hence, the remark made above—that, as a rule, it is preferable not to make the Particular Examen on a fault we commit only once, or seldom, during the day. It is better to give our attention to positive acts, scattered over the whole day, thus keeping ourselves continually on the alert. The Particular Examen would otherwise have but little effect on the spiritual life.—We should also mark down the result of the examination twice a day. The object of this is not so much to learn the exact number, as to prevent our forgetting the Particular Examen, and to cause the subject to take firm hold of our thoughts. Neglect in marking the result of the examination will gradually lead to forgetfulness and even to entire disuse. But what can excuse us from following this practice? Holiness? St. Ignatius marked his examen-book up to the eve of his death, and the care with which he would have us compare examination with examination, day with day, week with week, month with month, shows plainly what he thought of this practice. Is it large-mindedness and freedom of spirit that keeps us from marking our faults? For the most part this practice is omitted through laziness, tepidity, want of perseverance, and of vigor of will. We wish to avoid what is troublesome, or what we find irksome and humiliat-

ing. To give up the practice of marking is generally a sure sign of a decline in the spiritual life; it may even be said that the demon of tepidity has his favorite nestling-place in the note-book of the Particular Examen.—When we have examined ourselves and have made an act of contrition, we should impose on ourselves a slight penance for the faults that have come under our Particular Examen. We shall thus succeed better, and be more upon our guard for the future.

4. The Particular Examen cannot but have great results if made in accordance with these directions. The secret of its efficacy lies in the following advantages: first, it divides our enemies, and brings all the forces of our soul to bear upon one at a time; secondly, it attacks our disorders and sinful habits at the root; thirdly, it keeps us at work all day and calls for the exercise of every power of our soul; so it cannot help having good results.—One of our best directors of souls says, that only the perfect have no need of a particular point for examination, because they are so careful and circumspect in all things that, in a manner, they make a Particular Examen on all. “But,” you may say, “how comes it that in the matter of my Particular Examen I commit more faults now than I did before?” You do not commit more faults, but you more frequently notice them.—“Yes, but whereas I gain in one direction I lose in another.” It matters not. If we are active and zealous in a single point in the service of God, he will be satisfied, and will enable us at least by means of the Particular Examen to grapple with the whole man of sin, forcing him to yield inch by inch, till at last he is entirely subdued.—“But after a time I grow tepid and remiss in the practice of the Particular Examen.” This is no reason for giving it up: it is just the reason for beginning over and over again. One should not be surprised at inconstancy. We stand in need of all but superhuman strength to make the Particular Examen with fervor for any length of time; but that only shows how important and how necessary it is. Besides, we have the account of conscience to help us, one of the chief points of which is, “Do we make the Particular Examen and how; on what subject, and do we mark our faults.” The account of conscience is thus the chief and final regulator of the spiritual life.



## THE GENERAL EXAMEN

1. The General Examen differs from the Particular in this, that it does not take up one point at a time, but is concerned with all our actions within a certain space of time, say a day, or a half-day.—St. Ignatius first treats of the aim of the General Examen, next of the subject-matter, and last of the method of conducting it—

2. Besides purifying the heart and preparing us for Confession, which St. Ignatius intended as its immediate object (*ad purgandum et confitendum*), the General Examen has another good effect which is especially important in our daily life; that, namely, of making us collect our thoughts from time to time, and take our bearings, as it were, on the road to perfection, just as a traveller does when, after going a certain distance, he stops, looks about, and asks himself, How far have I got? Where am I now? Whither am I going?

3. The form and method of the General Examen is in keeping with the importance of its aim. The examination has two parts; the first has to do with the past, the second with the future. Hence the following sub-division into five points: for the past, thanksgiving, self-examination and contrition; for the future, purpose of amendment, and prayer for divine aid. The first part is of a negative, the second of a more positive character.

a) The thanksgiving should come from the heart. We receive so many graces that, were we on our knees from morning till night, we could not thank God sufficiently. The least we can do is to thank him twice a day, and to thank him with all our heart, not only for ourselves, but also for all men, especially for such as do not themselves pay to God the honor of thanksgiving.

The examination proper should be short. The first thing in order is the Particular Examen, after which we review all our thoughts, words and actions since our last examination. It might be well to have in our particular examen book a short list of our habitual faults, and to run over it at this point. In any case the examination should be short. It is of importance to spend most of the time on the act of con-

trition and on the positive part of the exercise. To remove the dust from a piece of furniture we do not pick up particle after particle. One good sweep of the duster will do the work in a moment. The effect of deep-felt sorrow and a firm purpose of amendment is much the same.

Our sorrow for sin should be as perfect and sincere as we can make it. How great the value of perfect contrition ! It is highly recommended at this point to rekindle our hatred and detestation of all that is sinful and displeasing to God, recalling some good motives for this hatred and this detestation. There is little danger of falling into deliberate sin if twice a day we thus strengthen our hatred of it. The purpose of the examination is, above all things, to put the conscience in an orderly state, and to keep it in the same ; but this orderly state of conscience lies in freedom from deliberate sin, and in the observance of a happy mean between laxity and scrupulosity.

*b*) In the second or positive part the chief element is the purpose of amendment. The resolution should be firm and strong, and should also extend to the subject of the Particular Examen. We should foresee the ordinary occasions of our faults, and take precautions against committing them.

If any time should remain over we might renew our good intention for the rest of the day, and offer everything to God. The right ordering of our day in advance will depend upon the answer to these two questions, What must I do now, and how, and for whom shall I do it ?

The exercise closes with prayer. We should pray for ourselves and for all men ; for the dying and all who are exposed to danger of body or soul ; for the success of all the good works to be done in any part of the world. There is not an hour of the day but somewhere interests are endangered, upon which in a great measure depend the glory of God and the salvation of souls. All these things we should recommend to God. *Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni*, etc.

This second part of the examination is just as important as the first. In fact, we often fail to reap the full fruit of the exercise because we spend too much time on the first part, and also because, during the first part, we make the review of faults too long, and the act of contrition too short and perfunct-

tory. In the examination we must not only pull down but also build up; not only discharge our debts, but also amass riches; not only view the weakness of the past, but also gain strength for the future. By thus making a great deal of the positive part, we prevent the examination from becoming irksome and tedious.—To avoid tepidity in the various acts it is advisable to make them with the lips, in a low voice. This may be done without much trouble or fatigue as the whole exercise is quite short.

4. In his instructions on the method of examining our thoughts, words and deeds, St. Ignatius sets forth a number of fundamental truths for the spiritual life, as he usually does whenever an opportunity presents itself.

On the examination of thoughts, his first remark is, that these thoughts may be of three kinds, according as they come from ourselves, from the evil spirit, or from the good one. This fact is very important for self-knowledge and peace of mind. Some attribute all these thoughts to themselves; others, to external influences; but we should bear in mind that they may be attributed to the one as well as to the other, and judge accordingly. Thus we escape the fear and anxiety that come from viewing all that passes within us as our own work, and we grow more cautious having to deal not only with ourselves but with a cunning enemy. This suggestion is a fundamental principle in the discernment of spirits.

Moreover, St. Ignatius here explains three points. He reminds us that bad thoughts may be a source either of merit, or of sin, venial or mortal.—We merit when we resist, even though our resistance do not entirely banish them from our minds (*ut victa maneat*), never deliberately admitting them but rather eliciting as often as we become conscious of their return, acts of the contrary virtues; when in a word we treat them as a troublesome guest. Thus treated, temptations become real helps to our advancement, and occasions of manifesting our fidelity and gaining merit. In sooth how many meritorious acts should we omit, did not temptation force them upon us. This aspect of temptations is as consoling as it is true.

We sin venially in bad thoughts of a grievous character,

through lack of full advertence or of full consent. So long as conscience does not remind us of the presence of a bad thought or desire, and of our duty to reject it as sinful, there is no sin ; but once the voice of conscience is heard, it must be heeded under penalty of sin.

When St. Ignatius says "a venial sin is committed when the same thought of sinning mortally comes and one listens to it, dwelling a short time on it, or receiving some sensual delight," he does not speak of deliberate consent, but of negligence more or less deliberate ; for he goes on to say, "or when there is some negligence in rejecting such a thought." This is the sense of this much-abused passage.<sup>(1)</sup>—After the temptation if we do not see at once and clearly that we have sinned mortally, we should examine no further, but leave all to the mercy of God. It is utterly useless to think any more about the matter. In what regards our moral conduct an inch-measure is out of place ; we cannot have therein the certainty found in dogma ; nor is it God's pleasure to give full light, but rather to allow us to abide in lowliness, and to trust in him.

Sin of deed, observes St. Ignatius, is more grievous than sin of thought or desire ; not of course in itself, but on account of circumstances : for sin of deed lasts longer, it strengthens the will's action, and often makes our neighbor an accomplice or injures him in some other way.

For the examination of words St. Ignatius very practically mentions three things wherein sin may be committed : swearing, idle words, detraction.—Supposing an oath to be lawfully taken, he remarks, it is safer for the imperfect to swear by the Creator than by the creature, because in swearing by the creature there is more danger of irreverence, since the perfect alone are wont to see God as existing by his essence, presence, and power in every creature. Here we have a practical and beautiful application of the second point in the contemplation on the love of God.—Treating of idle words, St. Ignatius tells us that *what* one says is of less moment than *why* one says it. Our words then, not to be idle words, should be directed to our own profit, or to the service of God, or to the good of our neighbor, in body or soul.—In two

(1) Vide Suarez de Relig. S. J., l. 9, c. 5, n. 13.

cases only is it permitted to speak of our neighbor's sins, first, when the matter is notorious, or hurtful to others; secondly, when there is hope that the disclosure will be for the spiritual profit of the wrong-doer. Otherwise, to make known another's fault is a mortal sin, or a venial sin, or an imperfection, according as the matter revealed is a mortal sin, or a venial sin, or an imperfection, and injures the person in question more or less grievously.

As to our deeds we should examine ourselves on the commandments of God, the commandments and precepts of the Church, and of ecclesiastical superiors.—In fact, thus to examine ourselves on the commandments is much to be recommended; for they embrace all our duties and furnish for the accusation a definite order by which every sin will be easily recalled: in this way the commandments and their meaning will make a deeper impression, and the nature of sin as a transgression of God's command will be better understood.—The remark that it is no slight sin to act against the precepts of the Church, or to cause others so to do, strikingly contrasts the genuine Catholic spirit of St. Ignatius with the spirit of the so-called reformers.

#### GENERAL CONFESSION AND HOLY COMMUNION

1. The instructions of St. Ignatius for a gradual and perfect cleansing of heart and restoration of order in the conscience are rendered complete by his remarks on Confession and Communion. These two sacraments, without doubt, effect in us the complete destruction of sin; negatively, for they wash away the guilt of sin, lessen if not entirely remit its temporal punishment, and weaken our evil passions by means of special actual graces to which the reception of these sacraments gives us a right; positively, on the other hand, for these sacraments keep us from sin, by increasing, elevating and strengthening in us the whole life of grace. To strengthen in us the life of grace is, in fact, the special fruit of Holy Communion: *cujus receptio*, as St. Ignatius beautifully puts it, *non solum juvat ne labatur in peccatum, sed etiam ut conservet se in augmento gratiæ*; or as the Church has it in the prayer to the Blessed Sacrament, *ut*

*redemptionis tuæ fructum in nobis jugiter sentiamus.* In the mind of St. Ignatius, the examination of conscience, whether particular or general, is merely an introduction to and a preparation for Confession and Communion (ad purgandum et confitendum), while examination of conscience, Confession and Communion, all taken together and properly made use of, are the all powerful means for the renewal, improvement, elevation, and preservation of the spiritual life.

2. St. Ignatius shows us the height and breadth of the sacrament of Penance and its efficacy, when he tells us of the advantages of a general confession, even for those who are not obliged to make use of it on account of previous bad confessions. He counsels its use during the retreat directly after the exercises of the first week ; and this, for three reasons : first, because at the sight of the sins and wickedness of a whole life, sorrow is more heartfelt, and its effect and merit greater in consequence ; secondly, we attain, in the course of the exercises, to a more intimate knowledge of our sins and their malice than at other times, when our inner life is less closely examined ; whence in like manner, our grief will be intenser, and its merit greater ; lastly, by a perfect confession we shall be better prepared for holy Communion. A general confession, then, St. Ignatius regards as advisable during the retreat, but nowhere does he direct us to recommend the indiscriminate use of general confession and Communion.<sup>(1)</sup>

3. According to the mind and spirit of St. Ignatius, therefore, we have in the two examinations of conscience, in Confession and in holy Communion, a most powerful means for the restoration, the advancement, and the preservation of the spiritual life in ourselves and others, the chief means, indeed, of our asceticism, all the mightier because so easily within the reach of all, and because so thoroughly Catholic. Following the counsel and example of its holy founder, the Society has ever devoted itself to the practice and spread of these exercises, and by this means what has it not accomplished in the guidance of souls and in the moral reformation of communities, cities, nay entire countries? “ Restorer of

<sup>(1)</sup> Vide Instr. III. pro confess. § 4. 8.—Reg. Sac. 26.—Annot. 18.—Reg. ad sentiendum, etc., 2.

the reception of the Sacraments" is one of the noblest titles of honor given to St. Ignatius and the Society. We should, therefore, regard the furtherance of these exercises both by ourselves and by others, as especially incumbent upon us. Hence our rules enter into such details about them and recommend them so earnestly.<sup>(1)</sup>

## MEDITATIONS ON SIN

1. With these meditations the second part of the first week begins. They show us the reverse side of the Foundation, or the turning away from our last end by sin. In fact, sin alone leads us away from our last end, since in its very nature sin is a complete renunciation of it; so much so, that the sinner is powerless to reach that end unless God again grant help and point out the way.—This way is none other than that of penance and justification. St. Ignatius puts the sinner through the complete process of justification in three meditations; one on the Three Sins, another on Personal Sins, and a third on Hell. These three meditations form a closely connected whole, no part of which ought to be wanting in a thorough conversion.<sup>(2)</sup> The drift of this process of justification is very much as follows:

2. First, the sinner must cut loose from self, from self-esteem, from pride; he must humble himself, and be filled with shame to see himself so sinful and so worthy of hell. Without this, conversion is impossible. Sin begins with pride and self-worship; conversion, then, must begin with self-contempt and shame. In this way a man's self-sufficiency is shaken and the ground fairly taken from under him.—Now this shame should be felt in the first meditation. Shame, in fact, is the special aim of this meditation, as St. Ignatius says in the prelude,  *pudor et confusio mei ipsius*; and in the first point,  *ut magis erubescam et confundar*. Shame, therefore, first of all, is the scope of this meditation, not fear and terror at the thought of punishment. To pro-

<sup>(1)</sup> Vide Summ. 5, 6.—Comm. I, 3, 42.—Reg. Sac. 8, etc.—Reg. Conc. 10.—Reg. Miss. 11.

<sup>(2)</sup> Vide R. P. Roothaan, n. 26.—Here again is an evidence of the logical and psychological arrangement of the Exercises.

duce this frame of mind is now the end of every endeavor. At the outset, the words: *anima in corpore corruptibili tanquam in carcere inclusa, in exilio, inter bruta animalia*, in the first prelude, forcibly express the sinner's debasement and degradation almost to the level of brute animals. The second prelude makes a personal application in the words: *Quam multi damnati sunt ob unicum peccatum, et quam sæpe ego meruerim damnari ob tam multa.*—St. Ignatius works out this line of thought in the three points which follow, placing sin before us in striking and terrible examples, drawn from creatures of different orders, that we may fully realize the dreadful injustice, folly, and misery contained in a single sin. Before the tribunal of God, of history, of our reason, we condemn sin as something utterly shameful and debasing; we view, as in a mirror, the deformed mass of our folly and sinfulness and, trembling at the depth of wickedness in one mortal sin, we consider what we must have been in God's sight, at the time when we had the misfortune to commit not merely one, but many, aye countless mortal sins. The injustice, malice, and baseness of sin find short and concise expression in the words of the three points: *Creati (angeli) in gratia, nolentes se adjuvare ope libertatis ad exhibendam reverentiam et obedientiam suo Creatori ac Domino, devenientes in superbiam, conversi ex gratia in malitiam—positi (primi parentes) in paradiso, prohibiti ne comederent, comedentes et ita peccantes—in memoriam trahendo gravitatem et malitiam (cujuspiam) contra Creatorem et Dominum, . . . peccando et agendo contra Bonitatem infinitam.* The folly and misery of the sinner are seen in the expressions: *De cælo in infernum præcipitati—vestiti tunicis pelliceis, ex paradiso expulsi, sine justitia originali, totam vitam in multis laboribus et multa (diuturna) pœnitentia, . . . . quanta corruptio genus humanum invaserit, tam multis hominibus ad infernum euntibus—ivit ad infernum . . . . juste condemnatus in æternum, etc.* One who by his own folly and wickedness has brought upon himself such well deserved unhappiness, has certainly no ground for self-complacency. The mere thought that here below we are continually exposed to so deplorable a fall, ought to be enough to cover us with shame.—Our confusion is brought to a climax in the colloquy, wherein is shown



what our Lord had to suffer for us and for our sins ; and wherein we see ourselves, in spite of our wickedness, the object of God's wondrous love and mercy. Here every word is to be weighed. Whoever makes this meditation earnestly, and in the right way, comes to look upon himself as a condemned criminal escaped from prison. And so it should be ; else the soul will not make an unconditional surrender to God. This feeling of confusion will be tempered by the humble confidence awakened in the colloquy. We should, in fact, conclude every meditation in a spirit of confidence.

3. The second step in the process of justification is taken in the second meditation, whose subject-matter is our own sins (*de peccatis propriis*). In the previous meditation sin is presented to us in its loathsome form as something rather objective and outside of ourselves, and our own sinfulness is touched upon only in a general way, without entering into details. Now, however, we examine our own sins in particular in order to excite by this means an intense sorrow for them. Intense sorrow for our sins, therefore, as St. Ignatius expressly declares in the second prelude, is the one end of the present meditation.

To secure this, St. Ignatius directs us to consider carefully the extent or number of our sins and then their intensity, that is, their nature and their malice. Thus, in the first point, we take a survey of the sins of our whole life, from our earliest days ; in the second point we consider their nature and gravity : *first*, in the light of reason and of our natural feelings which, of themselves, abhor what is mean and debasing, even were it not forbidden ; *secondly*, we consider the malice and deformity of sin in the meanness and insignificance of the offender, which are brought home to us by remembering how little good we possess in comparison with the rest of men, with the angels, and with God, and in the misery and corruption of our soul and body ; *lastly*, we dwell on the greatness and majesty of God whom we have offended. Here, at the thought of God's goodness and mercy, grief is transformed into genuine contrition. The whole design is so simple and so perfectly in keeping with the nature of the soul, that a lasting effect is sure to follow, if due earnestness be not wanting in making the meditation.—

To make the application of this meditation to our life in religion practical and fruitful, we ought to examine the disorder not only of our life in the world, but also of our life in religion (See Fr. Roothaan's excellent suggestions in the matter: notes 15, 16, and 34. Cfr. Dir. c. 10. § 4.)

4. The third and fourth meditations are repetitions of the two preceding.—Why does St. Ignatius here and elsewhere insist so much upon repetitions? The reason is given in the 2nd and 4th Annotations. No merely superficial routine work will do here; the matter should be dwelt upon until the fruit is obtained. It often happens, too, that in the first meditation the intellect absorbs most of the time, the will acting but little. At other times the affections are roused at once, but are not sufficiently upheld by motives which the intellect alone can supply. Hence, in weighty matters St. Ignatius prescribes the use of repetitions which, though disagreeable to curiosity, impatience, and shallowness, will on that very account be all the more profitable.—How should these repetitions be made? St. Ignatius points out two ways. The first is to take up the same meditation a second time, keeping the same points and the same arrangement, and dwelling especially on those points, in which we felt consolation or whence we drew no fruit before—(*exercitium tertium*). The second method is to make a sort of résumé of the meditation already made (*exercitium quartum*), dwelling at pleasure on this point or on that, or on the chief fruit of the whole meditation, or simply letting everything pass in review before us, as we do in the second week when we apply the senses to the different mysteries, in order to impress the matter more deeply on the mind, or to see whether anything new may be acquired for the intellect, the will, or the affections (Contempl. 3<sup>a</sup>, hebdom<sup>o</sup> 2<sup>o</sup>; nota 2<sup>a</sup>, hebdom. 4<sup>o</sup>).—To those already mentioned might be added another kind of repetition which consists in applying ourselves once more and with the greatest earnestness to the same subject, as if it had never been presented before (Dir. c. 15, § 2, 3).

We meet the triple colloquy for the first time in these repetitions. And why here? First, on account of the great importance of these meditations. Whenever the exercitant is engaged on a subject-matter of more than ordinary impor-

tance, St. Ignatius prescribes three colloquies : for example, in the meditations on Two Standards, the Three Classes, the Three Degrees of Humility. Moreover, he takes this occasion to teach us an important lesson : viz. that we should endeavor, little by little, by lengthening the colloquies, to give more time to prayer itself and to conversation with God (Cfr. nota post Contempl. 1<sup>am</sup> heb<sup>da</sup> 3<sup>aa</sup>). For the only object of meditation or of the exercise of the understanding and memory, is to dispose the will for fervent prayer, which is the immediate and most efficacious means for perfecting the will. We meditate to enable ourselves to pray.—By showing us to whom and for what we should pray, St. Ignatius shows us how to prolong our prayer. He counsels us to make little pilgrimages to the Mother of God, to our Savior, to the Eternal Father. Herein lies a beautiful act of humility wholly in keeping with the frame of mind produced by the preceding meditations. Moreover, it is so natural in important matters to seek for mediators and advocates ! In this way the colloquy is imbued with the true Catholic spirit and expresses perfectly what is fundamental in Christianity, the mediatorship of Christ with the Father, and of the Saints through Christ with God. How happy also for our present purpose is the choice of persons ! The Mother of Mercy and Refuge of Sinners ! The Redeemer, the Mighty Advocate of Sinners ! The Father of Mercy and the God of all Consolation !—We ask for a three-fold grace, a knowledge of our sins that will impress us deeply (*ut sentiam cognitionem*) and an abhorrence of them ; a like knowledge of the disorder in our actions, and of the wickedness and vanity of the world. These three graces embrace all that is required for a complete conversion. They reach the whole man, the understanding, the will, the heart, whatever sin has corrupted, above all, sin itself ; they also reach something which, though not precisely sin, yet does not tend to our last end and is an occasion of sin, to wit the disorder of our life and actions ; in fine, these graces reach even the world itself, which of its own nature is not only vain and transitory, and therefore unworthy of our consideration, but also wicked, in as much as it is a constant source of temptation and an ever active instrument in luring us to sin. When, therefore, sin with its ef-

fects, its attendants, and its very causes, is entirely removed from the soul by the triple colloquy, then we shall have a true conversion.

5. Yet to make this conversion perfect, one thing is still wanting, the firm purpose to sin no more. This last link in our chain is riveted by the meditation on Hell. What this firm purpose should be, is expressed in the second prelude : *ne in peccatum deveniam* (Cf. not. 26, R. P. Roothaan). The vivid apprehension of the torments of hell is a motive, a means to this end. Hence in the second prelude we ask for this grace.—These torments are brought before us in an application of the senses. And why? St. Ignatius likes to assign an application of the senses for the evening, when the exercitant is tired.<sup>(1)</sup> Indeed no other subject of the first week is so suitable for this kind of meditation as the exercise on hell. Moreover, he would picture hell to us just as it is described in Holy Scripture, and as it is in reality, the place of punishment for beings endowed with intellect and senses, where those who die in mortal sin are forever deprived of the vision of God, and subjected to torments proportionate to their nature and the nature of sin. Even the consideration of the pain of sense alone is dreadful enough to make one thoroughly miserable. And if the picture is so frightful, what must the reality be! The meditation can be given with effect just as it stands in the Book of the Exercises. Yet there is nothing to prevent one from developing the points of the repetitions, or of the meditation itself, by considerations drawn from philosophy and theology. The same may be said of the preceding meditations on sin; for it is quite proper by supplementary meditations on the nature and consequences of sin, to fill out the meditations of St. Ignatius and to strengthen and increase their effect. This course is often necessary in view of the ignorance of spiritual things so commonly met with now-a-days. That such filling-out is to the purpose and quite authorized by St. Ignatius, may be inferred from the words of the third point of the first meditation : *Trahendo in memoriam gravitatem et malitiam peccati contra suum Creatorem et Dominum . . . quomodo in peccando et agendo contra Bonitatem infinitam, juste fuerit con-*

<sup>(1)</sup> See later on the chapt. on "The Application of the Senses."

*demnatus in æternum*.—It is also proper to remark here how the colloquy, keeping vividly before us God's boundless mercy, disposes our hearts to sorrow and purpose of amendment from a motive of love. We see how earnestly God endeavored, we might almost say labored, to save us from the frightful disaster of hell.

6. As is evident from what has already been said, the three meditations, on the Three Sins, on Personal Sins, and on Hell, form a strongly linked and compact whole which goes to make up the second part of the first week. These three meditations must always be given in full and, indeed, before any others that we may wish to give in addition to them. The same holds good even for the more advanced in the spiritual life; for in them, too, they produce excellent results. By means of these meditations, we first of all lay a solid foundation of humility. For therein we learn what we are both in body and in soul, in the natural and in the supernatural order; what we have done and what we have deserved, and how much reason there is for a practical distrust of self. A certain hatred of self, so necessary to perseverance and fervor in penance, is inconceivable, without this humility (Cf. R. P. Roothaan, nota 34 to the Additions). These meditations, moreover, awaken gratitude and love of God together with zeal and readiness to make sacrifices. Impressed with these truths, we find no sacrifice too great or too difficult for us. Every sacrifice is easy. We are inflamed with zeal for souls, because the thought of our own sins, acting like remorse of conscience, spurs us on to offer satisfaction to God by gaining souls to his service, and saving them from the greatest misfortune. From whatever point of view we regard these meditations, they are calculated to produce fruit and blessings without number (Cf. R. P. Roothaan nota 28).

Only after these three meditations, in accordance with the remark of the *versio vulgata* and the practice of St. Ignatius himself, may we add other meditations, such as those on death, particular and general judgment, purgatory, venial sin, penance and conversion. The end of these meditations is to obtain the three graces we pray for in the triple collo-

quy of the repetition of the meditations on the Three Sins, and on Personal Sins. All these graces together, or only one of them, may be made the object of one meditation, according to the subject-matter. At all events, these meditations throw much light on our sinful state, on the disorder of our lives and on the vanity and wickedness of the world (Direct. c. 15, § 4 ; c. 17).

7. St. Ignatius usually assigns five meditations to each day, one to be made at midnight, two before dinner, the others to be made during the afternoon. The age, health, and surroundings of the exercitant, are always to be taken into consideration in assigning the number of the exercises.

#### METHOD OF MEDITATION DEVELOPED FROM THE MEDITATION ON THE THREE SINS

These three meditations, at least the first, are of great importance for the theory of mental prayer. For in the first, St. Ignatius gives us a practical instruction on the meditation of the truths of faith, at once so brief, so striking and so full of meaning, that nothing better can be said on the subject.<sup>(1)</sup> This instruction embraces the nature of mental prayer in general, as well as the various constituent parts of a meditation (Dir. c. 14).

1. St. Ignatius briefly touches upon the nature of mental prayer in the title of the first meditation : *est meditatio per tres potentias animæ* ; i. e., he explains it by the faculties especially exercised and the method in which they are set at work. Mental prayer consists in a peculiar and serious exercise of the three powers of the soul, memory, understanding, and will. In mental prayer we make use of internal concepts and thoughts, not of words or forms of prayer pronounced with the lips, which belong essentially to vocal prayer. To pray mentally is, in other words, to ruminate, to reflect earnestly upon the truths of faith in order to regulate our lives in accordance with them, and hence to act upon our will for

<sup>(1)</sup> Scriptores ascetici "omnes potius exhortando, quam instruendo procedunt et ideo fusius scribunt de laudibus et effectibus meditationis ; peculiarem autem methodum orandi non ita distincte tradunt. B. Ignatius brevissimis regulis ac verbis mirabilem hanc instructionem comprehendit, quam non tam ex libris, quam ex unctiōne Spiritus Sancti et ex magna experientia et usu hausisse videtur." Suarez, de Relig. S. J., l. 9, c. 6, n. 2.

its improvement. Unless we aim at influencing our will, to ruminate upon the truths of faith will be not meditation but a mere theological study.—From this definition of mental prayer we see that it necessarily demands a peculiar action of the powers of the soul. For the truths of faith cannot influence the will, unless the memory present to the understanding the substance and history of these truths, with their accompanying circumstances. This is the task of the memory. The moment it fails to do its duty and, relaxing its hold on the subject of meditation, takes up something else and presents it to the understanding, this faculty, too, passes over to the new object and we have a distraction.—The understanding, then, strives to convince itself of the truth of the mystery, to penetrate its meaning, to see its beauty, its depth, its sublimity and its importance, to find motives for influencing the will, and lastly to seize its practical significance for daily life, by drawing conclusions and making applications.—The will, however, moved by the truth, at once elicits acts of dislike or of pleasure and desire; at the same time it seeks to shun the evil or to possess itself of the good by having recourse to the practical understanding for the necessary means, which are good resolutions on our part and, on the part of God, graces solicited by fervent prayer which, being always at our command, we can at any time make use of.—We may compare the entire process of mental prayer to the inspection of a painting. Memory is like the hand which holds the painting up to view; the eye and its action resemble the understanding and its work; the satisfaction or displeasure arising from the inspection correspond to the will. Memory, understanding, and will, are indeed called into action in vocal prayer, otherwise it would not be human prayer, but they are called into action only cursorily and never in so thorough and earnest a manner. Vocal prayer is a passing glance at a painting; mental prayer is a prolonged contemplation at our ease, in order to make a thorough study of the painting. This kind of prayer ought to produce profound and lasting effects, as it is quite easy to spend much time in it, while to make notable progress in the spiritual life it is even morally necessary.

Of mental prayer there are various kinds, one of which St.

Ignatius mentions and teaches here, when he says "est meditatio," that is, meditation in the strictest sense of the word, reflecting upon the abstract truths of faith as opposed to the "consideratio," which we have already seen in the Foundation, as well as to the "contemplatio," which is to be used later on in the mysteries of the following weeks.

2. After this, St. Ignatius briefly touches upon the various parts of a meditation, viz., the preparatory prayer, the preludes, the meditation proper, and the colloquies.

When we have done what is prescribed in the third Addition, which will be spoken of later on, we make in the preparatory prayer the simple petition, that all our thoughts and actions, during the meditation, may tend to God's service, and that God may be greatly glorified by the profit we reap from it. There is no need whatever of a set form of words for this prayer; in fact, it is often very useful, for a change, to improvise a short prayer after the model just given.

The preludes aim at collecting the faculties of the soul, not in a general way, as the third Addition requires, but in a special manner, bringing them nearer the subject of the meditation and making them familiar with it. This is done in the first place by means of the memory, or of the imagination, which briefly recalls the history and pictures to itself the scene of action or, when the subject is an abstract truth, paints for itself a picture of it. Thus is set up for that restless bird, our imagination, a little perch upon which it may rest, or to which at least it may immediately return from its wanderings to settle and compose itself.—The will is set right on the subject-matter by the petition for the fruit to be derived from the meditation. This prayer is simply an application of the second Annotation; it is the acknowledgment that God's help is needed to make a good and heartfelt meditation and is, at the same time, a spur to our own will. For a good meditation is also our own work; especially is it the work of good-will and ardent longing. If our prayer is to succeed, this ardent longing must stand in the back-ground to set in motion, and to urge on as well as to direct our different actions and to secure our perseverance in them. Hence it is that St. Ignatius, in giving the prelude, so often repeats the words: *id quod volo*.—These preludes must be made briskly



and briefly, else they are a waste of time and expose us to the danger of falling into distractions. When a musician wishes to play, he does not waste much time in tuning his instrument, but begins to play as soon as possible. The preludes are merely an attuning of the powers of our soul.

The real work of meditation by means of the faculties of the soul, is concisely and pithily described by St. Ignatius in the words: *Trahere (applicare) memoriam super peccatum Angelorum, et super idem intellectum, discurrendo, deinde voluntatem, volendo illud totum intelligere et memorari, ut magis erubescam.*—He briefly suggests in the sequel the means whereby we are to exercise the memory and the understanding, that is, by reflecting on the circumstances, on the effects, by asking the questions: *Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando?* Thus the “loci communes inventionis,” and of rhetorical amplification furnish a wide field for the exercise of the understanding.

But the main strength ever lies with the will, of which he says: *Volendo illud intelligere . . . ut magis erubescam . . .* the desire, namely, to find something to move the will. One should say of every subject of meditation: “It certainly contains a treasure: let me look for it!” Every mystery is, in fact, a rock of Moses, in which a copious fountain of lights and motives lies hidden. We have only to strike it hard, again and again: *Movendo magis affectus . . . . utendo voluntate . . . . concludere actibus voluntatis.*

St. Ignatius makes some suggestions for the colloquy, by telling us to speak to God as a friend speaks to his friend, a servant to his master, an evil-doer to his judge; now asking pardon, now accusing ourselves; again communicating to him the concerns of our hearts, that is, our thoughts, doubts, difficulties, hopes, plans, resolutions, our misery and the whole state of our souls. He completes these remarks in the colloquy of the Contemplation on the Incarnation by judiciously observing, “that we should reflect (hence, bring the intellect into action) on what we are going to say to the three Divine Persons, etc., and what we ought to say, as the result of our meditation.” We may learn from this hint what care we are to bestow on the colloquies. Again in the note to the first contemplation of the third week we are told,

*petere et ratiocinari juxta subjēctam materiam*, i. e., as the subject-matter and our mood prompt us, *prout tentatus aut consolatus sum*; and lastly, the same remark is made in the colloquy for the First Method of Prayer.—Another good way for making the colloquies is to lay before God in the form of an address what we have meditated upon, that is, the whole course of our thoughts, resolutions and affections, as they presented themselves to us. Father Martin of Cochem does this in his “Life and Sufferings of our Saviour.” Might not this method be the best explanation of the remark of St. Ignatius in the Contemplation on the Incarnation?—We may make several colloquies of this kind, as St. Ignatius so often directs us to do, by going from one saint to another. Nor need we wait until the end of the meditation to make colloquies; they may be made whenever our heart prompts us to do so; for example, when we finish with a point or a part of a point, or when we take a firm resolution. In this way we make our meditation animated and fruitful. But we must often exert and even force ourselves, since indolence creeps in upon us more while actually praying than while meditating. A fervent colloquy must, at all events, be made at the end of the meditation; otherwise the most important part of the meditation is wanting. Prayer is the last and the most important act of the understanding and will. To put off the colloquy until there is no time left for it, is to act as a painter who, wishing to represent a saint, begins with the lower parts of the body, and enlarges them out of all proportion, so that there is no room left on the canvas for the head (Direct. c. 15, §§ 5, 6).

## THE ADDITIONS

1. The Additions, as we have said (page 1, n. 2), are suggestions and means that here, at least, relate chiefly to meditation, and enable us to make it better, i. e., with greater fruit and facility, as St. Ignatius says in the title: *Ad melius faciēda exercitia . . . et ad melius inveniēdum id, quod desiderat qui exercetur*.—Hence they are not absolutely necessary. We might meditate without them, but how? We complain so often that meditation does not succeed, or succeeds with difficulty. Here are the means to make it easy

and fruitful. We may well say that the success of our meditation generally depends upon the way in which we observe the Additions. To make a good and useful meditation three things are necessary, God's grace, our own good-will, and earnest cooperation. Our cooperation consists for the most part in the exact observance of the Additions.—The aim of the Additions, strictly speaking, is to prepare our souls and to dispose them properly for reaping the fruit, the only thing we can do in the spiritual life (*præparare et disponere*). The importance St. Ignatius attaches to the Additions may be gathered from the fact that during the four weeks of the Exercises he requires us to make the Particular Examen on our observance of them, as he says in the “*quartum notandum*” to the 10th Addition; nay “with great care,” he writes, *nota 4<sup>a</sup> hebdomadæ 2<sup>æ</sup> ad Addit. 10<sup>am</sup>*—(Cf. Annot. 6, and *nota diei 5<sup>i</sup> hebdomadæ 2<sup>æ</sup>*). Accordingly, we should not undervalue the Additions, but make our examination upon their observance the first and chiefest point of the review. How serious in our every day life are trifling mistakes, and how useful a little tact! How often, too, the growth of a plant depends on the merest trifle! But apart from this, if we do our share by faithfully observing the Additions, God will not fail to do his by blessing our endeavors. With what pains do we not prepare ourselves, when we have to appear before men and to speak to them! Why should we not take the trouble to put our hearts in the right mood, when we have to converse with God? (*Direct. c. 15, § 9.*)—The Additions tell us what we have to do, before, during, and after meditation.

2. At night before going to sleep, we think for a moment of the hour of rising in the morning, and of our meditation which is to follow. Then we call to mind briefly the points of the meditation somewhat in the following manner. What am I to do immediately on rising to-morrow morning? I am first to give thanks to Almighty God, then to make a good intention, in the third place to determine my Particular Examen, fourthly, to think of my meditation and, finally, of Holy Communion or Mass. And so in the morning these thoughts will immediately present themselves to us. This may be called arranging one's spiritual toilet-articles so as to have them within easy reach.—The review of the points pre-

supposes that we have prepared them. Preparation of the points is not itself an Addition, since it is not a help to meditate better, but simply a necessary condition, and in so far it should be attended to with greater care than even the Additions. We should never begin to meditate without suitable preparation. This would be tempting God, as well as wasting a good portion of the time of meditation in looking for a subject. Even in the fourth week, where St. Ignatius allows us the greatest freedom, he wishes us to foresee the points and in some measure to arrange them (Nota 3, hebdom<sup>ae</sup> 4<sup>ae</sup>).—The 2nd Annotation tells us how this preparation of points is to be made. If possible, we should at least determine the fruit, for then we can at all events get on by ourselves, even though something of the points escape us.

3. In the morning as soon as we rise, or rather as often as we awake during the night, we should at once try to busy ourselves with the thoughts which we arranged at night, but especially with the meditation. It should not be as yet a meditation, but a brief recalling of the points and of the fruit, and an endeavor to put ourselves in a suitable frame of mind by awakening our interest in the subject, recommending our meditation to Almighty God and asking him to show us the beautiful things contained in the mystery. We may also make use of vocal prayer now and then, provided we avoid voluntary distractions and work ourselves into a mood in keeping with the character of the mystery. St. Ignatius gives us an instance of this in the meditation on sin. This suitable frame of mind, though not essential to mental prayer, is yet extremely important *ad melius inveniendum*, as St. Ignatius has it. Fine weather does not make Easter, but it is difficult to enjoy Easter, when it comes amid frost and snow. It is to the end that our minds may be in full accord with what we celebrate, that the Church introduces the divine office and the Mass of each day by an *invitatorium* and an *introitus*, in which are given the character and key-note of the day's feast.

4. Immediately before meditation we must recollect ourselves. In three different places does the Book of the Exercises tell us in what this recollection consists. First, in the fifth note of the second week I am told to consider whither

I am going and before whom I am about to appear ; secondly, in the First Method of Prayer, I am told that before entering on prayer I should let my mind repose a little and so, sitting, standing, or walking, think whither I am going and for what purpose ; thirdly, here in the Additions, St. Ignatius directs that I should stand one or two paces from the place in which I am about to meditate and, with my mind raised on high, consider how God, our Lord, sees me, and make an act of reverence. This recollection of mind, then, comprises three things : the thought of whither I am going, an act of faith in the presence of God, and an act of reverence.—This Addition is, in general, to be observed before every prayer, no matter how short ; indeed, the shorter the prayer, the more necessary the Addition, if our prayer is to be of profit and not wasted in distractions. To clear a ditch, we take a short run ; so with prayer,<sup>(1)</sup> in order to make it well, we should recollect ourselves and animate ourselves to do well. There is no need of spending much time in this preparation. We have only to acquire the habit of asking ourselves before every prayer, however short, such as the Angelus, the prayers before and after meals, etc., “What am I going to do now? To pray. Then let me pray well.” This will be enough. If the prayer should last long, it is well to collect our thoughts anew from time to time, and at certain points, especially in vocal prayer, while reciting the breviary or the beads, otherwise it will not be an easy thing to guard against distraction. In vocal prayer the main point is to pause now and then to allow our hearts to rest in God. Then, indeed, it will be profitable to us.

5. St. Ignatius wishes us during meditation to remain in the position most suitable to the end in view, and to dwell upon a point so long as we find food in it.—With regard to the attitude of the body, provided it be respectful, he leaves us free to kneel, to sit, or to stand. He does not speak of walking (Cf. 2<sup>um</sup> mod. orandi). All depends on the help it gives us to attain the end, *id quod volo*.

But what do we desire, or rather what should we desire? Certainly not, to make ourselves comfortable, but to pray, to meditate, and from our meditation to derive this or that fruit.

<sup>(1)</sup> Cfr. R. P. Roothaan, nota 2 ad tres modos orandi.

Let us choose what helps us best and adhere to it without anxiety. It is never advisable, whatever the pretext may be, to choose a position, which will interfere with our meditation. We may say, in general, it is better to stand than sit, better to kneel than stand. The 3rd Annotation has already told us that during our colloquies we should observe greater reverence. This advice of St. Ignatius on the position of the body is to be followed in every prayer.—Freedom from anxiety, says St. Ignatius, is also to be maintained in working out the matter of meditation. We should remain quietly at a thought or at a point as long as we find food and satisfaction in it, or it is much to be feared that we shall never find these anywhere. The hunter that follows every hare, never catches one. The points of the meditation we have no time to examine will not be lost. There are times for repetitions, or free moments in the course of the day, when these points may be dwelt upon. We must act as the bee that remains at the same flower as long as it finds anything. To act otherwise betrays curiosity, thoughtlessness and levity. *Non multa sed multum!* (Cf. Annot. 2.) On the other hand there is a kind of laziness, which sticks at the same point even when nothing more can be had. This, likewise, is unprofitable and should be avoided.

6. After meditation comes the review which contains four parts. The first is an examination as to the way in which we have made the meditation. It is of the utmost importance to see how we have observed the Additions, and how we have exercised our faculties of will and understanding.—The second is to return thanks to Almighty God, if the meditation has succeeded, or, if through our fault it has not succeeded so well, to be sorry for it and resolve to amend.—In the third place, we examine why the meditation went well or ill. Thus we learn how to meditate properly, and acquire the habit of making this exercise fruitfully. Otherwise, we continue in our faults and at last lose the art of meditation entirely. Here, as in the case of a torn garment, the longer it is neglected the worse it becomes. A stitch in time saves nine. If we are bent upon learning an art we ask ourselves after each new attempt, “Why have I succeeded?” or in case of failure, “Why have I failed?” This

is the only way of mastering an art. Even during the review it may be possible to try the right method of making the meditation. — In the fourth place, we are to gather the fruit of the meditation. This we do by asking ourselves, “What have I gained from this meditation? What is my practical conclusion? Have I had any lights which struck me in a special way? Have I taken any important resolution?” The results we should note down briefly together with the reasons that prompted them. This noting down of our lights is of great importance. They are graces and for their own sake deserve to be recorded; besides, they are in this way more deeply impressed on our hearts and, should we ever take them up later on, they will reproduce their good effect. God is pleased, moreover, to see his graces highly valued, and is drawn thereby to bestow them on us more abundantly. We ourselves would hesitate before giving a second alms to a beggar, if we saw him throw away the first without looking at it. It may be that God is acting in the same way with us; perhaps this is the very reason why our lights are so few. To give up the practice of writing down our lights is generally looked upon as a sign of tepidity (Cf. Dir. c. 3, § 5).—The Review is an Addition, and a very important one, and should be made every day at some suitable time, at the beginning of Mass, say, for those who are not priests, or during breakfast, or at some other time.

7. The 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th Additions have reference to the rest of the day. They recommend us to entertain thoughts and sentiments in keeping with the subject-matter of our meditation and to endeavor to drive away such as are at variance with it. *Tenere ante me velle me dolere* are the words of St. Ignatius. These Additions, therefore, recommend us to avoid laughter and whatever would give occasion to it, to preserve strict custody over our eyes, and to keep our room darkened or to admit the light according to the fruit we are seeking. How natural it is in the first week to observe silence, to keep our eyes cast down, to avoid laughter, and to shun the light. All this we do in ordinary life when we are in sorrow. Why should we not do the same in a time of spiritual sorrow?—We see how the Additions contain almost everything that can dispose the soul for prayer, how

the care we should have for the meditation and for prayer demands a proximate and a remote preparation which covers nearly the whole day, and how carefully we should set about our prayer if we hope to succeed in it. What painstaking care a chemical experiment or a photograph demands. Prayer demands no less. By observing all the Additions we show our solicitude in our intercourse with God, who assuredly deserves this much. *Indicabo tibi, o homo, quid sit bonum, et quid Dominus requirat a te . . . sollicitum ambulare cum Deo.* Mich., vi., 8. Whoever is unwilling to pray or to think of prayer, except when he is on the point of beginning his meditation, and yet hopes to succeed in it, is, says Blessed Peter Faber, looking for a miracle.<sup>(1)</sup>

#### THE TENTH ADDITION

1. The tenth Addition contains a short but very full instruction on penance. St. Ignatius puts it here for the reason that penance fits in very well with the first week, since it helps greatly to purify the soul and has no little influence on prayer and meditation. Penance, therefore, is properly classed with the Additions, since it serves as a remote preparation for meditation.

2. In this instruction St. Ignatius lays before us the theory and practice of penance, and the motives on which it is based.

3. Penance is that virtue by which we destroy sin in ourselves and make reparation to God for our offences. In sin there is an interior and an exterior element, a turning away from God and a turning to creatures. Hence, satisfaction should reach both elements, and should consequently be both interior and exterior. Interior satisfaction is made up of acts of contrition and purpose of amendment. Exterior satisfaction is made up of those acts by which we inflict pain on the senses for the bad use we have made of creatures and of our external faculties.—As sin is properly in the will, the main thing is interior penance, for it is the very soul of all satisfaction. Without it, exterior penance is worth nothing. Since, therefore, exterior penance is the fruit of that which

<sup>(1)</sup> Memoriale, 1542, mense Junio.



is interior, we may well doubt the worth of our interior penance, if it has not strength enough to put forth this exterior fruit. A tree which bears no fruit is worth little. Exterior penance in its turn, as we shall see later, may help on that which is interior.

4. The practice of penance includes all exterior and interior acts which serve to blot out our sins. We practise interior penance especially in the meditation on sin, in the examination of conscience, and most of all in confession, which is the obligatory form of penance. We practise exterior penance, as often as we inflict pain on the senses in order to atone for sin. St. Ignatius speaks in particular of three kinds of exterior penance: fasting, watching, and bodily chastisements, such as disciplines, hair-shirts, etc.—For the practice of these three kinds of penance, he lays down certain general principles, which we here bring together. First, he says, penance properly consists in withholding from nature what is due to it; anything else would only be temperance. We do not keep the fasts of the Church by eating with moderation, but by entirely abstaining for a time from what nature has a right to.—Secondly, penance as such is better the severer it is.—Thirdly, penance must not be injurious to health. It is not an end, but a means, and therefore should not be a hindrance to a greater good. Cfr. Reg. Summ., 48. Penance is far from being the highest of the moral virtues, and therefore, when St. Ignatius speaks of disciplines, hair-shirts, etc., he adds that they should be used only to cause pain, but not wounds, at least not such as would do harm to one's health. Why, in fact, should blood be made to flow? In itself it is not painful, and it may serve but to feed our vanity and self-complacency.—Watching is of all the forms of penance the hardest and the most likely to do harm, and very great harm. And so, St. Ignatius warns us to take nothing, as a rule, from the time usually allotted to sleep, unless we have the bad habit of sleeping too much. In this case, we may shorten the time gradually, till we reach the proper limit. Mark here again an application of the 13th Annotation!—With the practice of exterior penances we may class the patient bearing of heat, cold, fatigue, etc.

And how are we to practise these austerities? First of all, we should practise them with prudence, that they may not do us any harm but may be a real help to us. Hence, we should not confine ourselves for a long time to any particular form of penance, but should vary our practices, using now one, now another, and at times laying all aside. By so doing we need not dread any serious injury to our health. It is not single acts of mortification, even though they be painful, that do the body harm, such as occasional fasts, after which we return to our ordinary mode of life, but it is the long and continual practice of the same penance.<sup>(1)</sup> Secondly, in this way we are in less danger of being deceived by our cunning nature, which is willing enough to do something, but is not willing to do what it finds really hard. Thus one may be quite ready to take the discipline, but wholly unwilling to deny himself anything in the matter of food and drink; while another is ready to fast, but shrinks from the use of the discipline. Whereas, if we vary our penances, we shall foil this ruse of our nature. Thirdly, we easily learn in this way what is most useful for ourselves and what Almighty God demands of us. Once this point is determined, we should change no more, but continue to practise what we find will help us.—Accordingly, it is with prudence and modesty that we should practise exterior works of penance, hence, not in public; for, generally speaking, there is nothing that impresses men more than outward austerity, and here there would be danger for our humility. Hence, the warning of our divine Saviour: “But thou, when thou dost fast, anoint thy head and wash thy face” (Matth. vi, 17).

5. The motives for doing penance St. Ignatius gives in the first note. He enumerates three.

The first motive is that penance keeps our lower nature more subject to reason, and disposes it for the practice of all that our state of life demands. If we allow the body to have its own way and to be free from every hardship, it becomes slothful, effeminate and troublesome, either by openly rebelling, or by refusing the service required of it. A horse that is well fed and seldom worked is always ready to run away.

<sup>(1)</sup> St. Ignatius applies this remark even to the number of meditations; here too he recommends variety (Nota diei 2<sup>i</sup>. hebda<sup>e</sup> 2<sup>ae</sup>).

The effect of penance is to make the body tractable, and to destroy in it every inclination to rebel against the spirit. Little birds are tamed, when hunger forces them to get accustomed to come and pick the crumbs from our hand. However, once the pride of the natural man is broken, and he has been brought to do his duty without reluctance, it will no longer be necessary to hold so tight a rein. Who would give the whip to a horse running at the top of his speed? <sup>(1)</sup> Another beneficial though extraordinary effect of penance is that by it the body becomes less sluggish, less indolent and less cowardly, while, on the other hand, it becomes prompt in the service of God and is endowed with a wonderful constancy and suppleness in the performance of good works, however arduous. This we often see in the saints, who with all their fasting and watching were not prevented from doing a vast amount of good. Thus penance is an act of the victorious and masterful might of the spirit: it is man's greatest honor.

The second motive for practising penance is to obtain certain graces, as light in meditation, the solution of difficulties, help in temptation and deliverance from the same, spiritual consolation, and the withdrawal of desolation. Penance is of great help in obtaining all these, as we are taught in the Preface of the Mass for the Lenten Season: *Corporali jejunio vitia comprimis, mentem elevas, virtutem largiris et præmia.* During Lent our souls are often lighted up with flashes of noble, holy, and consoling thoughts: for when we abstain from sensible enjoyments, God rewards us by spiritual sweetness, and by light and consolation in prayer. On the other hand nothing drives away spiritual joy more speedily than indulgence in the pleasures of sense. To enjoy both together would be too much. happiness for this life.—It is well, then, to perform some penance during the first week in order to obtain a hearty sorrow for our sins. We may do the same out of time of retreat, especially in seasons of doubt and when beset by difficulties from without or from within. It is quite plain, then, that the practice of penance is of great benefit even to the soul. For besides the advantages enumer-

<sup>(1)</sup> Cfr. the letter of St. Ignatius to St. Francis Borgia. Life of St. Ignatius by Father Genelli, Part. II, Chap. 11. Reg. Summ. 4, 48.

ated above, through penance the soul becomes humble, overcomes its tendency to hasty and precipitate action, and gains in strength, constancy, and cheerfulness. In fact, it is hardly possible to become a truly interior man without practising some suitable penance. The neglect of exterior penances usually marks the presence of sloth, faint-heartedness, and the ascendancy of the natural man. Penance, therefore, leads to true wisdom, to peace and joy (Cfr. Reg. 6 ad spirit. dignosc. 1<sup>re</sup> hebdom<sup>ae</sup>).

The third reason for practising exterior penance is to atone for the sins we have committed and to offer satisfaction for the temporal punishment that remains. In this way penance is the counter-stroke of the spirit against the rebellion of the flesh, and an act of justice; it re-establishes order. And hence, for this reason also, penance is of daily necessity. For by sinning daily we are like a leaky boat which requires constant bailing. What folly to put off settling the great account until eternity is upon us, where the punishment is so severe and lasting! Now everything is easy, everything profitable, everything meritorious. We should, therefore, accustom ourselves to do a little penance every day.—An edifying custom, too, of some holy souls is to offer self-imposed penances in satisfaction for the sins of others.

A last motive for the practice of penance we find in the example of the Saints and of all good and enlightened Christians. Who is the Saint that has not done what he could in this matter? Even the gentlest among them, the favorites of the world, Saints like St. Francis de Sales, to what a life of austerity did they not freely condemn themselves! Obedience and regard for a higher good were the only restraints they put upon their penance. The esteem and practice of exterior penance mark the true Catholic spirit, no less than the shrinking from it marks the spirit of the so called Reformers; nay, the esteem and practice of this virtue are but the natural promptings of one who is sincerely penitent. He has sinned, he wishes to atone for his sins by bodily austerities; at once and instinctively he hits upon this method of atoning. Penance, then, may be called the A B C of the spiritual life.

From what has been said it follows that the practice of

penance must needs be constant. Sufficient motives are never lacking. The religious state is properly the Church penitent, as the Church is the world penitent.

#### SUMMARY OF THE FIRST WEEK

Such is the nature of the first week. It shows us our last end, eternal happiness and, pointing out the direct way to it through the service of God, lays before us the proper use of creatures as the very best means. — However, if we have strayed from the right path, the first week leads us the only safe way remaining, that is, the way of penance, which supposes an entering into oneself, contrition, good resolutions, a proper use of Confession and Communion, of the twofold examination of conscience, and the practice of austerities. By this system of penance, the reign of sin in us is utterly destroyed. For the reign of sin consists first of the guilt of sin, next of the remnants of the temporal punishment due to it, and lastly of the force of bad habits and passions. The former are the effects, the latter, the causes and occasions of sin. All these receive a thorough treatment in the Exercises.

The immediate result of this week, therefore, is the resolve to return to our last end by combating sin and, above all, our disorderly passions. Without this determination to fight against one's evil passions, the resolution to avoid sin will be worth nothing.

Hence we may reduce the first week to the following principles: to reach our last end, heaven, we must serve God; to serve God, we must avoid sin; to avoid sin, we must wage war on our unruly passions.

## THE SECOND WEEK

1. *Meaning and Scope of the Second Week*

We have seen that the last conclusion reached in the first week is that we have to struggle against our unruly passions, if we would avoid sin and thereby make sure our last end, which is eternal salvation. The second week takes up the work of the first, giving it a further development, and showing how in our fallen state we may reach our end.

Without the intervention of our divine Saviour it would have been impossible for us to be freed from sin or to make a stand against our passions; a truth the Apostle beautifully and concisely expresses in writing to the Corinthians: *Deo autem gratias, qui dedit nobis victoriam per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum* (I. Cor. xv. 57). Seeing that God insisted on full satisfaction, no creature could cancel the debt contracted by sin, and in consequence never should we, any of us, have the light, the skill, or the strength needed for a successful struggle with our passions. A sufficient proof of this is the history of the four thousand years that preceded the coming of Christ. Christ came, the ransom for our guilt and punishment in one hand, and a sword in the other, that by his glorious example no less than by his all-conquering grace he might lead us on in the conflict with our passions. We are no longer under a dead law, which says: *non concupisces*, pointing out the way, but offering neither aid nor sympathy. No, a man comes forward, and not a mere man, but the God-man, who puts himself at our head, fights our battles with us and gives us a practical example of a most glorious warfare. He gives us a practical example, inasmuch as having made himself like unto us in all things, sin alone excepted, he goes into the battle burdened with the infirmities of our flesh. He gives us a glorious example, inasmuch as he himself has overcome the enemy and, by the grace he bestows and the love he inspires, will render us, in like manner, victorious and invincible. In this combat we have but to stand by his side and do as he does. And as sin not only

overthrew us in single combat, but also subjected everything to its power, like a wide-ruling despot and the king of this world and of darkness, so Christ will not lead us to battle and to victory singly, but will associate us with others as subjects of a great Kingdom of God which he came on earth to establish. This is a sketch of the second week (Dir. c. 18).

2. From what we have said the connection of this week with the preceding has been partly shown. In both, the end remains the same, but, on account of the introduction of sin and the intervention of our Redeemer, the way and the means differ, or rather by the addition of new and important motives, are more definite in the second week than in the first. As in the first week the way was self-reformation in accordance with our idea of God, so it is now self-reformation in accordance with our idea of the God-man, the second Adam. "He is the way, the truth, and the life" (John, xiv. 6), and our proximate end. The best means, the choice and use of which we touched on only in general during the first week, are here gradually revealed in such clear light that nothing more can be desired, while the grace and example of the God-man move our will so powerfully that we embrace these means at last with love and joy.—For these reasons this week is preeminently the week of light, and corresponds to what is known as the illuminative way. *Ego sum lux mundi, qui sequitur me non ambulat in tenebris* (John, viii. 12).

3. The principal means to effect this reformation of self on the model of our Saviour, is a practical knowledge of the God-man, of his interior and of his exterior, of his virtues, his principles, his views and aims, of his way of thinking and acting. And that this knowledge may move our will to imitate him, there must be kindled in us a love of his person. Hence, the knowledge, love, and imitation of our Saviour are to be our occupation and study during this week. This is what is meant by the following of Christ.—To this end will help the study and contemplation of the God-man; then much prayer, above all, to the Heavenly Father, that he may reveal his Son to us and draw us to him (John, vi. 44); prayer to the Holy Ghost, who glorifies the Son on earth and gives testimony of him (John, xvi. 14; xv. 26); prayer to the Mother of God, who knows her divine Son so perfectly,

and communicates her knowledge so willingly ; lastly, prayer to St. Ignatius and to all the special lovers of our Saviour. After prayer, nothing so helps to the same end, as carrying out in practice what we have been meditating upon.

#### THE CONTEMPLATION ON THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

1. The Contemplation on the Kingdom of Christ is very important. It serves as an introduction to prepare us for the contemplations on the life of our Saviour. This exercise, says St. Ignatius in the title, will help us to meditate with fruit and success on the life of Christ. This help lies in putting us in the proper frame of mind and disposition of will to follow Christ closely and generously. The words of the second prelude are, "that I may not be deaf, but prompt rather and eager to carry out his holy will." The same object is again expressed with great clearness in the concluding prayer of the meditation. — At this stage, therefore, we ought to be enlightened and favorably disposed towards whatever pertains to the following of Christ. Now the following of Christ includes three things : first, a knowledge and love of the person we are to follow ; secondly, a knowledge and love of his cause to which we are to devote our energies ; thirdly, a knowledge of the degree of generosity with which we can and ought to devote ourselves to this cause, and a resolution in keeping with this knowledge. If we possess this threefold knowledge and are captivated by it, we are well prepared and may take up the life of our Lord, confident of drawing satisfactory fruit from it. In this sense, the meditation on the Kingdom of Christ is fundamental (Dir. c. 18, § 4).

2. The plan and development of this meditation are in keeping with its end. In the first point St. Ignatius, to bring the subject home to us, proposes the parable of an earthly king calling his subjects to arms ; in the second point he applies this parable to our Lord. — In each of these two points we can easily distinguish the three conditions mentioned above, that must be found in any one who would declare his readiness to enter upon this campaign.

In the parable we are introduced to an earthly king, who



unites in his person all the qualities that can stir up in the hearts of men feelings of respect, love and enthusiasm, and who possesses what is of the highest importance when men are to be roused to lofty purpose, a personality commanding the highest respect. And what will men not venture under the eye of a great leader?—In his manifesto the king explains his plan of campaign and declares what must be resolved upon by each one, who is ready to follow him, thereby giving us a clear idea of his project.—Lastly, in the reply of the king's subjects is suggested what we may and even ought to do, namely, to summon all our energies and to consecrate ourselves without reserve to so exalted a person and to so worthy a cause.—This first point infallibly predisposes us for an heroic resolve by putting before us only what is reasonable, true and attractive, and what finds its confirmation in history.

This effect, however, is produced without fail in the second point, by making an application of the parable to our divine Saviour. Whatever is beautiful, attractive, and inspiring in the first point, whatever arouses our enthusiasm for the person of the earthly king, whose existence is merely possible, all this now flashes upon us with so much truth and reality as to surpass anything we can imagine or desire. The king described in the first point does not exist; but our Saviour, and he alone, is all this and even more than our imagination can picture. This is the place to give full play to the imagination, and after each effort to confess: Thou art all this, O Lord, and not this alone, but infinitely more! *Quantum potes, tantum aude: major tamen omni laude, nec laudare sufficis.*—It is of supreme importance at this place to form, at least in outline, a lofty idea of the person of the God-man.

Furthermore, our Saviour describes for us the nature of his cause and the duty of a soldier in his service. To attain to a knowledge of this we must briefly consider the purpose of our Lord's life; how for the glory of God and the salvation of man he came upon earth to establish God's great kingdom, the Church, and how he wills that we, by becoming members of the Church, by making war upon sin and the passions after his teaching and example, should help him in building up this kingdom, first in our own hearts, and then in the

hearts of our fellow-men.—This, then, is the following of Christ: We are to make war upon our own sins and evil passions and thus become instruments in extending the kingdom of Christ among others. It is in this sense that the following of Christ is really a military expedition against the evil in ourselves and in others, and by its very nature a battle. Such is the distinguishing mark of the life of Jesus and of every one of his followers.—To the hardships of this service one should strive to be reconciled by bearing in mind the necessity of the warfare and the certainty of victory, the vastness and magnificence of the enterprise, differing in no wise from that in which Christ himself takes part, as well as his Church and that array of noble souls whose desire it is to do great deeds for the glory of God and the salvation of men. It would lessen the grandeur of this meditation and increase the difficulty of taking a generous resolution, were we to place the following of Christ solely in the denial and mortification of self without keeping in view the main object, which is to build up, defend and enlarge the kingdom of Christ in ourselves and in others. This object St. Ignatius expressly declares in the words of Christ's manifesto: "My will is to conquer the whole world," that is, to found God's kingdom. For the fulfilment of this his will we pray in the second prelude. This kingdom we see realized in the Church. Self-denial and sacrifice, prayer and labor, virtues and good works after the example of Christ, are but means to strengthen this kingdom in ourselves and extend it to others. These means may be trying to nature, but for the sake of so great and glorious an end one should be ready to make use of them not only willingly but even joyfully. Without this reference to the apostolic activity this meditation could not be an appropriate introduction to the following three weeks as well as to the whole life of Christ. Whithersoever the Lord may call, whatsoever may be our resolve in the following of Jesus: it must all be grounded on this meditation.

Lastly, we are called upon to decide the position or grade we are willing to take in the army. For as in worldly societies there are various grades, so likewise are there in the army of Christ. The first is to keep the commandments; the second, to follow the counsels; the last and highest, to labor

as an apostle. In each of these grades there are again degrees of fervor and generosity in making personal sacrifices or in taking the offensive against evil in ourselves or in others. This is the meaning of *agere contra propriam sensualitatem et contra amorem carnalem et mundanum*. All this St. Ignatius lays before us in weighty words to ponder on, that we may take a resolution worthy of ourselves, of our state of life, worthy of so great a Lord and King. It is manifest what position we, the members of the Society of Jesus, ought to choose for ourselves in Christ's army. We are, indeed, by our calling to devote ourselves without reserve to the person of Christ, to his mission, and to his work, that is, to his kingdom. The object of our Order is the defence and spread of the Catholic Faith and the service of the Church militant. Therefore, the kingdom of Christ and its extension ought to be the leading thought of our lives.

The meditation concludes with a prayer, expressing the noblest and completest surrender to the cause of our dear Saviour. It is a short summary of the foregoing reflections and of the subject-matter of the entire meditation. First of all, it expresses reverence and love for the person of the king: *Domine rerum omnium . . . infinita bonitas. . . Majestas sanctissima . . . in conspectu Matris et sanctorum . . .* What a noble army! Then it expresses a firmness of purpose which nothing can ever shake: *volo . . . desidero . . . deliberata voluntas . . .* Lastly, the noblest generosity: *imitari te in ferendis omnibus injuriis et omni vituperio . . . in omni paupertate actuali et spirituali . . .* Gently and gradually the best means are beginning to unfold themselves, though conditionally as yet: *dummodo sit majus servitium, major laus tua . . . si voluerit me eligere*<sup>(1)</sup> (Dir. c. 19, § 2).

3. These are the three points to be considered in this meditation, and we should, while meditating, lay great stress upon each point as it presents itself and weigh it carefully. Here, again, St. Ignatius prescribes a repetition,—a hint not to go on until we have arrived in a general way at that dis-

<sup>(1)</sup> Notice here the exact knowledge of human nature which St. Ignatius displays, and the gentleness and firmness with which he proceeds. Above, on page 30, the "best means" are not pointed out at all, here they are merely hinted at, and even here conditionally. The soul cannot, as yet, bear any more. When, with the example of our Saviour before it, the soul has grown stronger through prayer and love, St. Ignatius goes a step further.

position of mind which is the object of the meditation. Then, and then only, may we proceed to the contemplations of the second week.

4. St. Ignatius tells us here that henceforth it will be very useful to read "something occasionally," from the gospels, the Following of Christ and the lives of the Saints. "Something" and "occasionally" are the words he uses,—not too much, lest it give rise to distractions. To read a little is beneficial, it gives variety, enkindles our fervor, suggests practical applications and illustrates the life of Jesus by the lives of the Saints. They are the true and enthusiastic followers of our Saviour and the heroes of his army; and when we read their lives, there arises naturally the thought of the obligation which such a companionship in arms imposes upon us. We all know the effect this reading had upon St. Ignatius himself.

5. The following contemplations on the mysteries of our Saviour are but illustrations, developments and applications of the three points of this preparatory meditation. Now one point, now another is given greater prominence, but the three can always be kept in view, since they really form the groundwork of all the mysteries. In each mystery our Lord adds a new stone toward the building up of his kingdom. Everywhere our Saviour, by the example of an heroic struggle against the passions, forces his disciple to consider what resolution he should take; everywhere he reveals to us the majesty of his person and character, at one time showing the superiority of his intellect, at another, the greatness and loving kindness of his heart. To obtain this sketch of the character of Jesus in outline and in detail is the scope of all our meditations throughout the year. And since in this meditation our attention is chiefly directed to Christ's exalted character, is it not evident that St. Ignatius would signify to us that in meditating on the gospel mysteries, our chief aim should be to study the doctrine of Jesus, his virtues and his miracles, not otherwise than in close connection with the magnetism of his person? Were we to do this, how interesting, vivid, attractive and practical would not our meditations become! May not the dryness and barrenness of so many meditation-books be owing to a neglect of this suggestion?

6. As this meditation is the foundation of the following weeks and epitomizes the motives of our love for our divine Saviour, it must be given always and, if possible, without change of form. This, however, will not hinder us, in giving the Exercises to others, from taking into consideration their state of life and their age, nor from altering the meditation so as to bring it within each one's grasp, by holding up to priests, for instance, our Saviour as the model of priests; to men, as the model of men; to children, as the model of children, etc.

## MEDITATION ON THE INCARNATION

### METHOD OF CONTEMPLATION

1. With this contemplation the second week properly begins.

2. This exercise is presented under the form of a contemplation, that is, of a meditation on material, sensible things, on places, persons, events and words. The intellect obtains a footing here by means of the senses and of external objects, and finds in these material to work upon.—To meditate in this way is easier than to meditate on abstract truths. We call it contemplation, because we have, as it were, but to open our eyes, to see things as they appear and let them pass in review before us. Hence it follows that in this method of meditating the memory and the imagination are brought into play much oftener than in the meditations on the abstract truths of faith.

A peculiar feature of this method of meditating is that it begins with an additional prelude, to aid the memory. In this prelude we briefly recall the history of the event, and in the second prelude we picture in imagination the scene of the mystery. The third prelude is always a prayer to know, love and imitate our Saviour. In the words of St. Ignatius we are to pray for an *intima cognitio*, that is, for a knowledge of the interior of our Lord, of his heart, of his spirit, of his thoughts, principles and tendencies; as the Apostle says: *Sentite in vobis, quod et in Christo Jesu* (Philip. ii. 5); or we may take *intima* in the sense of vivid, thorough, coming from the heart and going to the heart.

In this contemplation and the following one, St. Ignatius gives us a method for the distribution of the points. We are to direct our attention in each point to the persons, their words and their actions,—a very simple, and often the best way to consider the mysteries. However, it is not necessary to follow this division invariably; we may take up the various events or scenes of the mystery, and in each of these dwell upon persons, words and actions. This is what St. Ignatius himself does later on, when he divides the mysteries into points (Cfr. *Mysteria vitæ Xti Dni Nostri*.—Dir. c. 19, §§ 4, 5, 6).—Lastly, it will not be amiss, if from time to time we reflect on the nature of the mystery and look into its end and its means, its causes and effects, etc. This can be done with advantage especially when the mystery evidently tends to some great result, which may be called the end and intention of our Saviour in the mystery. Unless we aim at this special object, we are apt to linger upon details, good and useful in themselves, but not including the substance and principal fruit of the mystery. But when the principal fruit has been gathered and secured in the way just described, we may in the repetitions take up what remains and turn it to profit.

In accordance with the directions expressly given by St. Ignatius, we should in each division of the points, by making the application to ourselves, reap some practical spiritual fruit from what we have been meditating upon: *Deinde reflectere . . . reflectendo in meipsum, ut fructum spirituales capiam*. For the very object of meditating is to model our lives on the pattern given in the mystery, and by so doing to give glory to God and our Saviour. This is one of the reasons why our Saviour has given us the mystery.—The fruit to be gathered from a mystery may be twofold, general as well as particular. The particular fruit is the resolution to practise this or that virtue, to shun this or that fault, according to the nature of the mystery and the needs of our own souls.—The general fruit is to take a deep interest in our Lord, to love him and to find in him all our happiness, to feel that to be near him, to gaze upon him and to converse with him is the soul's true happiness. Of course it would never do always to rest satisfied with this general fruit; we

have our individual and pressing needs to satisfy. However, we should not make little of the general fruit, because, after all, it is this general fruit, that withdraws us from the world and leads us to our Saviour, that near him we may build our tabernacles in joy. On special occasions, such as feast days, the general fruit is sufficient and very appropriate. There are days enough remaining in the year on which it is proper and even necessary to take earnest and particular resolutions.

The suggestion which St. Ignatius makes for the colloquy, that we should consider what we are going to say to the three Divine Persons, to the Mother of God and to the Word just made flesh, has already been mentioned in the instruction on the colloquy (page 53).—Here we have only to remark that it is evident from the words *recens incarnatum*, “just made man,” St. Ignatius would have us view or contemplate the mysteries as though they were actually taking place before our eyes, that in this way they may make a vivid impression upon the understanding, the will and the heart.

3. In the points, as St. Ignatius sketches them for this meditation, see how vividly, forcibly and graphically he paints the misery, degradation, unhappiness and woe which man has brought upon himself. How truly a drifting of the nations into hell; the whole human race a *massa damnatorum*! This is the condition of the creature without God, and a clear answer to the question what mankind can do without Christ. From this dark and gloomy back-ground stand out in heavenly beauty the kindness, condescension and eternal mercy of the Blessed Trinity, the touching love of the Son offering himself to be our Redeemer, and the lovely scene at Nazareth. In what a splendid light the person of our Saviour here comes before us; on the one hand personally united to the Second Person of the Godhead, on the other assuming real but fallen human nature, into the very depth of whose misery he out of personal love descends of his own free will! In truth, he makes here his election for life, according to the words of the Apostle: *Ingrediens in mundum dixit, hostiam et oblationem noluiti . . . tunc dixi: Ecce venio* (Hebr. x. 5); . . . *Exinanivit semetipsum formam servi accipiens* (Philip. ii. 7); . . . *Proposito sibi gaudio sustinuit crucem, confusione contempta* (Hebr. xii. 2).—In this great work the Angels

and, above all, our Blessed Lady are instruments and cooperators. In contemplating our Blessed Lady St. Ignatius would have us consider how she humbles herself, and how she gives thanks to the Divine Majesty.

#### CONTEMPLATION ON THE NATIVITY

1. In developing the preludes and points of this contemplation, St. Ignatius shows us clearly and forcibly how we can make use of the senses, the memory and the imagination, for the purpose of drawing matter for the understanding from the outward circumstances of the mystery, such as time, place and persons, and of thereby enabling the understanding to act effectively upon the will. For this reason he mentions several particulars, the companions of our Lady, the roads, the grotto of the Nativity etc., even circumstances which, though simply probable, *ut pie meditari licet*, serve to add completeness to the mystery and to awaken our interest in it, by representing it as happening in our very presence. It seems as if our Blessed Father could not say enough to make us take a heartfelt interest in the mystery, as is shown by the expressions he uses in the second point: *Attendere, advertere et contemplari* . . . Nay more, he shows us how we may take an active part, as it were, in the mystery and be eye-witnesses of it, when he says: *Faciendo me pauperulum et servulum indignum, spectando illos et serviendo illis in suis necessitatibus, ac si præsens adessem, cum omni possibili obsequio ac reverentia*. Thus the contemplation becomes almost an application of the senses.

2. What he says, especially of our Lord, in the third point, is not only very significant, but also touching and effective. He tells us to consider how our Lord is born in the most abject poverty: *in summa paupertate et post tot labores, post famem, post sitim, post æstum et frigus, post injurias et contumelias, ut moriatur in cruce et omnia hæc propter me*. This gives us a view of our Saviour from the cradle in the stable to the cross on Calvary; it is the programme of his life, wonderfully harmonious from beginning to end.

By these words does not St. Ignatius wish to call our attention to the leading idea of the contemplation? The birth



of our Saviour is his visible entrance into human society ; his first appearance,—an important moment in the life of one, whose every act is so full of meaning, and was so clearly foreseen in accordance with deliberate and far-reaching plans and purposes. And what is the striking feature of his first appearance ? Extreme poverty joined to the deepest humility, obscurity and abandonment. *Et hoc vobis signum : Invenietis infantem pannis involutum, positum in præsepio* (Luke, ii. 12). *Et sui eum non receperunt* (John, i. 11). In Mary and Joseph appears a shining example of the same virtue, as well as an example of those forms of poverty, which the Infant cannot as yet practise, such as submission, the hardships of the journey, slights and spurns, solicitude about food and shelter, etc. Thus all things tend to give unity to the picture of the first appearance of Jesus, wholly in keeping with his manifesto in the meditation on the Kingdom of Christ.

3. The third contemplation is a repetition of the two preceding ones.

#### THE APPLICATION OF THE SENSES

On the evening of the first day, St. Ignatius presents us with something new, to wit, the "Application of the Senses."

1. In what does this exercise consist ? It consists in going through the mysteries by means of the senses, that is, in viewing the mysteries as far as, by means of the imagination, they come under the senses, and may be apprehended by them and presented to the mind. To contemplate the mysteries after this manner, we should let the entire event as related in Scripture, even down to its smallest details, *videre in particulari circumstantias*, be brought under our sight, hearing, taste and touch ; we should let it act upon the senses, and strive from all this to derive some suitable profit for our soul. The exercise, therefore, consists in beholding in detail the places, the persons, their outward appearance and their actions ; in hearing what they say, or may be supposed to say ; in tasting in our hearts the fragrance, as it were, and sweetness of their virtues ; in feeling in spirit how cold, for example, and hard and damp was the ground of the grotto where they stood or knelt ; in kissing in spirit the same

ground, though not the persons, as humility and reverence forbid it (Cfr. Punct. 1<sup>um</sup> contempl. 2<sup>ae</sup>, *cum omni possibili obsequio et reverentia*),<sup>(1)</sup> and in doing all this for the spiritual profit of our soul.—Here we have a new method of mental prayer—(Direct. c. 20).

2. And what are the motives for practising this method of meditating? First of all, the method is generally an easy one. For what can be easier and simpler than looking and listening; in short, than letting the senses act? Now herein lies the peculiar feature of this method, for the senses do the main work, while the understanding follows leisurely, so to speak, adding its own share. Hence, in this place St. Ignatius merely says, *videre, audire, etc.*, and not, as he did when speaking of the other methods, *attendere, advertere, contemplari, spectare, considerare, etc.* And thus he suggests what may possibly have occurred to ourselves in some of the foregoing contemplations, the thought, namely, of the advantage enjoyed by Mary, Joseph and the shepherds, who had but to gaze upon our Saviour to experience the effects of the most fruitful contemplation. We shall enjoy a like advantage; for the application of the senses is easy as well as profitable. Accordingly, for this exercise St. Ignatius assigns the evening, at which time the mind is often tired and in need of some relaxation. This manner of contemplating may be compared to a pleasant walk in spirit through the scenes of the mysteries already considered, or to a sort of living picture, or even to a reproduction of the mystery, in which we ourselves act and are acted upon, give and receive, thus living the entire scene over again. But as every one has not the same liveliness of imagination for picturing to himself the details of the mystery, it is advisable to call to mind incidents and occasions familiar to us and not unlike those of the mystery, and to consider the scenes, the words, the thoughts and the feelings, which usually find place under such circumstances. Then we apply this to the persons and events of the mystery, seeing whether our Lord thought, spoke or acted in this manner. Even the very comparison will often disclose the fruit we should gather, without which this exer-

<sup>(1)</sup> Cfr. R. P. Roothaan, nota 31. See also his work: *Annotationes et Instructiones spir.* (Hagæ Comitum, 1891), where (p. 67) he says: "Odoratus, gustus, tactus sanctis animabus reserventur — ; his ego indignus!"

cise would be nothing more than a sort of spiritual pastime. This fruit may be likened to a fragrant little nosegay or a bunch of strawberries which we bring home from our walk. The exercise ought to be easy, and it will be comparatively easy, if, as recommended, we recall similar scenes of daily occurrence, and apply what is usual in these to the contemplation of the mystery before us. For many it is extremely difficult to form and retain a vivid picture of persons, places and actions. To do this a strong imagination is required. Such a picture, however, is not absolutely necessary; we need only turn to everyday life and view the mysteries in the light which this will throw upon them. Let us not be afraid of being too simple. If at times we find that our prayer has been rather simple and almost too easy, we may rest assured that it was prayer of the right sort.

The second motive for practising this method of prayer is its great utility, no less for the understanding than for the will and the imagination.—For no sooner have the senses begun to play, as it were, with the subject, than the understanding, which, we said, is often fatigued in the evening, will again be roused to action. Just as sometimes happens at the fireside; let some one, when everybody is drowsy, begin to tell an interesting story, and see how soon all are wide awake again. So it is here. Nay, by the application of the senses we often enter more deeply and thoroughly into the mystery than by a meditation proper. The simple question, for instance, why our Lord did this, why in this way and not in another, places us at once within the inner workshop of the mystery, in his Divine Heart. For the acts of the senses are wont to influence the understanding.—The will also derives fruit from the love and the joy, which, as a rule, are easily excited through the senses and the imagination. Whenever a sermon moves us to tears, we may rest assured that the preacher has drawn a graphic picture, which made a vivid impression on our imagination. What an increase of love should we not have felt, in a single quarter of an hour, at the crib of Bethlehem? *In amore oculi sunt duces.* The will, moreover, gains in humility and childlike simplicity, both of which are wonderfully promoted by this method of prayer. Proud spirits disdain it; for them it is too child-

ish and silly. A greater liking for this prayer may, on this account, be looked upon as a sign of real progress.—Lastly, the imagination is greatly aided by this exercise. For when one has just left the world, the imagination, far from being devout and holy, is oftentimes giddy and worldly and given to the strangest tricks. It, too, must little by little withdraw into the cloister, and learn to be devout and pure, holy and godly. All this will be brought about by the application of the senses. For after a while pictures of our Saviour and of his Blessed Mother will with heavenly charm and beauty be stamped upon the imagination, thereby rendering it an instrument and a direct help in making prayer more easy and heartfelt.—Such are the advantages hidden in the little word *prodest*, with which St. Ignatius introduces this exercise.

Thirdly, this method of prayer has been in great favor and use with the Saints, and with pious and learned men. Thus we read in the Introduction to the meditations on the Life of Christ, attributed to St. Bonaventure: “If you are desirous of reaping fruit from your meditation, you must picture to yourself the actions and words of our Lord as vividly as if you were actually present. Follow the natural promptings of your heart.” The same is found in the Introduction to the Life of Christ by the Venerable Ludolph of Saxony (Cfr. nn. 10, 11, 12, 13). The practice of representing scriptural events in the costumes, scenery and manners of a later day, as we often see in mediæval paintings, rests no doubt upon the same principle. “I have often given a description of the scene of the mystery,” says Ludolph in the place cited, “because it is well to know, not merely the mystery, but the place also in which it happened.” And he adds: “The chief efficacy, devotion and sweetness of these meditations come to us from contemplating our Saviour and observing him closely as he stands, walks, speaks, sleeps, wakes.” St. Bonaventure makes the same remark in the 18th meditation. And again in the 12th meditation St. Bonaventure tells us: “Disdain not these lowly things: for they excite our devotion, increase our love, inflame our zeal, and move us to compassion. All this confers a new purity and simplicity on our manners, it fosters in us a strong desire of humility and poverty, it keeps up a certain familiarity with our Lord, and

creates in us a kind of conformity with him. We may not always be able to rise from our lowly state to sublime thoughts, but let us bear in mind that what is folly and weakness with this world is wisdom and strength with God. . . . This way of meditating annihilates pride, weakens concupiscence, and puts to shame our vain curiosity."

Therefore, we have every reason for becoming familiar with this kind of meditation. It is far from our purpose, however, to maintain that the application of the senses is more excellent in itself than contemplation, or to recommend its use as an independent and customary exercise. For St. Ignatius himself makes use of it only in the evening, when several mysteries are to be repeated. Probably the best way of using it is to join it to contemplation, or to meditation. If it be thus employed, the application of the senses will be productive of even more good, and to a greater or less degree will be applicable to all the subjects of the gospel narrative. And certain it is, the more that we are guided by the principles underlying the application of the senses, the more that we accustom ourselves to represent vividly to our minds our Lord and his actions down to the minutest particulars, and to find in such contemplation repose and contentment, the more that we are induced to meditate by the loving desire to know better the heavenly beauty and exalted character of our Lord's Person and mysteries,—so much the easier and better and more perfect will our prayer be.

#### NOTES ON THE SECOND WEEK

1. In the five Notes to the second week, St. Ignatius lays down regulations in reference to the number and order of the hours of meditation; he insists anew on some of the Additions, and changes others as necessity requires, adding, however, that all the Additions should be observed "with great care." (Nota 4<sup>a</sup> ad Addit. 10<sup>am</sup>.)

2. In the first and fourth Notes, corresponding to the eleventh Annotation and the sixth Addition, we are told that on rising and during the day, we should entertain thoughts in keeping with the character of that day's meditations. We

are to bring to memory frequently the mysteries of our Lord from his Incarnation down to the mystery we are engaged in contemplating, desiring to know our Saviour more intimately in order the better to serve and follow him. By this means we shall often receive light, strength and holy impulses at the very time we most need them.

3. Then as to penances (Addit. 7, 10), St. Ignatius desires us to be guided by the character of the mystery of the day, and by the help they may afford us.

4. He recommends a change now and then, even in the time and number of the hours given to meditation, whenever such a change may be beneficial to the exercitant or may be called for by his state of health (Nota 3<sup>a</sup> and not. ad 2<sup>m</sup> diem).

5. The fifth Note is an explanation of the third Addition, given on page 57.

#### THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

St. Ignatius would have us consider the Flight into Egypt as if it were an exile, for he says : *fugam ut in exilium*, or : *fuga ejusdem veluti exulantis in Ægyptum*. Accordingly, we are not to look upon this mystery as a model of obedience chiefly ; for obedience, strictly speaking, supposes a visible superior and is the virtue of our Saviour's hidden life ; but we are to look upon it rather as a model of resignation to God's will, when made manifest in the untoward events of our lives. This interpretation is supported by the wording of the points, as given by St. Ignatius farther on in the mysteries of the Life of Christ. In the first point this trial is represented as coming from the violent passion of King Herod, and from the will of God who sends an angel ; in the other points is represented the conduct of the Holy Family in their flight and during their sojourn in Egypt, till the angel returns and the trial comes to an end.—This is our Lord's first encounter with the civil power.

## THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

1. This noteworthy meditation, as St. Ignatius observes in the *præambulum ad considerandos status*, marks a turning-point in the second week. On this account it is a meditation of great importance, the scope of which should first of all be clearly understood. We have a key to this in the preamble, in which St. Ignatius tells us that our Lord, after giving us in his sojourn at Nazareth, by his obedience, humility and love of labor, the pattern of the ordinary life of a Christian, which consists simply in the observance of the Commandments, holds up to us in the present mystery the pattern of evangelical perfection, when he leaves his earthly parents to be entirely free to apply himself to the service of his Heavenly Father. The example of evangelical perfection therefore is the aim of this meditation. But wherein does evangelical perfection consist? It consists, properly speaking, in the observance of the evangelical counsels, particularly when we embrace them with the view of consecrating all our liberty and all our strength to the apostolic life (Mark, x. 29). And this is evangelical perfection in the highest sense of the word. As we shall see, our Lord is here the model of this perfection also.—However, this cannot be the first and general meaning of the words of St. Ignatius; because in the first place among those to whom the Exercises are given, there are many whose state of life is not open to change; and secondly, because St. Ignatius by the Spiritual Exercises seeks not to lead men to the religious or the priestly state exclusively, but rather to lead them to the attainment of perfection in any state whatsoever—*ut perveniamus ad perfectionem in quocunque statu*. And so, in this place, evangelical perfection, without however excluding its highest degree, must be taken in a wider sense, that is to say, not only for every call of God to something higher—whether to the state of perfection itself, or to perfection in a state of life already embraced—but also for readiness of will to obey this call of God to something higher. It is in this wider sense that the call to perfection is to be understood in this meditation. It is true then that it marks a turning-point in the Exercises, the de-

termination, namely, to seek something higher, or to aim at perfection.

2. According to this view, three principal points present themselves for our consideration. The first is the nature of God's call to our Saviour. What did his Heavenly Father require of him? Of course he was called upon first of all like all other Israelites who had reached the age of twelve, to go to Jerusalem in fulfilment of his religious obligations; then particularly, on this occasion, to leave his parents, not merely in order to tarry in the Temple for prayer and converse with God, but to make his public appearance in the Temple; otherwise our Lord might have withdrawn simply into the wilderness, or to some cave near Jerusalem. But it is manifest that he had to appear openly in the Temple and attract attention. And here the thought naturally occurs, that, in the designs of God, this appearance was meant to be a new revelation of the coming of our Saviour; and in point of fact, it is the first personal revelation, inasmuch as all previous revelations were made through others, through the Angels, through Elizabeth, the Shepherds, the Magi, through Simeon and Anna. Here, therefore, we have a link connecting the revelations following his birth with his public appearance on the bank of the Jordan. This much at least is certain, that the mystery contains an apostolic element, not to be overlooked or rejected, to wit, the witness Christ bears to his mission by his public appearance, by his manifestation of marvellous wisdom and by the mysterious words: "Must I not be about those things which are my Father's?"—This call of his Heavenly Father comes to our Lord under circumstances most unlooked for, extraordinary and painful, imposing upon him and his parents the greatest sacrifice, that of complete detachment from all things. Doubtless God meant to bring home to Mary and Joseph the fact that our Saviour was subject to higher obedience, thereby preparing them for his future calling and for a complete separation from him. We, on our part, are to learn the lesson that God has greater rights over us than our parents, nay, that his is every right, and that he can assert them wherever, whenever, and in what manner soever he will.—All these lessons are contained in the mystery and should not be overlooked. To sum up, we



find herein every kind of divine call to entire renunciation and detachment; the call to greater perfection in a state of life already chosen, as well as the call to perfection, either in the contemplative life, or in the apostolic life, and all this no matter what the circumstances by which we are surrounded.

In the second point we consider the qualities of our Lord's obedience: its exactness, earnestness and perfection; how he obeyed under the most trying circumstances, in poverty, in entire detachment and to the great grief of his parents. During these three days he leads exactly the same life he led later on during his public ministry, bearing glorious witness to his own Person, and living in the greatest poverty and detachment from flesh and blood. Thus this mystery becomes in reality a prelude to his future public ministry considered from every point of view: object, manner, and means.

Lastly in the third point we consider what God might demand of us under certain circumstances, and why we in turn should obey him faithfully and generously. Of course perfect detachment is what we must chiefly strive to acquire, as it is from the want of this virtue, and not from the choice of vocation, that our difficulties usually arise. Of this detachment our Lord gives us here a striking example. How prompt his obedience to God and to God's call!—This mystery may truly be called the mystery of vocation. No matter how God's call may come to men, our Lord's example will sweep away all objections and difficulties; for whether they have their origin in the nature of the call itself, or in other circumstances, such as the youth of the person called, attachment to home, the ties of flesh and blood, the displeasure or inconsolable grief of one's parents, etc., they have all been clearly foreseen. For ourselves this mystery, thus understood, possesses a peculiar interest, because we behold therein a perfect type of our own vocation with its aim, conditions and means.

From Mary and Joseph parents may learn what their duty is. They have a right to inquire into the vocation of their children: *Fili, quid fecisti nobis sic?*, but theirs is also the duty to submit to the manifest call of Almighty God in resignation, patience and confidence, and by this means to cooper-

ate in the noble work which God intends to accomplish through the vocation of their children. To fulfil this duty they need the grace of God, which they can obtain by prayer; for our Lord and his Mother have in this mystery merited that grace for all those who are in trouble about vocation.

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE VARIOUS STATES OF LIFE

1. The most momentous matter in the whole Exercises is undoubtedly the election, whether of a state of life, or of reformation in a state already embraced. This election is simply the outcome, the fruit of the Exercises, hence also their aim, as is evident from the definition given in the 1st Annotation, where we are told that they are Exercises by which we are to seek the will of God and to find it in the regulation and ordering of our lives, for the salvation of our soul. Since then the matter is so all-important, we must strain every nerve to secure a good election. For the same reason St. Ignatius had to consider how he might help us in this affair.

2. And, in fact, he begins to help us in this very mystery, since, as we have seen, by the example of our Lord in the Temple, an occasion is afforded and an invitation given the exercitant to examine whether and how far he too is called to perfection, and how he will order his life in accordance with his call. Now, in order to enable us to make a perfect election, St. Ignatius proposes three meditations, the object of which is to work us, by a gradual preparation, into a suitable frame of mind for this step—*et ideo pro inductione hujus rei*, etc. The first of these meditations is on Two Standards, the second, on Three Classes of Men, and the third, on the Three Degrees of Humility. That this last is to be included in the list can be gathered from the third Note after the twelfth day, wherein St. Ignatius expressly declares, "Before anyone enters upon the Election, that he may be well disposed toward the true teaching of Christ our Lord, it will be very profitable to consider the following Three Degrees of Humility."—These meditations then form a trilogy, a complete and well finished whole, whose end it is to put man

in the proper mood and frame of mind for a perfect election ; just as in the first week a similar trilogy gradually brought about his justification. Behold here again the logical and psychological arrangement of the Exercises !

3. Here St. Ignatius points out also what we ourselves should do in order to acquire the requisite disposition. For he says : " Let us in the course of our meditations on the life of Christ begin to investigate and to ask, in what kind of life or state his Divine Majesty is pleased to have us serve him." Let us pray therefore and begin the search for ourselves. This is the good will and generosity referred to in the 5th Annotation. Both these dispositions are provided for in the three following meditations, in which St. Ignatius, by means of the three Colloquies, leads us on to prolonged prayer.—On the meaning of these meditations, consult the 29th chapter of the Directory.

## TWO STANDARDS

### 1. *The meaning and scope of the meditation*

As we have said, this meditation is the first step to be taken, the first condition to be fulfilled in a good election. In the Preamble to the Consideration of the Various States of Life, St. Ignatius calls the Two Standards an introduction to the Election. And what is the aim of this introductory exercise? St. Ignatius tells us very briefly and aptly that it is *videre intentionem Xti Domini et inimici naturæ humanæ*, that is, to know the purpose, the thoughts, the designs, the principles, the spirit of our Lord. For he that is to make a good election, must above all be acquainted with the true principles of Christian perfection, that he may build upon them, and with the principles of the world, that he may reject them. But these true principles are nowhere so clearly defined as in the principles, the motives, and the spirit of our Lord ; just as the spirit of the world is nowhere so clearly defined as in the principles of the evil one.<sup>(1)</sup>—And this is the meaning of the word *intentio*. R. F. Roothaan takes it in

<sup>(1)</sup> " Incipit (S. Ignatius) tractare de mediis, quibus homo paullatim disponi debet ad . . . electionem faciendam illius status, in quo melius et saluti suæ et Deo famuletur." Suarez de Relig. S. J. l. 5, c. 15, n. 18. "Ista tria (divitiæ, honores, superbia) maxime perturbare solent rectam electionem," n. 19.

the same sense ; for explaining the word *intentio* in note 45\* he says : *quæ media, quæ documenta sequi debeamus ; . . .* and again : *spiritum Christi, quem in hoc exercitio docemur, cognovisse et hausisse omnibus utilissimum est.* Cfr. R. P. Root-haan nota 46, 51. St. Ignatius himself subsequently calls this *intentio* the true life, the blessed doctrine of Christ. In fact, what the Saint here teaches is simply a sketch of the sermon on the Mount (Matth. v. 1 ; Luke vi. 17), which in turn is a summary of our Lord's moral teaching.

*Videre intentionem Christi*, therefore, cannot mean that we are to try to find out whether it be the design, the will of Christ to call us to the apostolic life ; as if this meditation were an invitation to such a life. This is not at all the object of the meditation. The Exercises are intended for all classes, even for those who have already made choice of a state of life ; and St. Ignatius tells us that these meditations are given to enable us to arrive at perfection in any state of life whatsoever, just as the sermon on the Mount was intended for all classes of men (Matth. iv. 25). On this account he does not expressly mention the evangelical counsels of poverty, obedience and chastity, but only some general points of Christian perfection, as poverty and humility. It is true, an occasion is here taken to awaken in us zeal for souls, and the desire to make known far and wide these principles of our Lord ; but this is by no means the immediate and proper fruit of the meditation. The only bearing the meditation has upon the vocation to the apostolic life is that it describes with brevity and accuracy the interior nature of the apostolate, "the apostolic spirit."

Much less can this *intentio Christi* mean, that our Saviour requires us to follow him and not the enemy ; in other words, the object of this meditation is not to aid us in deciding whether we are to follow Christ or Satan. A deliberation such as this would be an insult to our Saviour and a sin. This was settled in the first week and is therefore a point already gained. The proposals of the evil one, as laid before us in this exercise, are not by any means sinful : they are simply indifferent. The standard, here spoken of, is not the great flag of Christ's Kingdom. It is rather Christ's personal flag, which is borne by the favorite regiment of his

army, the King's own body-guard, whose privilege it is to carry his colors. And so the word *standard* is to be taken in a restricted sense, as the badge or the symbol of a definite spirit and of definite principles. Thus we say of one that he upholds the standard or banner of liberalism or of the revolution, when he upholds their principles.

In short, the aim of this meditation is, in the first place, to obtain a clear knowledge of our Saviour's principles, or of evangelical perfection, and on the other hand, a clear knowledge of the principles of Satan and of the world. Secondly, it aims at helping the will to take the resolution to reject the principles of Satan, and to be on one's guard against them, as well as to be guided by the principles of our Saviour at every step in the Election. Thus the application of the meditation is twofold; partly to the understanding, partly to the will. Wherefore St. Ignatius says expressly in the third prelude, that one should ask for knowledge of the snares of Satan, and for help to guard against them, for knowledge also of the true life and for grace to follow our Lord. The same is repeated in the colloquy (Cfr. R. P. Roothaan, nota 51). Accordingly, this is the twofold object we must strive to obtain in the meditation. And therefore, it would be well the first time we make the meditation, to aim at one of these objects, and the second time, to aim at the other, whereby we shall act upon both the understanding and the will. For this reason, also, St. Ignatius requires the meditation to be made four times on the same day.

2. To apply it to our understanding, we may arrange our points, so as to bring out distinctly, after the example of St. Ignatius, the opposition there is in the principles, in the words and the actions of the exponents of these contrary spirits; between our Lord on the one side, and Satan on the other. Moreover, in the repetitions we should try to understand how essential it is to discern between these two spirits, since we ourselves and the whole world besides are under their influence everywhere and at all times.—The application to the will may be secured by seeking, in like manner, from a consideration of the character, intentions and methods of the two leaders, such motives as may dispose the will to

avoid the principles of the one and adhere to those of the other.

But to return to the first object, it is plain that a closer contemplation of the persons and the conduct of the two leaders will show us, not merely the essence of their respective characters, the love of poverty, of humiliation, and of humility in our Lord, and the love of the contrary in Satan, but such contemplation will give us also a more comprehensive and finished picture of the spirit which animates each of them. Therein we shall see that the love of vain display and of material splendor belongs to the spirit of Satan and of the world, as well as whatever is restless, rude, or overbearing, whatever savors of disregard or contempt for our neighbor, whatever is dishonest or deceitful; while to the spirit of Christ belongs all that is simple and modest, peaceful and sincere (Cf. R. P. Roothaan, nota 56).

Almost every word said of both leaders contains an excellent motive to arouse the will. Observe what is said of their persons: *Summus et verus dux, Dominus noster, speciosus et amabilis, in loco humili — caput inimicorum, malum caput, figura horrenda et horribili . . . in cathedra ignis et fumi.*—Again, of their intentions: *Ad summam paupertatem, humilitatem, ad reliquas virtutes,*—to make us his apostles and friends: *Amicos et apostolos . . . vera vita, sacra doctrina — ad vanum honorem et magnam superbiam et ad reliqua omnia vitia.*—And of their manner of acting: *Eligit, mittit, commendat, ut velint adjuvare adducendo — spargit, tentat, injiciendo retia et catenas, fraudes . . .*—Before going further we should also observe, that there is little need of striving after humility, if we are careful to cultivate a love of poverty and of humiliation. For as red and blue unite to form violet, so a love of poverty and a love of humiliation readily blend to form humility. The love of humiliation is the perfection of humility.

In the meditation as well as in each repetition the triple colloquy is to be used to obtain the twofold grace of escaping the snares of the evil one, and of being received under the tricolored banner of our Saviour in the love of utter poverty and humiliation. The persons to whom we are to apply for these graces are happily chosen: the Mother of God, who

clung so steadily to our Saviour's colors through life and at the foot of the cross ; then, again, our Lord himself, whose inmost spirit is this very love of poverty and humiliation ; and, lastly, the Heavenly Father, by whom according to St. John (vi. 44, 45) all men are drawn to the Son, and without whom no man can come to the Son ; the same Heavenly Father who in the well known apparition associated St. Ignatius with our Blessed Saviour. And so our Order is called the Society of Jesus, *Compañia de Jesús*, the body-guard of our Saviour, because it should be animated with his spirit. For this great grace of close companionship with Jesus we should pray frequently and earnestly.

3. If from this place we glance at the foregoing exercises we shall easily perceive their connection and development. The *best means* are now evident. We see, moreover, the importance of *indifference* even in matters which are perfectly indifferent, that is, neither good nor bad in themselves, but which in the hands of our enemy are made use of to bring men to their ruin.—The struggle against the passions is here sketched in detail, the plans of the enemy exposed. The meditation on the Kingdom of Christ now unfolds itself in all its beauty, revealing first, the character of the King as well as the spirit of all his actions, and next his plan of campaign for conquering the world by the overthrow of covetousness and pride, as well as his plan for founding and extending his Kingdom in ourselves and others by the love of poverty and of humiliation. This is the true apostolic spirit. We know now what "the offers of greater worth and moment" are, which should come from those who would signalize themselves in our Saviour's service. There may be observed, also, in the colloquies of the two meditations, a vast increase in our sympathy for his cause ; in the former we offer to take upon ourselves humiliation, if such be our Lord's good pleasure ; whereas in the latter we beg for it *ut ego recipiar sub vexillum*, provided only we can endure humiliation without any offence to the Divine Majesty. For the rest, it cannot escape our notice that, here as elsewhere, the last word and the final decision are prompted by the truth of the Foundation : the service of God.

## THREE CLASSES OF MEN

1. This meditation has in view the attainment of the second step in the preparation for a perfect election. In the first meditation, on Two Standards, we formed a clear idea of Christian perfection, by which our election might be guided, and we resolved to make our election in accordance with this idea. If we desire our advance to be certain and solid, we must in the second place seek to ascertain whether this resolution of ours, upon which everything else depends, is firm and reliable. If not, then everything is uncertain. But how is this resolution to be tested? By having recourse to the means; that is by seeing whether our will is prepared to employ the best means in carrying out this resolution. For the strength of our will is to be measured by our readiness to employ the necessary means. The end of the present meditation, therefore, is to test the disposition of our will in regard to the means, and to try and dispose it to accept the very best means, as St. Ignatius says in the heading of this meditation: *ut amplectamur optimum*, not *velimus*, but "*amplectamur optimum*;" or as it is expressed in the two pre-udes: *quod gratius est divinæ Bonitati, quod magis sit ad laudem divinæ Majestatis et salutem animæ*. Compare likewise the "*notandum*" placed after the meditation, and Rev. F. Roothaan's remark in note 64: *Est meditationis hujus scopus, ut voluntatis repugnantia* (what is wanting, therefore, and defective in the will<sup>(1)</sup>) *vincatur et homo sibi caveat ab illusionem, qua forte solo quodam pio desiderio satis se fecisse existimet*. Cf. nota 67, last paragr. "Mire juvat."—(Direct. c. 29, § 3 et seqq.).

2. To attain this end, i. e. to test and to strengthen our will, St. Ignatius proposes to us three classes of men, all of them desirous of following the call to perfection, *ut in pace inveniant Deum*. However, they feel themselves hampered by a sum of money, which, though honestly acquired, gives rise to such an inordinate attachment, that they find it difficult to obey God's call—*non pure ac debite propter amorem*

<sup>(1)</sup> What is defective in the will is its opposition and reluctance to the use of the best means, by which attachments are overcome and obstacles removed.



*Dei.* The example is well chosen. For money is precisely one of the hindrances to the love of poverty, which is the first step in the way of perfection. Furthermore, the love of money and of property, or the fear of poverty, is the very thing which for the most part prevents men from embracing a life of perfection, as instanced in the rich young man in the Gospel (Matt. xix. 22). Lastly, this hindrance may be removed by good will, which is not the case if the parable of a sick person be chosen. For even with the best of wills, sickness is often beyond all cure. Let us then adhere faithfully to the text of St. Ignatius.—From the various dispositions of will manifested by these classes of men, we come to a knowledge of the state of our own will.

The prelude is admirably suited to dispose us for a great and generous resolution. We are to regard ourselves as *coram Deo et omnibus sanctis, etc.*—the Saints have in a particular manner distinguished themselves by their generosity . . . . *ut cognoscam, desiderem, eligam, quod magis sit ad gloriam Divinæ Majestatis et salutem animæ.*

The various classes are divided according to their disposition of will. The first class would gladly be rid of its attachment, were it to cost nothing; it will do nothing, use no means, and hence takes no resolution, entertains the mere wish.—The second class would also lay aside its attachment and is resolved to do something; but it is not ready to do the right thing, strike the decisive blow, and go direct to the end by the use of the best means. This class would be free from its attachment, but would not give up the cause of it, though to do so were by far the very best means. As St. Ignatius puts it: *Vult manere cum re, ita ut Deus veniat eo, quo ipse vult.* To this class belong all those, who are willing to use only means that do not reach far enough; who often adopt what is good in theory, but neglect the practical (*in affectu*); or who, if they are willing to use practical means, do so only by fits and starts.—The third class wishes to divest itself of the inordinate attachment at any price, to make use of any means even the hardest, were it the very surrender of the object itself (*in affectu*—Cf. R. P. Roothaan nota 67.) When considering these various dispositions of will, our understanding may subject our own will to a like exami-

nation and see how far it is well disposed.—But to lift up the will itself, to render it better and stronger, and raise it to the best or third class, motives either of fear or encouragement are found in each of the classes. Above all we should go back to the resolution taken in the first week, at the end of the Foundation,—of using the best means to the end. Several of the expressions St. Ignatius uses in the Three Classes, point to their close connection with the closing words of the Foundation, *quæ magis conducant ad finem*. Thus in the preludes, for instance, *ut desiderem, quod gratius est divinæ bonitati . . . ad eligendum id, quod magis sit ad gloriam divinæ Majestatis . . .* and in the third point, *quod melius videbitur ad servitium et laudem . . . desiderium, ut melius possit servire Deo*. It will become evident at once, whether we were in earnest then, or not. As to the means which each one is to use, this must be learned from the hindrances in each particular case. St. Ignatius here touches on one difficulty only and points out the best way to overcome it. To acquire humility, for instance, the best means is to love and desire humiliation.

The colloquy is the same as in the meditation on Two Standards.

3. The Note to this meditation is very important. It says that whenever we feel a repugnance for anything, and so are wanting in indifference, we should beg of Almighty God in the colloquy to choose us for this very thing, if it be for his greater glory; and further, that this special request will help us in conquering our inordinate affection. At least, having thus done what lies in our power, we may go on with confidence. Not unfrequently, the will of God is that for which we feel an aversion. We have here a practical application of the 5th and 16th Annotations.

### THREE DEGREES OF HUMILITY

1. St. Ignatius desires, as we said above in the third Note for the twelfth day, that, before we begin our election, we make frequent and careful consideration of the following Three Degrees of Humility. This consideration, therefore, is the third and last means to dispose our will for a perfect

election. But what is this meditation to effect? Let us review briefly what we have seen hitherto.

In the first meditation (Two Standards), we became acquainted with the idea or the means of Christian perfection and we resolved to make our election in accordance therewith. In the second meditation (Three Classes), we put our will to the test, to see whether it was ready to select the best means and to apply them; then we endeavored to dispose it for this step, in which, it is to be hoped, we have by the grace of God succeeded. And what is still wanting? Simply a disposition, which will enable us to act without difficulty and to accept anything whatsoever, not only with willingness and generosity, but if possible also with joy. If this point be secured, our souls will be fully prepared for the election. Now to put us in this disposition of soul is the aim of this meditation. And this is the meaning of the words of St. Ignatius, *Ut afficiatur ad veram doctrinam Christi*, i. e., that our affections be properly disposed towards the true teaching of Christ, that they take delight in it, and be set on fire thereby.<sup>(1)</sup> R. F. Roothaan likewise describes the purpose of the meditation in note 73: *Provocamur ad generosam Christi sequelam (doctrinam) in rebus arduis magno affectu amplectendam*. This contented and cheerful disposition is often very necessary, because the means are hard and painful.

2. And now what is the disposition that will make everything comparatively easy? It is none other than humility; that is, the disposition of entire submission to God in all things, a submission which springs from our knowledge of his greatness and of the littleness and insignificance of ourselves and of all our petty interests. Nothing has more power than this to dispose us for undertaking everything with readiness and joy. To the humble nothing is difficult. For as pride is the love of self, even unto the hatred of God, so humility is the love of God even unto the hatred of self.—But is humility really the virtue St. Ignatius speaks of in

<sup>(1)</sup> Notice the words of Annot. 16, "*debet affici*," i. e., affectum impellere; "*affektarse*," i. e., magno affectu æstimare et amare.—St. Ignatius uses the same expression in the third part of the second point in the meditation on the Kingdom of Christ: "*qui magis affici volunt*."—Annot. 3: *Voluntatis dum afficimur*.

this place? Of this there can be doubt. For St. Thomas says that humility essentially consists in a praiseworthy contempt and lowering of self (2. 2<sup>o</sup>, q. 161, art. 1, ad 2<sup>um</sup>), that it checks the tendency of soaring unduly beyond oneself (art. 1, ad 3<sup>um</sup>; art. 2), and that it does so first from the knowledge of one's own deficiencies, which renders self-abasement quite reasonable (art. 1, ad 1<sup>um</sup>), and secondly from the knowledge of the greatness of God (art. 2, ad 3<sup>um</sup>; art. 3); and that therefore humility consists in subjection to God, for whose sake one also subjects oneself to others (art. 1, ad 5<sup>um</sup>). Now all this is exactly what St. Ignatius says here. A sentiment of sincere and heart-felt humility is, accordingly, the disposition spoken of by St. Ignatius. With humility every thing will become easy. So true is this, that whosoever has properly made the meditations on sin in the first week, will, in virtue of this humble disposition which is always the effect of those meditations, consent to any sacrifice with readiness and joy. And all the more so, now that the example of Jesus and our love for him add strength to the other motives.

2. In this humility St. Ignatius distinguishes three degrees. The distinction, however, is not founded on the motive: the motive being, in all the degrees, humility itself; nor, strictly speaking, on the object, in as much as the object must be one: for the same degree, e. c. the second, embraces many objects; but on the measure, the degree of perfection with which we can despise temporal interests, subordinate them to God and follow Christ. This answers very well the intention of our Holy Father in proposing these considerations. For he wishes to lead us on to a perfect election. And since the election depends very much on the disposition of will to withdraw from earthly things and subject oneself to God, St. Ignatius endeavors to make this disposition of will perfect by proposing to it Three Degrees of Perfection, one better than the other.<sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Suarez de Relig. S. J. l. 9, c. 5, nn. 24, 25. Recte potuit distinguere S. Ignatius tres gradus humilitatis ex tribus modis contemnendi seipsum et suam voluntatem et temporalia commoda, scilicet, vel quantum necesse est ad servanda rigorosa præcepta, vel ad vitandas veniales culpas, vel quantum confert ad majorem Christi imitationem . . . Distinxit S. Ignatius gradus humilitatis quoad interiorem affectum, prout potest esse magis vel

a) The first degree consists in a willingness, out of contempt of self and reverence for God, rather to lose all earthly goods and endure all temporal sufferings, than to transgress any divine commandment binding under pain of grievous sin. The nature and perfection of this degree lie in this constant disposition of the will (*in habitu*); so that at once, and without deliberating, we reject (*in actu*) any temptation that may urge us to the contrary; for even to deliberate, at least consciously, would already be sinful. This is the lowest degree and, as St. Ignatius says, is absolutely necessary for salvation.

b) The second degree consists in the first place in a disposition of indifference which draws no distinction between temporal things, such as honor and dishonor, wealth and poverty, etc., if equal glory be given to God by the use or non-use of such created things. This degree, therefore, consists in simple indifference of the will, an indifference which again is grounded upon the greatness and majesty of God, upon contempt of self and of our own interests. For such indifference always contains true humility, that is, a tempering and lowering of the high esteem of self and of one's own interests. On the other hand, the want of this indifference, inducing us to set too high a value on temporal concerns and to give the preference to one thing over another, is real self-seeking and self-overrating.<sup>(1)</sup> St. Ignatius, moreover, makes this indifference of the second degree bear also upon the avoidance of venial sin; either because the avoidance of venial sin is essential to this degree, or because it is simply one of its effects; in as much as without this indifference, the avoidance of venial sin is impossible.

minus perfectus, quia eam distinctionem solum præmittebat ad electionem faciendam, quæ maxime pendet ab affectu magis vel minus subjecto Deo et abstracto a rebus temporalibus.

<sup>(1)</sup> There is, consequently, no essential distinction between the indifference of the second degree of humility and that of the Foundation. They differ only in this, that in the use of creatures the second degree of humility excludes every sin and imperfection by the proviso, "that equal service be rendered to God, our Lord"; whereas, in the indifference of the Foundation, such use may be more or less sinful and imperfect. Again, when we abstain from the use of creatures, we do so in the indifference of the Foundation, lest we should act against reason and conscience; in the indifference of the second degree, we abstain through the purest and noblest unselfishness.

c) The third degree does not stop at indifference towards poverty and wealth, honor and dishonor, etc., but, provided equal glory be rendered to God, actually makes choice of the portion our Lord chose for himself, to wit, poverty, dishonor and suffering. Thus the essence of this degree lies in a positive advance, in taking the offensive, in choosing what our Lord has chosen, that is, poverty etc., from a motive of humility, and still more, from a motive of reverence and love for him. For at the sight of our Saviour, who preferred contempt, poverty and suffering, we blush to see ourselves better off here below than he was.

In the second and third degree we have the following condition: "supposing equal glory to redound to the Divine Majesty, whether I choose this thing or that." For the second degree of humility, in so far as it bears on indifference, this condition is absolutely necessary, because it is only on this condition that we can be indifferent to creatures. In the third degree this condition is in most cases a mere hypothesis; for God's greater glory lies for the most part in choosing the very thing which our Lord embraced, especially if we choose this from the motive of the third degree. For if this motive direct our choice, we shall thereby glorify God exceedingly. Yet St. Ignatius was obliged to lay down this condition and to make every thing depend thereon, because, as we have seen in the Foundation, on the greater service and the greater glory of God, every thing must really be made to depend. Besides, it may actually happen in some cases, that the glory of God forbids us to expose ourselves to dishonor and poverty, at least beyond a certain degree. But even then, our own secret longing may and even ought to be for that which our Saviour chose, and it should spring from a love and reverence for him, or from some intrinsic reason.

In reviewing these three degrees we notice the following order: in the first degree, conscious of the greatness of God and of one's own insignificance, one is habitually ready and determined to sacrifice all, and to suffer all, rather than offend God mortally. In the second degree, one is indifferent toward creatures unless the glory of God demand otherwise. Let things be as they may, it is all one to him; he will not move a finger. In the third degree, apart from the greater

glory of God and all it may demand, one is no longer indifferent toward creatures, but wills and chooses those which Christ has chosen, and because Christ has chosen them. Hence arises a threefold subjection to God: the first is subjection to God's will, when it binds us under pain of grievous sin; the second, the fruit of indifference, is subjection to God's will, binding only under pain of venial sin or not binding at all; the third and last is subjection inspired by the example of Christ, which for the humble and loving heart is as binding as a strict command. The first and second degrees are purely negative; the third is eminently positive.

The motives that will urge the will forward in each degree, spring from the nature of the degree itself, and from the relation each degree bears to humility, that is, to the disposition which must of necessity flow from the knowledge of God's greatness, of our Saviour, and of our own nothingness. This is no less true of the third degree, in which the two motives of love and humility are altogether essential.

But, of all the motives, the first and foremost is the example of Christ; and, of course, reverence and love for him. This St. Ignatius says explicitly: *Ad imitandum magis Christum Dominum nostrum utque ei magis actu similis fiam, volo et eligo magis paupertatem*, etc. And again: *Quo magis eum imitetur ac melius ei serviat*. And the reason why we choose one thing and not another is precisely because Christ has done so before us. This motive unites us most closely to our Saviour and makes us as it were one with him. And just as the theological virtues are the most excellent of all, because their motive is taken from God and is identified with God, and because they unite us immediately to the person of God, so, in the devotion to the God-man, there is nothing more excellent, nothing that will unite us more closely to him, than this motive of reverence and love for his Sacred Person. We become one with him: *Vivo autem, jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus* (Gal. ii. 20).—Yet it is not love alone, but humility as well, that must be our motive. For as it is called the third degree of humility, it follows that humility cannot be excluded. Besides, without the solid foundation of humility and self-contempt, love cannot last long. For the love of God can exist only at the expense of

inordinate self-love, particularly through a love of humiliation. This love of humiliation is the hardest sacrifice in the spiritual life. As long as we hesitate to make this sacrifice, the absolute reign of God in our hearts and his perfect service will never be secured. A thousand times will our self-love run counter to the honor and service of God and place it in peril. The reason is obvious; hence the importance of humility in a life of virtue. Humility is the foundation of the edifice of virtue in as much as it removes pride, the main hindrance of the spiritual life, and makes man submissive and obedient to God (S. Thom. 2. 2. q. 161 art. 5 ad 2<sup>um</sup>). This seems to be the mind of St. Ignatius, when he says : *ut magis ei serviat*. It is only through the love of humiliation that we shall become in the hands of God a safe instrument, which he may use with freedom. To be covered with shame at seeing ourselves better off than our Saviour, is the briefest and most striking expression of the third degree of humility. But it is love and humility which give rise to this feeling, and go to make up whatever is touchingly noble and beautiful in the third degree. Every election made in our every-day life after the example of our Lord and out of love for him, may be regarded as the practice of this third degree of humility.

3. With the third degree of humility, the highest point of the Exercises is reached. All that follows tends merely to confirm us in the disposition called for by the third degree. The Exercises go no further. And, indeed, the third degree of humility is the highest point which sanctity can possibly attain. For therein lies that wondrous originality, that divine folly of Christianity, which gives a distinguishing mark to the greatest Saints. It is, in fact, the truest and sublimest following of Christ, the genuine love of our Saviour, and, be this said for ourselves, it is the essence, the spirit, the secret of the Society of Jesus, the fulfilment of the eleventh and twelfth rules.—The third degree of humility is really a compendium and an abstract of the Exercises. Viewed in this light, everything is clear and intelligible. For the third degree of humility is the true service and glory of God as well as our salvation; it is the noblest use of creatures; it is the employment of the best means. Herein lies the surest



way of avoiding sin, the most brilliant victory over our passions, the loftiest service that knight can render to Christ, his King, and certainly the fullest and best preparation for a perfect election.

4. These three degrees are to be weighed after the manner not of a strict meditation, but rather of a consideration. For this St. Ignatius has assigned no definite time. His intention is, that during the day we should often call the three degrees to mind and think them over for ourselves. We are not forbidden, however, to make a meditation upon them, with repetitions and colloquies.—In this case, we should use the colloquies of the meditation on the Three Classes, and beg most earnestly that we may be chosen to the third degree.

5. Such, then, are the three meditations, which are to prepare us gradually for a perfect election. In the first, on Two Standards, we become acquainted with the outline, the main features of Christian perfection, and we dispose our will to make our choice in accordance therewith. In the second, we strengthen our will to employ any means whatever, even the hardest. In the third, we put on a disposition, by which all that is most difficult will be readily and cheerfully embraced. And now nothing is lacking to a suitable preparation, and after the following meditation on our Lord's farewell to his Mother, we may at once proceed to the Election.

#### OUR LORD'S FAREWELL TO HIS BLESSED MOTHER

In accordance with the second Note for the twelfth day, St. Ignatius directs us to make the following contemplation before entering upon the work of election. And rightly so. For this meditation is in an especial manner a meditation on vocation, no less than the mystery of our Lord's stay in the Temple, which marks the beginning of loftier aspirations. The mystery in the Temple is properly only a figure and a prelude of the present mystery. For it is here that our Lord actually enters upon his public career, and enters upon it for good; and hence it is a mystery of such importance, that St. Ignatius directs us to devote to its consideration the entire day.

The Colloquies are to be made as indicated in the meditation of the Three Classes, and with particular attention to the Note which follows it.

#### RULES FOR THE ELECTION

1. Having prepared us for the election by the foregoing contemplation, St. Ignatius proceeds to its material or technical part, and gives us a practical instruction on the manner of making it.—This instruction comprises three points: first of all, the principle, or stand-point according to which every election must be begun as well as decided; secondly, the matter about which the election may be made; and thirdly, the means to be employed in finding out the will of God in regard to this matter.—On the importance of the choice of a state of life, read the 22d chapter of the Directory; and on the disposition presupposed in one who is to be admitted to the election, the 23d chapter.

2. The leading principle according to which every election must be begun and decided, is the truth of the Foundation, namely, that my first and only end and duty is the service of God and the salvation of my soul. Upon this, from first to last, must I fix my gaze and never look away from it. I am placed here to serve God and to save my soul; everything else is and can only be a means to that end.—Having first settled this weighty point, the great subject of inquiry now before me is to examine, by what means I may arrive at this end. And therefore it is plain, how wrong it would be first of all to determine to do this or become that, and then see how the end can be brought into line with this determination. This would be to turn things topsy-turvy; to make of the end a means, and of the means an end; to wish that God would come to me, and not that I should go to God. Nothing should induce me to allow any other consideration to influence my election save the service of God and the salvation of my soul.

3. The matter of the election is, in the first place, restricted to what is either purely indifferent in itself, or to what is in harmony with the teaching and practice of the Church. For whatever is bad or prohibited can certainly never be made the subject of an election.—Next, it is our

duty to examine how far the matter of the election is still open to deliberation. If the matter be one in regard to which we are no longer free, as, for instance, an immutable state of life, then, supposing the election to have been made unduly and through some inordinate affection, nothing remains but to repent of the fault and to make amends for it by leading a truly Christian life in that state of life. Such an election is surely not a vocation from Heaven; because a vocation from Heaven is always pure and without any disordered affection.—Lastly, if the matter fall under the heading of a mutable election, and our election was made rightly and without inordinate affection, there is no reason to change: let us strengthen ourselves in our choice and seek to become more perfect in it. But if in any way our election has not been rightly ordered, then let us make it duly, if we would bring forth fruit profitable to ourselves and pleasing to God (Dir. c. 25).

4. There are three ways of learning with certainty the will of God about anything that may be the subject-matter of an election.—The first way is, when God speaks so plainly to us that we cannot doubt about his will. But this way is extraordinary. Thus it was that the Apostles and a few of the Saints were chosen. We however have no right to hope for anything of this kind.—The second way of learning God's will is through frequent and continued consolation, through light from on high, sometimes even through desolation. Many a time we shall obtain much light by observing carefully the movements of our soul.—The third is the method of calm deliberation, when the soul, free from the agitations of diverse spirits, and in the quiet possession of its natural powers, sets before itself the end for which it was created and considers carefully whether the object in question can be a means to that end, and then makes its choice accordingly (Dir. cc. 26-34).—We ought not to overlook how St. Ignatius in these rules again and again reminds us, in regard to the matter of an election, of the deference we should show to the sentiment and practice of the Church.

Of the third and last method St. Ignatius proposes the following development. In the first place we ask ourselves what we are about to do, setting before our eyes the matter

of the election, and recalling at the same time the remarks made above concerning it.—Next, keeping in view the end for which we were created, we make ourselves so completely indifferent toward everything else—for everything else is only a means to this end—that nothing but the consideration of our end shall rule and decide our election. Like the needle of a balance, our natural inclination should be perfectly at rest.—Thirdly, we beg of God the grace that he move our will in the direction most pleasing to him.—Fourthly, we consider carefully how far the choice or rejection of the matter in question may advance us toward our end, which is the glory of God and the salvation of our soul.—Fifthly, we notice to which side reason inclines, without regarding our sensual appetites.—Sixthly, we betake ourselves to prayer with all possible fervor, offering up our choice to God, and beseeching him to approve it to his own greater glory.

There are other simple considerations and reflections, which may serve to test our election or to aid us in making a good one. They are as follows: First, is the inclination I feel solely from God, or not? Secondly, if a stranger, whose good I sincerely desired, were to ask me what he should do for the glory of God, what would I tell him? Thirdly, if I were on my death-bed, what should I desire to have done in this matter? What, on the day of Judgment? And what must I do at present in order on that day to be full of confidence and joy?—For the order of the election read the 30th chapter of the Directory.—How he who gives the Exercises is to act, is explained in the 24th chapter.—It is highly advisable to read the Directory from the 24th chapter to the 34th, as these chapters are probably the choicest portion of the Directory.

It is impossible to read the rules for the Election and to meditate upon them, without being filled with respect and admiration for the spirit of solid and enlightened holiness stamped upon them. They alone would prove beyond question the masterly skill of St. Ignatius in the spiritual life.

## SELF-REFORMATION

1. If one is already in a fixed state of life, and has neither the power nor the desire to change it, or is not obliged to do so, he should rest satisfied with a reformation to be brought about according to the instructions given above. Let him therefore place before his eyes his last end, as well as the particular end which he is bound to attain by virtue of his office and position; and let him consider what means he ought to choose and make use of in order to attain this end. For this purpose let him carefully examine the affairs of his soul and of his household, turning over in mind how he shall put them in order.—Besides the principle of the last end, St. Ignatius establishes still another, which is of the highest importance not only for a perfect election, but also for the perfection of the spiritual life. “We shall make progress in all spiritual matters,” says he, “in proportion as (*tantum quantum*) we depart from self-will, self-seeking and self-love.”—Again on a like occasion, in the Rules for the Distribution of Alms, he lays down another principle: “In what regards our own persons, the more we restrain ourselves, and the nearer we approach to Christ our Lord, our pattern and our model, the better and more secure will our plan of action be.”—The 9th and 10th chapters of the Directory treat of the different states of life, whose end must be taken into account at the election.—On reformation of life for Ours, Cfr. Dir. c. 10, § 7.

2. Whoever has seriously made the three foregoing meditations, which usher in the election, and has now to face the work of reformation, may well ask himself, whether it be really profitable to lay down any other programme than that which our Lord sketches in the third degree of humility and in the meditation on Two Standards, and whether, indeed, all men be not obliged to direct their efforts in the election towards poverty and humiliation. The reason why it is difficult, nay impossible, to avoid arriving at such a conclusion is, that this programme, after all, contains the spirit of Jesus as opposed to the spirit of the world, and the leading features of Christian perfection in every state of life. Besides, this programme is so comprehensive, that our diffi-

culties, no less than the means of overcoming them, cannot but be found therein. For, in truth, these difficulties can arise only from inordinate self-love; and self-love, owing to the union of spirit and matter in our nature, is prone to sensuality and vanity. And therefore, love of poverty and humiliation, prompted by love and reverence for our Lord, is a remedy that can be applied in every instance to our self-love, as well as to all our difficulties.—A life of poverty and humiliation means, in more general terms, an uncomfortable life, a life of mortification and self-denial. And this is the very life which all must lead, due allowance of course being made for each one's state of life. Wherefore, if our life is to resemble in any way our Saviour's life, which never was tainted in the least with worldliness, pride or sensuality, we must make the programme of the third degree our own. And if our progress in the spiritual life has not been what it might and should have been, the reason of it most likely is, that we have practised voluntary self-denial so little.—Lastly, the love of poverty and of humiliation,—in other words, the love of the cross,—is a point of so much consequence in the spiritual life, that no one with any aspirations after a higher life can afford to neglect it. It is, indeed, the *pons asinorum* of the spiritual life. Thus we see that we cannot choose anything better or more perfect.

Yet it may really happen that, in view of one's chief difficulty, the election may, and even ought to fall not upon poverty and humiliation, but upon something else. Thus, for example, we may stand in special need of meekness, fortitude, etc., and if so we should choose the means accordingly. But even in this case, it is not only proper, but even necessary, that we go through the work of the election in the spirit of the third degree of humility, that is, desiring to practise these virtues out of reverence and love for our Lord, in the way he practised them, and because he practised them. Then, indeed, will the effort we make to uproot this fault or to acquire that virtue become our cross and our mortification; and the meditation of the third degree of humility will supply an a fortiori argument, prompting us to say to ourselves, "See, then, what you really ought to be ready for, and with what earnestness you should struggle with your difficulty!"

3. The above rules for the election are very important. We ought to be familiar with them and to use them, not only when there is question of reforming our lives, but, as St. Ignatius remarks in the first point of the *primus modus electionis*, whenever in any important matter we are obliged to come to a decision. Thus it is, that spiritual men are wont to act. We have an instance in our first Fathers, when they elected St. Ignatius General of the Society.—It is not required that one should always go through the whole process, point by point, as given above; some of the serious thoughts will usually suffice.—Those also whom we are training in the spiritual life, should be taught how to use these rules, particularly when they are about to choose a state of life or to decide a matter of some importance (Cfr. Reg. Summ. 46). Only when we have observed these rules, may we hope that the result of our election will be pleasing to God.—From these rules, it is clear, now more than ever, how in the eyes of St. Ignatius our last end is the first and highest principle, or as he calls it, the *principium et fundamentum*.

A practical application of these rules to a particular object will be found in the Rules for the Distribution of Alms, which St. Ignatius gives us after the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits.

#### OTHER MEDITATIONS FOR THE SECOND WEEK

1. St. Ignatius desires that even while busy with the Election, we should continue to meditate on the mysteries of our Lord (Cfr. *Præambulum ad considerandos status*). Hence he gives us, for at least twelve days, various subjects of meditation, and, if we desire more, he refers us, in the first Note for the twelfth day, to the points on the Mysteries of the Life of our Lord, as developed farther on in the Book of the Exercises.

2. In the same Note, St. Ignatius tells us that each one, according to the devotion he feels and the progress he makes, is at liberty to increase or lessen the number of meditations in the second week. If he wishes to increase the number, he may add some of the Mysteries of the Life of Christ to be found at the end of the Book of the Exercises. These mys-

teries set down for the second week are only for the purpose of affording an introduction and method, *dare introductionem et modum*, whereby the exercitant himself may afterwards meditate better and more fully. But, although the mysteries St. Ignatius gives us serve only as an introduction, yet they are in themselves very excellent; for, on closer examination, we shall find he has made a choice selection from the mysteries of our Lord's public life, which St. Thomas divides into discourses on doctrine, examples of virtue, and miracles. Each of these divisions is illustrated, and that, too, by the most striking mysteries. Nevertheless one is free to choose other mysteries in addition to those in the book, or to make a different arrangement of the points given. For the primary intention of St. Ignatius in proposing these mysteries and in arranging them as he does, is to accustom us by following this pattern to meditate after a definite method and order. It should be observed, however, that the foregoing remark applies only to the mysteries and not to the meditations on the Election. The latter form a well-rounded and perfect whole, which should not be changed.

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## THE THIRD WEEK

1. The object of the third week is to confirm our election. And truly this week is invested with a wonderful power for bringing about such a result. It is here that our Lord verifies in his own person all that we have been meditating upon. His determination to win his glory by combat and suffering, how earnestly it appeals to us! How he holds up to our eyes the best means! How he preaches the third degree of humility and appeals to our love and generosity! How he unfolds to us the greatness and nobility of his kingly character, by going freely into his Passion, with a stout heart, full of love for each one of us! Truly his example grows into gigantic proportions. He suffers and he dies for us! The Saints made use of no other means than the contemplation of the Passion of Christ to attain to the third degree of humility. And our Lord himself said, that from the cross he would draw all things to himself (John, xii. 32).—(Dir. c. 35, § 1).

Furthermore, the Passion of our Saviour throws a flood of light upon the first week, and adds fresh strength to the resolutions we took during it. Above all, we see in an entirely new light the nature of sin, and of the passions—those instruments of sin. It is here that we see them putting forth their mightiest effort, in the murder of the God-man. That is their work! The whole history of the Passion is a great tragedy, in which the passions are the players. Nothing can give us a more awful idea of what sin is, than the thought that to atone for it a God must become the victim.—Though feelings of compassion, of love, and of gratitude are indeed very appropriate; hatred of sin, however, and the resolution to make war upon the passions are far more necessary. As our Lord said to the women that wept over him: “Weep for yourselves and for your children! For if in the green wood they do these things, in the dry what shall be done?” (Luc. xxiii. 28, 31.)—Lastly, what an exalted idea the third week gives us of the necessity and grandeur of our soul’s

salvation and of the service of God, seeing that they are worth the price of such labors!

2. Now the first means to attain the object of the third week, is a vivid conception of the Passion of Christ, with a deep sorrow and compassion for him. To this end, St. Ignatius lays down some directions in the first two contemplations. Thus in the third prelude we are to beg earnestly for this grace of compassion. We are told in the strongest terms: *Petere dolorem, afflictionem, confusionem, quod ob peccata mea, Dominus eat ad passionem . . . petere dolorem cum Christo doloribus pleno, confractiorem cum Christo confracto, lacrymas et pœnam internam de tanta pœna, quam Christus passus est pro me.* And in the contemplations themselves we are to strive, *magno nisu conando, laborando (excitando me) ad dolendum, tristandum et plangendum*, with great earnestness to excite ourselves to sorrow, compassion and grief.

In reflecting on the persons, the words and the actions throughout the Passion of Christ, St. Ignatius suggests three special thoughts to be pondered over. First, we are to consider what Christ our Lord suffers or wishes to suffer in his Sacred Humanity. "In his Humanity," says St. Ignatius, directing our attention to the fact that Christ had a nature like our own; impressing upon us, that what causes us pain, caused pain to him also, nay even more than to us, by reason of the greater delicacy and sensitiveness of his bodily constitution. This pain, which his sufferings caused him, we must keep before our eyes and try to realize as vividly as possible. We may, perhaps, have had occasion to endure something like it ourselves. If so, we should call it to mind, and thus bring home to us what took place in the Sacred Humanity of Christ.—"And what he desires to suffer," adds St. Ignatius. Yes, our Lord desires to suffer, and to suffer freely! Here, again, is a point well worth considering—this freedom in suffering, this will to suffer, leading him to fore-ordain everything, and to work into the programme of his Passion whatever human nature is capable of suffering.—In the second place, we are to consider how the Divinity, as it were, withdraws itself from the Humanity, leaving it without defence, and withholding the blissful effects of the beatific vision. Instead of shielding, defend-

ing, consoling, and comforting this innocent, most sacred, *sacratissima*, and divine Humanity, the Divinity only sustains and strengthens it, in order to enable it to suffer the more and the longer, *tam crudelissime*, and thus to satisfy to the full the desires of its bitter enemies and cruel tormentors. Our Saviour himself complained upon the cross of this utter abandonment: *Deus, Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?* (Matt. xxvii. 46)—We are to consider, thirdly, how he suffers all this for me, for my sake, in punishment and expiation of my sins, and out of the purest love. And what must I do in return?—To make the contemplation more effective, St. Ignatius desires that I should consider myself as personally concerned in these events, that I should view everything as if taking place under my eyes and as if done for me—as indeed it was done for me (Cfr. the third prelude of the first two contemplations).—These reflections, if properly and seriously made, cannot fail to impress us deeply.

3. As to the number of meditations and the hours for making them, the remarks for the second week still hold good.—The 2nd and 6th Additions undergo this modification, that at the moment of rising and frequently during the day we call to mind the Passion of Christ, entertaining such thoughts as may dispose us to grief, penance and contrition, as well as to compassion for the God-man amid his sufferings.—Here, again, St. Ignatius leaves us free to increase or lessen the number of contemplations on the mysteries (Cfr. especially § 3 in the Note for the seventh day). He recommends, in particular, that, after going through the history of the Passion once, we should spend one or two days more in reviewing the whole course of the Passion a second or even a third time; whereby we shall undoubtedly reap great fruit for our soul. This way of making one meditation on a whole series of subjects at once, may be regarded as a new method of contemplating the mysteries. The meditation may be made in the form of a repetition, or of an application of the senses, or by going through the different subjects with the object of producing a certain effect upon the will, or of gathering some definite fruit.—The Particular Examen during this week should again be made on the observance of the Additions.

## RULES FOR REGULATING ONE'S FOOD

1. Why did St. Ignatius refrain from giving these rules till now? It may have been that the contemplation on the Last Supper seemed to render this a natural place for them: at least, we may suppose so from an allusion made in the 5th rule.—Besides, for one who intends to give so many days to prayer in the Spiritual Exercises, a wise moderation in eating and drinking is necessary; partly, in order that he may derive great profit from the Exercises, and partly, that he may preserve his bodily strength unimpaired (Cfr. Reg. 4: *nec dispositione ad exercitia spiritualia*). Our manner of taking food has a decided influence on our spiritual life, and, in particular, on prayer.<sup>(1)</sup> On the other hand, the contemplation of Christ's Passion naturally urges us on to penance and fasting; whereas in the fourth week, as a rule, we are advised, not to fast, but only to observe temperance; and so, a prudent admonition here will not be out of place, and will serve to prevent harm.—Furthermore, these rules suppose a rather high degree of perfection, hardly to be expected of those who are engaged simply in the exercises of the first week. Human nature must be raised little by little, and, as we said before, nothing conduces more powerfully to this, than the example of our suffering Saviour.—Lastly, it is quite possible that St. Ignatius has withheld this instruction until now, in order that he might always have something new to offer the exercitant (Dir. c. 35, §§ 12, 13).

2. The rules, which can be given on this subject, may be reduced to three points: the quality of the food, the quantity, and the manner of taking it. Of all these St. Ignatius treats in this place.

3. He touches on the quality of the food in rules 1, 2, and 3. Less care, he says, is required in abstaining from bread, because, in this matter, neither our own appetite nor the evil spirit is apt to lead us into excess. Mortification should be practised more particularly in the use of delicacies, and most of all in the matter of drink, especially, what is spirituous. In general, we ought to accustom ourselves to simpler and

<sup>(1)</sup> "Ad usum mentalis orationis, ut continuari possit, hæc moderatio (in victu) imprimis necessaria est." Suarez, de Relig. S. J. 1. 9, c. 6, n. 6.

coarser food, using delicacies either not at all, or very sparingly.

From this rule we learn incidentally what it is that may lead us into disorder, namely, our own appetite as well as the evil spirit. The very two that were the causes of the first sin.—The remark concerning bread is meant in general, and so far is quite true. For, as a rule, neither the devil, nor our own appetite tempts us much to self-indulgence in the use of bread.—How necessary it is to guard against a liking for drink requires no proof. For the proof lies in the evil results, which in this matter are far more serious than any disorders arising from eating. The mere suspicion of a weakness in this direction would be degrading and ruinous to a religious and an apostle. The same may be said of a taste for delicacies. It is degrading to a high-minded man, even from a natural point of view. What fruit would our sermons produce, if anything of this nature could be cast up against us? The saying of the worldling would be true of us: "I despair when I hear you preach, but my hope revives when I see you at table." With regard to delicacies, therefore, the general rule is to use them not at all, or only occasionally: and in this case with the moderation we observe in taking dessert or physic.

4. The 4th and 8th rules have reference to regulating the quantity of our food. What is of first importance here is to find out and to reach the golden mean. And what is the *golden mean*? It is simply that measure of food which frees us from the discomforts arising from eating too much or too little, and enables us to attend to our affairs quietly and vigorously until the next meal, when we may take our food again with a good appetite. Nature itself seems to point this out. For Almighty God has so disposed the vegetative functions of our body, that in a normal state of health they may not disturb the spiritual. But how shall we come to a knowledge of the right mean? Either God by inspiration will make it known to us, or we ourselves must find it out by trial, that is by observing and making trial of the quantity of food with which the above mentioned object can be at-

tained. This does not mean, however, that we are to go on reducing the quantity of our food indefinitely. Nothing could be more hurtful to one's health, especially when one's system has not yet reached its full development. Let the trial be made a few times and if we seem to have discovered the right mean, then let us stop there without scruple. Generally speaking, a surplus of bodily strength is better than a lack of it.—Another way of finding this mean is to determine, at a time when we are harassed neither by hunger nor temptation, the amount of food we shall take in future. From this amount we must be careful not to depart, and if our enemy endeavor to induce us to do so, let us take even less than we had resolved upon (Cfr. Annot. 12 and 13). But, it may be asked, are we never allowed to exceed this amount? Certainly we are; and at times it may be even our duty to do so, in order that, should we ever stand in need of more food, we may be the better able to take what is proper. Let us shun all excess, bearing in mind, however, that temperance admits of degrees, just like the fair price of merchandise. It is not lawful to sell beyond the highest price; but between the highest and the lowest there is still left no slight freedom of action.

5. The method which should regulate our behavior while eating, is outlined by St. Ignatius in the 5th, 6th and 7th rules. These rules embrace our interior as well as exterior conduct. It is important, above all, that, while eating, the spirit should be engaged with something higher; indeed there is no reason why the spirit should join the body at all in this occupation. The body will succeed very well without it, and then this is quite beneath the dignity of the spirit, which should not take part in the menial work of its servants, but busy itself about nobler things. Lastly, if we fail to act in this manner, temptations will arise, and sensuality will pass from the body into the soul.—But how can we keep the spirit occupied? By thinking of our Lord, and how he sat at table, how he eat and drank, how he looked and spoke. From him let us acquire finer and nobler manners, *majorem methodum sumere*. It is very likely, indeed, that this is the reason why in the refectories of the old monasteries we so

often meet with paintings of the Last Supper (da Vinci). Surely our Lord was as edifying to behold in this occupation, as he was while engaged in prayer. The secret of this we must begin to learn now. We may also think of the lives of the Saints, or of any work in which we are profitably employed. —With regard to our outward behavior all we have to do, is to practise a quiet self-command and perfect politeness.

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## THE FOURTH WEEK

The end and object of this week is to set forth and to confirm the last point in the manifesto of the Contemplation on the Kingdom of Christ, namely, that after the battle victory ensues, that this victory is most certain and glorious, and that our share in it and in the reward will be in proportion to our share in the toil of the battle. In other words, this week, like the third, has no other aim than to confirm us in the election we have made, by holding up to our gaze the splendid reward, which is clearly and vividly exhibited in the person of Christ. In him we behold the glory that awaits us in the life to come, even for our bodies. It is to make this clear, that Christ walks with us in his glorified body for forty days and then ascends into heaven.—The second and the third weeks, as it were, point out the way; the fourth shows us the goal (Dir. c. 36, § 1). And thus, once more, a stream of light is let in upon the Foundation.

Joy and love, therefore, constitute the spirit of this week, or rather we should say, its fruit and proximate end.—And why should we rejoice? First of all, because of the triumph and joy of our Divine Saviour. Ah! how much he deserves that we should rejoice because of his joy and for his sake alone. Yet there is reason for rejoicing also on our own account; for we, too, are to share the joy and triumph of our Saviour. His joy is our joy, and the joy of all his faithful followers, whom he now rewards and consoles.—The motive here advanced is not, it is true, the loftiest; but it certainly is a practical one. For it may often happen in times of trial, that scarcely anything else will make an impression on us but the answer to the question: "How long is this to last? And whom will it benefit in the end?" Then we draw a breath of relief, go to work once more, and the very cross seems to become bearable.—Holy Writ does not forget this motive either; for it is the motive of Christian hope. Our Lord uses it frequently, when speaking words of consolation, particularly in his farewell discourse, *Veniam ad vos . . . modicum et videbitis me . . . in domo Patris mei mansiones*



*inultæ . . . gaudium vestrum nemo tollet a vobis* (John, xiv. 2, 18 ; xvi. 16, 22).—For our Lord himself the struggle lasted only thirty-three years ; his great Passion only a few hours. And after all, from this motive to perfect love there is but one step. Here, again, how great and glorious the character of our Lord as it stands unfolded before us ! What a master he is ! Good beyond measure, immortal himself and requiting his servants with never-ending reward ! This thought alone carries us onward to perfect love. Nor should we overlook the kind and affectionate nature of his intercourse with his own after the Resurrection, his constant and untiring exertion in our behalf, manifesting in his glorified life a marvellously energetic and divine activity, while he lays the last stone in the building of his Kingdom, the Church.

2. To this end, namely, of rejoicing with our Lord, the remarks and instructions of St. Ignatius are admirably adapted.—In the third prelude we are to ask for the grace of rejoicing *intensè*, with exceeding great joy. It is a grace. It greatly furthers our progress, it gives facility, courage and strength in the practice of virtue—all of which can come from God alone. Very often it happens that in the fourth week we are in anything but a joyful frame of mind. Weariness and disgust may perhaps beset us ; possibly the thought of how we shall faithfully carry out our resolutions causes us worry and anxiety ; and, lastly, perhaps our enemy tempts us to ill-humor and sadness. Wherefore, we must pray for joy and strive to obtain it with as much earnestness as in the third week we strove for grief and sorrow.

Further, St. Ignatius suggests two new thoughts, which ought to be present to us in our meditations. We are to observe, first, how the Divinity which had concealed itself during the Passion, now reappears, showing itself through the radiant figure of our Lord, in his words, in his goodness, in his majesty and beauty, showing itself in effects most sacred, wonderful, and true, *miraculose . . . per veros et sanctissimos effectus . . . in sanctissima resurrectione*. The effects are miraculous, because the life upon which he has now entered is a glorified one, and because miracles attend his steps, as flowers do the rays of the sun in spring ; they are, above all, true and holy and sanctifying, because they bear witness to

the glorious truth of his Resurrection, and bring us the graces of faith, hope and love.—In the second place, we are to consider how our Lord assumes and discharges the office of Consoler. He regards it as an office, dispensing consolation to all and in every possible manner, to the understanding, the heart, and the senses; and he does so as a friend and a father, that is, affectionately, tenderly, heartily, as will appear in detail from the meditation of the several apparitions.

The Notes allow us in this week some lessening of effort and exertion with regard to the number of meditations, which are now to be reduced to four.—In the repetitions, we are to dwell rather on those points, in which we have experienced consolation.—The subject of the meditation, however, is to be prepared always, and is to be divided into a definite number of points.

A change is to be made in the observance of the 2d Addition. As soon as we rise we are to dispose ourselves to joy, *volendo affici et exhilarescere de tanto gaudio et letitia Christi*. How can this be done? By arousing our energies; by driving dullness and gloom away; and by summoning up new courage. And why? Because our Lord is now rejoicing. It would surely be undutiful for a child not to rejoice on the birthday of its parents. Well, our Lord, too, wishes us to rejoice and be glad. Hence his oft-repeated greeting: *Pax vobis; Nolite timere*.—The 6th Addition also undergoes a change. Henceforth we are to think of such things only as will afford joy and spiritual pleasure. Therefore the thought of Heaven ought ever to be in our minds. We ought to exercise our imagination in making an Easter-garden round about us, an Eden filled with spiritual delights, in the midst of which stands the second Adam, our risen Saviour. We ought to recall our sins only to think of them as forgiven, and as occasions for joy and thanksgiving.—Then, as to the 7th Addition, in which mention is made of the light and warmth of the sun, the beauty and fragrance of flowers, etc., we are now to make choice of such of these things as will, in our judgment, increase our joy in the Lord. Hence we must consider them well beforehand, and not be hasty or heedless in our choice, because very often snares may here

lie hid under our feet. For as Satan of old glided into Paradise, so he will try to make his way into our Easter-garden and to overthrow our spiritual joy, by the same means which he used in Eden, that is, by levity and sensuality. Here is an instance of the proper use of creatures, as dictated by wisdom and foresight.—The 10th Addition is observed by practising temperance instead of penance, unless a fast-day of obligation should occur.

#### CONTEMPLATION TO ACQUIRE THE LOVE OF GOD

1. St. Ignatius very appropriately crowns the work of the Exercises with a contemplation for obtaining the love of God. Love, indeed, is the first commandment, the loftiest demand made upon us by God, and the most excellent of virtues. Love is perfection; it is also the sublimest service of the Divine Majesty. And it is by love that God truly becomes the Lord of our hearts.

This contemplation, therefore, is most intimately connected with the whole of the Exercises. Love is the petition and fruit of the second, third and fourth weeks, the spirit which must animate us in our following of Christ. And therefore, love is most truly the sum and substance of the Exercises. However, it is particularly and expressly the object of the fourth week; and not merely the love of action and imitation, but also of affection. And so it is very proper that the Exercises as a whole, and the fourth week in particular, should be brought to a close with a special meditation to excite us to a genuine act of the love of God. This meditation is as it were the golden seal of the Exercises. But why did St. Ignatius put it off till now? Why did he not give it sooner, for example, in the Foundation? The love of God is, indeed, contained in the Foundation. It follows with natural necessity from our dependence upon God and from our subordination to him, both of which are essential to our nature as God's creatures. Nevertheless it was better not to speak of love in express terms, until man should have learned to cut himself loose from sin, to control his evil passions, and thus to cleanse his heart and make it capable of real love. At any rate, the heart is now far otherwise prepared

for love than it was in the beginning of the Exercises. And thus love becomes the solid and matchless corner-stone, as well as the worthy conclusion of the Spiritual Exercises. This meditation also suggests an analogy with the mystery of the descent of the Holy Ghost, which is the glorious fruit of the life of Jesus. The soul comes forth from the Exercises as the Church came forth from the Cenacle : full of the Holy Ghost, full of love.

2. The contemplation plainly consists of two parts. In the first, St. Ignatius gives us two principles to think about on the nature of true love. True love, he says, consists rather in deeds than in words or feelings, and the deeds themselves, in the mutual sharing of goods. It is manifest, therefore, that St. Ignatius is speaking of the genuine love of friendship, which consists in the mutual knowledge and return of love.—The second part contains the following motives for loving God. First, God is our greatest benefactor. In proof of this, we call to mind, not only how God himself fulfils towards us the above-mentioned conditions of true love, by actually giving us something of all the goods that are his in the various orders of creatures, but also how he intends and desires to give us even infinitely more.—Secondly, God is near us and dwells within us, as he does in no other merely natural creature, nay he dwells within us even in a supernatural manner. Now that God should wish to be so near us, that he should give us not only what is his own, but himself also, and that he should give himself in such wise, that, excepting his presence in Heaven and in the Sacrament of the Altar, he is present nowhere else as he is within us—all this is proof of wondrous affection for us on the part of God. This nearness of God to us and his indwelling within our souls is, of course, a great honor for us poor creatures, and a magnificent proof of his benevolent love for us ; but apart from this, it affords us a great advantage in returning his love. We need not seek him afar off. He is ever near, he is in us, and we are in him. What grand motives for loving him ! Thirdly, God is ever working for us, around us, within us. Take a general view of the different spheres of his activity in the kingdom of inanimate nature, of plants, animals, in human society, in the family, the

state, the Church, in Heaven itself, which is so active for our welfare ; behold in each of these spheres the countless creatures, which God preserves and energizes for our sake, and consider how everywhere God himself loves us, and in the exercise of his love moves, as it were, heaven and earth to win a return of love from us ! In some beings, as in Christ, God is active for us even unto suffering and death !—Fourthly, God is beauty and goodness itself. Here we must endeavor to form a great idea of God, by presenting to our minds all that is beautiful and grand in creation, and then by reasoning rise to the idea of the uncreated goodness and beauty of God. St. Ignatius tells us to consider how all goodness and beauty proceed from God, as rays from the sun, or as the stream from the fountain-head. We ought therefore in spirit to review the kingdom of irrational creation, the kingdom of man, the Church, Heaven. What hierarchies of wisdom, power, goodness, beauty and holiness ! But what is this compared with the Mother of God ? And what all this again, if compared with the God-man, and lastly with God himself ? How great then is God !—And what if this Being were to know us and to love us ! If this Being were to desire us to love him, if he longed for our love, if we had it in our power to gratify him by our love, and if in return for such love he were to bestow himself wholly and for all eternity upon us—could we do otherwise than love him ? Could we ever love him enough ?

If we compare these four points with one another, we shall notice, as we proceed from one to the other, how God is ever approaching us more nearly, unfolding his infinite loveliness more and more, and acting more powerfully upon our love. In the first three points, the motive for our love of God is his relative goodness, i. e., his goodness to us ; in the fourth, it is his absolute goodness. — The prayer *Suscipe* forms an apt conclusion, a beautiful refrain to each of the four points, expressing, as it does, a complete surrender and sacrifice of self to God : it is, as it were, the soul's last will and testament.—Truly, it is a fitting crown for the Exercises, a worthy answer to the mysteries and demands of the four weeks ; a perfect compendium of them, the most beautiful

plan of life, the carrying out of which is the highest prize of all earthly efforts and strivings.

3. There are two ways of giving this meditation: the first is to present it in its entirety at the end, after all the mysteries of the glorious life; the other, to distribute the points as separate meditations throughout the course of these mysteries. Direct. c. 36 § 2.

4. The Contemplation on the Ascension of our Lord and that on the Love of God bring to a close the series of meditations in the Book of the Exercises. Is not this a hint St. Ignatius wishes to give us, that everything is included in the life of Jesus, and that all we need for preserving, quickening, renewing and perfecting our spiritual life, nay for a safe and perfect training in spirituality, is the knowledge, the imitation and the love of Jesus? The gospel itself contains nothing more than the life of Jesus, and the apostles knew nothing but Jesus the crucified (I. Cor. ii. 2) and the risen (I. Cor. xv. 3).

Yes, in the life of Jesus we possess everything. For other foundation no man can lay, beside that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus (I. Cor. iii. 11); who is made unto us wisdom from God and justice, and sanctification, and redemption (I. Cor. i. 30); he is the way, and the truth, and the life (John, xiv. 6). Hence as the Following of Christ says, our chief study should be to meditate on the life of Christ (Book I, ch. 1). This applies in an especial manner to the Society of Jesus, whose peculiar task it is to reproduce inwardly and outwardly the life of Jesus, and, by making known and propagating the spirit of Jesus, to save and sanctify the world. Her escutcheon therefore is the name of Jesus, her watchword: *Ad convivendum et commoriendum et conregnandum cum Christo* (II. Tim. ii. 11, 12).

### THREE METHODS OF PRAYER

St. Ignatius, at the end of the Exercises, adds a few more methods of prayer, of which mention is repeatedly made in the last Annotations. They may be justly classed with mental prayer, or, at least, may be easily developed into it. For it is repeatedly said of the second method: *fit contemplando*

. . . *consistat in considerationibus*, and of the third : *ad quamlibet respirationem orandum mentaliter . . . attendatur ad significationem*. These methods may be called the opening chords in the symphony of mental prayer. At the same time they are so simple, that anybody can practise them with the greatest profit to himself. We are, on this account, according to the direction of St. Ignatius, to give and recommend them to all.—These methods of prayer are three (Dir. c. 37, § 1).

## THE FIRST METHOD OF PRAYER

1. In what does this first method of prayer consist? In taking either the Commandments of God, the seven deadly sins, the powers of the soul, or the five senses of the body, and considering, for instance, at each Commandment for about the length of three Our Fathers and three Hail Marys, what it commands and what it forbids, and in what we have transgressed against it ; in being sorry for our shortcomings and purposing to do better. We do nearly the same with the deadly sins ; only, to understand them well, we at the same time put before our minds the opposite virtues. For vice is properly understood only from the virtue, whose denial or contrary it is.—In reflecting upon the senses we consider for what purpose they have been given us, and how we have used or misused them.

This way of praying, therefore, may be looked upon as a short consideration, or as a longer and more thorough examination of conscience. St. Ignatius says that it is more of a preparation for prayer than a prayer in itself ; a manner of cleansing the heart and getting it ready for prayer (Dir. c. 37, §§ 2, 6).

2. The additions for this prayer are : First, previous recollection, according to the 2nd Addition or the 5th Note for the first day of the second week.—Secondly, the preparatory prayer, in which we ask for three graces : a perfect understanding of the Commandments ; next, of our faults ; and lastly, the grace to do better.—Thirdly, after each Commandment an Our Father may be said for the same intention.—Fourthly, the whole is to be concluded by a colloquy.—If we are not in the habit of sinning against a certain Command-

ment, the examination need not fill up the time of three Our Fathers. — If any one in the manner of using his senses wishes to imitate our Saviour or his holy Mother, he should recommend himself to them in the preparatory prayer and in every colloquy.

3. How may this prayer be developed? It may be developed into a kind of meditation by considering, for instance, in each Commandment, its importance, purpose, its holiness, its obligation, its blessing and its curse.—The consideration of the senses may be developed by calling to mind their end, how good God is to us through them, how we can offend and honor God by them, how our Saviour made use of them.—We may also take for our subject the duties of our state of life, the Rules of our Order, or office, considering their meaning, obligation, perfection, the advantages of observing them, the disadvantages of violating them, the practice of the Saints (Dir. c. 37, §§ 2, 6).

4. The advantages of this way of praying are, in the first place, that we are able to persevere in it for a long time without fatigue and weariness, even without serious distractions.—Secondly, it is very easy and at the same time full of variety.—Thirdly, it cleanses the heart from sin and violations of duty, by calling them to mind and bringing them home to us; by filling our hearts with the fear of God and making us conscientious in the discharge of our duties. It was for this reason, that St. Francis Xavier very earnestly recommended this method of prayer to persons of the world, whom he wished to put in a fair way to reform their lives (Dir. c. 37, § 6).

#### THE SECOND METHOD OF PRAYER

I. This method of prayer consists in taking some determined form of prayer and dwelling on each thought or word so long as it keeps us employed, and affords us nourishment, edification and consolation, reflecting upon the meaning of the words, making comparisons and applications, and eliciting acts of virtue and good resolutions. Thus, in the first words of the Our Father, we consider that God is truly our father, and fulfils towards us all the duties of a father, giving us being, preserving and taking care of us, and that we, too,



ought to fulfil the duties of children towards him by showing him reverence, obedience and love. The same may be done with the Hail Mary, the Creed, etc. (Dir. c. 37, §§ 9, 10).

2. The additions for this method of prayer are : First, the preparatory and the closing prayer are to be addressed to the person to whom the form of prayer is directed.—Secondly, we are free to take any posture, to sit or kneel, etc., according to the profit derived. The eyes may be kept shut, or fixed on one spot, without allowing them to wander about.—Thirdly, we should try to spend an hour in the exercise, as it is hardly possible in less than this time to go through a long form of prayer profitably.—Fourthly, we should dwell on a word quietly as long as it affords us matter for thought (Cfr. Annot. 2 and Addit. 4). When the hour is at an end, we recite the rest of the prayer in the usual way. Thus something complete is had, and also a fitting conclusion. In the following exercise we commence by reciting what was already dwelt upon, and then continue the consideration of the remaining words of the prayer. After the Our Father, we meditate according to the same method on the Hail Mary and on other vocal prayers, in order that by spending some time in this manner of prayer we may acquire facility in it.

3. The advantages of this exercise are as follows : First, it is extremely easy and will keep one occupied for quite a time. It is well, therefore, to advise the laity and beginners to try it, taking, for example, on days of greater solemnity the mass-prayers or other prayers in this way, or going through the Commandments of God according to the first method. Ordinary Christians often succeed thus in praying for a long time with great profit. St. Elizabeth used to spend two hours in this way on a single Our Father.—Secondly, this method of prayer is especially recommended, when we are fatigued or very much exposed to distractions, for instance, while travelling. The formulas of prayer themselves and the words that compose them, are the texture into which the understanding and the imagination may weave their own creations with little or no effort.—Thirdly, this way of praying opens up to us the inner logical structure, connection and beauty of the vocal prayers with which we are familiar. Thereby we shall lay up a store of good and solid thoughts,

which will immediately come before our minds, when we have to say these prayers more hurriedly. Certainly, we have herein the best remedy against distractions in our everyday prayers.

4. An application of this method of prayer may be made in meditating on the mysteries in which words of our Lord or of other persons are recorded. These may be dwelt on according to this method.—We may do the same in colloquies, or in the course of the meditation, when a certain form of prayer expresses well either the emotion we feel or the fruit of the mystery.

#### THE THIRD METHOD OF PRAYER

1. The third method of prayer is a shortening of the former. Its material object is, as in the preceding one, some formula of vocal prayer. We do not, however, dwell on the several parts for an indefinite length of time, as in the second method, or as long as we find any matter for thought in them, but we pronounce each word slowly, rhythmically, at every breath a word, and in the length of time between each breath, we think on the word just pronounced.—Its formal object lies in this, that while pronouncing the words singly, we pay special attention to the meaning of the word, or think of the person to whom the prayer is directed, or of ourselves, our present state, our frame of mind, our wants, or the relation we bear to the person addressed.—(Dir. c. 37, § 12.)

2. This way of praying gives us a very useful suggestion on the manner of fixing our attention during vocal prayer, for example, during the beads, the breviary, etc. All the ways of remaining attentive just mentioned are good. We often grow tired, when we try to consider steadily the meaning of each word, and dryness and distraction are the result. But in this manner we may enliven our prayer by variety.

3. The same suggestion may be followed to advantage in particular parts of longer prayers; thus, in saying the breviary, we may pause now and then at the Gloria Patri, at the Pater, or Ave; and so, again in meditation, etc.

4. These, then, are the three methods of prayer. They contain many a new point relative to the theory of prayer.

First, there is the advice to keep the eyes either shut or fixed on one spot, at least not to let them wander about. Many distractions come, in fact, from overlooking this hint, especially in places we are unacquainted with or not used to, in churches during divine service, etc. It is an advice that will be found useful for all.—Of no less value is the information about the way of fixing our attention during vocal prayer, in order to vary it.—Compared with one another the three methods of prayer stand thus related: the first is a kind of consideration, the second a true mental prayer, the third more of a vocal prayer. They all have this in common, that they keep to a definite form of prayer, as to a given pattern, whence arises the facility we come to experience in the use of these forms of prayer, and the comparative infrequency of distractions.—With a knowledge of these three methods and skill in using them, the laity will be well equipped for prayer. Hence they are to be withheld from none (Dir. c. 37, § 11).

HOW MANY KINDS OF MENTAL PRAYER DOES ST. IGNATIUS  
TEACH US IN THE BOOK OF THE EXERCISES ?

1. He teaches us no less than seven kinds: first, the Consideration, as in the Foundation and the Three Degrees of Humility; secondly, the Meditation, properly and strictly so called, as on Sin; thirdly, the Contemplation, in the mysteries; fourthly, the Application of the Senses; and lastly, the Three Methods of Prayer. Truly an astonishing number of methods of prayer! It would be well, now and then, to call this to mind. Tediousness and dryness in prayer often come from our not thinking of a change in the way of praying, according to the dispositions and circumstances in which we are placed.

2. As a rule, it is good to make a change at times, or at least to endeavor to join vocal prayer to mental. Nothing rouses us from sleepiness and inactivity in meditation better, than to say some vocal prayer during the course of it, or at least to express orally in a quiet way, what we feel and entertain in our hearts, or to try the third manner of praying, or in general to fix our thoughts upon some definite form of prayer.—On the other hand, vocal prayer is enlivened and

strengthened by introducing into it short considerations and meditations, as may be done when preparing for Holy Communion or during divine service.—Moreover, in a contemplation pretty nearly all the ways of praying may be joined together. Thus we may introduce an application of the senses very easily ; if the subject-matter bear upon a virtue, we may interweave either a consideration or a strict meditation ; and lastly, we may dwell on the words, which occur in the mysteries of the contemplation, according to the second method of prayer. The third method of prayer may form the conclusion, or a profitable interruption during the course of the meditation. And so meditation will become a living mosaic, a beautiful enamel containing all that is precious in the art of prayer—(Dir. c. 37, § 13).

3. But does not St. Ignatius teach the higher contemplative prayer? By contemplative prayer we here mean that kind of interior or mental prayer, in which, without further effort of the powers of the soul, by a special help of God, our understanding is at once put in possession of the truth and our will embraces it in all peace and sweetness. This kind of prayer cannot be taught as such (*in termino*) by human means ; God alone can teach it. No human effort will reach up to it, and it would be folly not only to aim at it, but even to make the attempt. All we can reasonably do is to pave the way (*via*), to prepare and dispose ourselves for it. And it is this precisely that St. Ignatius does in the Book of the Exercises. First, he cleanses our hearts from sin, frees us from the yoke of the passions, and teaches us the perfect use of creatures ; next, he puts before us the Humanity of Christ, as the compendium of all that can lead and unite us to God. Then he teaches us an easy, secure, and solid method of interior prayer and meditation, and by means of the Additions, enlists in the service of prayer all our strength of body and soul. Further, by means of the easy method of Contemplation and especially by the Application of the Senses, which is, as it were, a spiritualization of the senses, we mount a step higher. Again, in the fourth week he leads us, by the mysteries as well as by an express invitation to the love of God, into the dwellings of love ; and lastly, he helps us to this same end by many remarks and

hints scattered throughout the Exercises, for example, the 2d and 11th Annotations and the 4th Addition, which instruct us not to flit uneasily from point to point, but to apply ourselves rather to one thought in recollection and peace of soul.—Such is the only right and safe way to contemplation, should God wish to bestow this gift upon us. There is none other besides faithfully, humbly, and generously following out the ordinary path of prayer and of the spiritual life—(Dir. c. 39).<sup>(1)</sup>

### RULES FOR THE DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS

1. The discernment of spirits is properly a gift or grace of the Holy Ghost (I. Cor. xii. 10; I John, iv. 1). Hence it is primarily given for the benefit of others, and consists in a special supernatural illumination of the Holy Ghost, by which, in the opinion of St. Thomas, we become aware of the hidden thoughts of others (1<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>ae</sup>, q. cxi. art. 4), or, according to some (Suarez, De Gratia, Proleg. i. 6), by which we recognize whether it is the good or the bad spirit, which produces in us or in others this or that particular thought, or inspiration of the heart. In any case, the discernment of spirits bears either upon prophecy, or upon the knowledge of the divine origin of revealed doctrines (I. Cor. xiv. 24, 25, 37). This discernment, therefore, always and essentially consists in a judgment, a decision as to which of the two spirits, the good or the bad, is acting upon the soul. And since the matter of the judgment, which is: “the good (or the bad) spirit is the author of the suggestion,” is not brought before our mind in the light of evidence, but is of its nature obscure, it follows from the nature of the case that our assent will always be more or less uncertain. It becomes certain and infallible only by the supernatural illumination of the Holy Ghost; and then it is properly an act of the gift of the Holy Ghost. This gift is made use of, especially in private revelations, visions, new doctrines and devotions, interior impulses to extraordinary things, in suggestions to make some change in one’s spiritual life under the appearance of a higher

<sup>(1)</sup> Suarez, De Relig. S. J. l. 9, c. 6, nn. 9, 10, 11.

good, etc.—When the judgment rests not so much upon this special illumination of the Holy Ghost, as upon the rules of Christian prudence, which directors of the spiritual life have drawn up and tried by experience, it is not properly an act of the gift of the Holy Ghost but of acquired wisdom, and it is only in a wider sense that it may then be called an act of the discernment of spirits.—Something of this kind St. Ignatius offers us from the abundant treasures of his own experience in the spiritual life. He was fully justified in stepping forth as a teacher. He had gone through the whole spiritual life in all its stages and occurrences; and these rules contain pretty nearly the whole history of his interior formation and development.

2. The purpose of these rules, as the very title declares, *Regulæ ad sentiendum et cognoscendum aliquo modo varias motiones*, is to perceive, know, and discern the various motions which are excited in the soul, in order to follow those that are good and to reject those that are bad. In the first place, therefore, *to perceive*, that is, to pay attention to the fact that such influences may proceed from various spirits. St. Ignatius already made the remark in the General Examination of Conscience, that we have three kinds of thoughts: coming from ourselves, from the bad, and from the good spirit. In the meditation on Two Standards this truth is again confirmed. We must, therefore, pay attention to these thoughts, and learn to know and to discern them. The more so, since these motions are of the highest importance in the spiritual life, just as the winds are for a sea-voyage and for the weather; our going forward and our going backward, our welfare and our ruin depend upon them.—But St. Ignatius says, know *in some measure*; for it is only acquired wisdom he offers. God alone can bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost, which carries infallibility along with it.

RULES FOR THE DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS  
FOR THE FIRST WEEK

1. The rules for the first week differ from those for the second week in being more general; besides, in being more suitable to the purgative process and to a time when the

enemy comes to the front in a bolder and ruder way, with palpable difficulties, with incitements to evil or to something that plainly leads to evil (Cfr. Annot. 9, 10).

2. The division of these rules is as follows. They fall naturally under three headings ; 1-3 deal with the difference of the influence exerted by the various spirits according to the difference of the subjects, i. e., of the conditions of their soul ; 3-12 treat of the diversity of influences as to their nature or quality, or of consolation and desolation ; 12-14 describe some of the artifices of the enemy and his stratagems in tempting.

The 1st and 2nd rules declare that to such as are conscious of being in mortal sin and are resolved to go on from sin to sin, the pleasure and sensual delight in temporal enjoyments and the encouragement to partake of them come from the enemy ; for he wishes to keep and confirm them in evil. On the other hand, remorse of conscience and uneasiness come from the good angel.—The contrary happens to such as are earnestly advancing from good to better. Whatever makes them sad, uneasy, or throws obstacles in their way, and none but apparent reasons serve to this purpose, comes from the enemy. Whatever, on the contrary, encourages and strengthens them, whatever gives consolation, light, tears, peace, ease in all things, comes from the good angel with the view to furthering their progress.—We have only to be morally certain of the state of our soul to be able immediately to decide, which wind is blowing. He who is morally certain that he is in a good state may rest assured that all encouragement comes from the good angel, all discouragement from the bad angel, and all the reasons he has for giving in to despondency are mere pretence and fraud.

May these rules, moreover, be applied to the state of lukewarmness? Nothing is said on this point. Very Rev. Father Roothaan also (nota 2) leaves the question undecided.

Rules 3-12 treat of the nature and effects of the diverse influences, that is, of consolation and desolation ; 3 and 4 give their definition ; 5-9 instruct us how to act in desolation ; 10 and 11 in consolation.

The 3rd and 4th rules give the definition of consolation, that is, of true spiritual consolation. For true and genuine

spiritual consolation St. Ignatius claims three things. First, its object and source should not be something external, sensible, but internal, supersensible and spiritual, *motio interior, lætitia interna*, such as, God, Christ and his sufferings, sorrow for sin, love of God, etc. As soon as something sensible is the object or source of our joy, we have reason to doubt that it is true spiritual consolation. There are men who become mellow and pious when cheered up by wine.—Secondly, the joy should lead up to something higher and spiritual, *ad res cælestes . . . amorem . . . propriam salutem*; hence, the tendency, too, should be towards something spiritual. As soon as the joy degenerates into what is sensual, we should be on our guard.—Thirdly, this tendency to something spiritual must be direct, *directe ordinatis*, and not lead to it by a roundabout way. Such is, in general, the notion of spiritual consolation.—More accurately defined, it is always a supernatural illumination of the intellect, from which arise quiet, peace, and an up-lifting of the heart and will beyond earthly or sensible things to God; hence, it is found in every increase of faith, hope, charity, peace and joy. It is plain, that there may be different degrees in this consolation. Now it is the ordinary consolation—it might be called the working-day consolation—which consists in a simple tranquillity, a steady peace in the service of God, so that we can perform our interior and exterior occupations without let or hindrance, *reddendo illam quietam . . . pacificando in Domino*; now it is the extraordinary consolation—the Sunday and holyday consolation — when we are moved, even to tears. Desolation is just the very contrary. It consists in a darkening of the intellect, so that spiritual things no longer give a vivid, pleasing light. Whence arise sloth, sluggishness of the will, attraction towards sensual things, a waking up of the lower passions, a kind of apparent separation from, and abandonment by God, agitation and disquiet, without knowing why and whence, distrust and despondency, half-despair and whatever else the wind-rose of the state of desolation exhibits.

We see from this, how precious and advantageous in the spiritual life is the state of consolation, and on the other hand, how troublesome and even dangerous desolation may become; we learn, in consequence, that we ought not to be



indifferent to these two phenomena of the spiritual life ; and again, that we ought to walk cautiously.

In rules 5-9 St. Ignatius tells us how we are to behave during desolation. First, never make any change in the resolutions which were taken before desolation came on, or in a time of consolation. In general, a change should not be lightly made, especially in time of desolation ; we should sooner let everything about us change than change ourselves. Why? Because at such time the evil spirit influences us, since he is upon us. Shall we take the advice of our enemy? We have no worse enemy than Satan, as St. Ignatius says : *Cujus (inimici) consiliis non possumus invenire viam ad recte quid agendum.* Hence no matter what happens, no change is to be made in time of desolation. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.* The thing he puts before us is most certainly a Trojan horse. Hence no change, but steadiness and perseverance—*firmiter et constanter.* Without this firmness nothing is done, nothing is attained. Difficulties will spring up everywhere ; but surely difficulties are not a reason for changing. We must be convinced from the start, that resolutions are not made for a parade, but for the fight. A resolution or a virtue, which cannot stand before difficulties is not worthy of the name.

Secondly, when a change is to be made, it ought to be for the better, for the more perfect. Therefore we ought to make our resolutions more pointed, and to do the very opposite of that to which desolation wishes to seduce us. *Intense se mutare . . . insistendo magis . . . extendendo nos,* says St. Ignatius. And why? It is simply the spirit of heroism, the tactics of St. Ignatius (Cfr. Annot. 13). Thus taking the offensive we shall certainly succeed in becoming masters of the desolation.—In what does this change for the better consist? In praying more, in making an extraordinary meditation, recollecting ourselves often, paying visits to the Blessed Sacrament. *Tristatur quis? Oret* (James, v. 13). Besides, we ought to examine ourselves often and watch over ourselves more carefully, since in this state we are more in danger of admitting negligences, and the enemy himself is near at hand. Hence we must be on the lookout and post guards. Lastly, we should perform some suitable penance. For this

quickens and strengthens us, while it weakens the enemy, since it shows him that we are not lacking in courage or energy. A trifle often does a good deal to drive away the despondent mood.—It is plain from this rule that, generally speaking, we are not to be indifferent towards consolation or desolation. Desolation is a dead calm in the spiritual life, against which we are forced to struggle, especially when it gives rise to temptations. Else there is danger of taking pleasure in temptations and of thereby suffering harm. It is a proof of ignorance in the spiritual life to make no account of consolation. True consolation is a grace. It always gives us a better insight into God and spiritual things, which insight we may make constant use of for our own advantage and the advantage of others. In time of consolation, moreover, we pray better, and fulfil with greater care the duties of our state of life, we are farther removed from the danger of many faults, we make joyfully whatever sacrifices God may demand of us,—in short, we find it easy to serve God as we ought to serve him. To make light of consolation is often an effect merely of tepidity. Perhaps we have become used to living in want, and to maintain consolation, or to earn it anew, costs us too great a sacrifice. But even putting all else aside, we cannot well live without joy.

Thirdly, we ought to think that desolation was sent to try us, and that extraordinary and sensible graces were withdrawn from us, in order that we might actually resist with fewer sensible graces. It is a trial, indeed, because it is hard ; but we begin to learn that things go on anyhow, in spite of greater difficulty and effort. For there are different kinds of efficacious graces. Some are accompanied by sensible consolation and sweetness, so that we scarcely perceive any difficulty ; others are, as it were, mere matter and force, and give scarcely any perceptible help. And yet by their aid we actually hold out. And this, strictly speaking, is enough. By the expression, *ut potentiis naturalibus resistat*, St. Ignatius does not mean, as may be gathered from what has just been said, a mere natural power, but a natural power supported by grace, more or less sensible, however ;—*licet aperte illud (auxilium) non sentiat . . . gratiam intensam*, as we read it in the context. Because it is not sensible grace, it may seem

to us that we are left to our mere natural powers. Moreover, *gratia quæ sufficit ad salutem* is not a merely sufficient but an efficacious grace, because with it we actually work out our salvation.

Fourthly, we must arm ourselves with patience, as the tactics of Christian warfare suggest. *In patientia vestra posidebitis animas vestras!* (Luke, xxi. 19)—When we are placed in the darkness of desolation let us grope about for the cause of it. Should we find none in ourselves, then it only remains for us to have patience, and to put up with it as we do with the weather or a bodily ailment. But we ought to work to gain patience; for such is the meaning of the word *laboret*. St. Ignatius explains in passing, how patience may be acquired and preserved. First, consider that desolation will soon pass away. Nothing is more true. These mental moods change like the weather. They are, in fact, the weather of the soul. No matter how dark and threatening the sky may look to-day, no one thinks that it is going to remain so always. To-morrow or the day after, it will clear up. This is natural hope, it is true, but it produces its effect, and dulls the edge of impatience. We may ascend from this motive to something higher.—Secondly, make use of practical measures against desolation. Some of these measures are given in the 6th rule, and one is given in the 7th. We ought to withstand desolation; its continuance at least should not be the result of our inactivity. *Adhibendo diligentias*, says St. Ignatius in the 8th rule. As the enemy tries to prevent consolation in our souls (Reg. 1 de Discr. Spir. pro 2<sup>a</sup> hebd.), so ought we on our part to resist desolation. We may learn from our divine Saviour in the garden of Olives, what desolation is and how we are to behave therein.

Fifthly, we are advised to investigate the sources and causes of desolation, in order to remove them. St. Ignatius gives three main sources of desolation. The first is culpable sloth and negligence in the spiritual life. The expression *exercitia spiritualia* means not only prayer, but all that regards the spiritual life, or disposes us for our supernatural end. Hence penances, the Particular Examen, etc., are included. God deals with us as a father with his child. When

the child has misbehaved, he calls its attention to the fact, by withholding his tenderness and kindness, and so makes it recognize its fault. God acts in the same way. And it is well for us that he does so, else we should ever jog on in the same sauntering way. We ought, therefore, immediately to examine how matters stand with us.—The second reason why God permits desolation, is to try us and to see how far we can go without a supply of extraordinary graces and consolations. God makes this trial not on his but on our account. He knows well what we can do. But we must be taught by what methods we may learn to know ourselves.—The third reason is to let us arrive at the clear and practical understanding—*vera et intima cognitio*—of the truth that it does not depend upon ourselves or upon our efforts to obtain and preserve consolation; or, in other words, that whatsoever we do or are able to do, is not the cause of consolation; all this is at best but a mere disposition and a removal of obstacles, but not a true cause. God alone is the cause. This holds good not only of extraordinary, but also of ordinary consolation, *cæteras partes spiritualis consolationis . . . ulla alia consolatio*. How much less reason, then, have we to imagine that through our own endeavors we may be enabled to climb up the higher steps of the contemplative life!—Why does God wish to bring this experience home to us? To keep us humble. As soon as we have done anything in the spiritual life and consolation puts in an appearance, we straightway imagine that our action is the cause of it. We thus put ourselves as St. Ignatius has it “in another’s nest.” God drives us out of it; for all self-sufficiency, *aliqua superbia*, displeases him, and we are thus taught to ascribe nothing to ourselves. Thus it may happen at times, that even after fervent preparation for a great holyday, we experience no sensible consolation or elevating emotion.—Still less should we imagine that external or accidental things, such as places, pictures, books, prayers, can retain for us the consolation, which we have received. Consolation is not lasting, nor should it be so, even for our own advantage.

The 10th and 11th rules are for the time of consolation. First, consider that consolation will soon pass away and desolation come on; consider what our conduct ought then to be,

and how we should now prepare and strengthen ourselves for that time.—For this purpose, remember, in the first place, that consolation will soon pass away. This is a true and wholesome thought. And as we may justly console ourselves in the time of desolation with the assurance that it will soon pass away, so we may at present call to mind that we shall soon be in desolation. Even this thought alone does good, for it prevents our becoming attached to consolation. For consolation is, indeed, a good that will not stay with us, and knowing this we are already prepared for the change. — Next, consider how we ordinarily behave in desolation, how we ought to behave, and how we ought to resolve to gather our forces together for our conduct in future. For in consolation we always understand a thing much better and more clearly. We ought to pay attention to this point, to be thoroughly imbued with it, and to say to ourselves: “See, this is a truth you now understand. Be mindful of it on such and such an occasion. It will be a light to you.” In time of consolation, moreover, we can pray well; God is nearer to us; he is especially kind to us. Hence we must profit by the opportunity, and secure particular graces for the time of desolation. We must do as did Joseph of Egypt, who profited by the time of plenty for the time of famine to come.

Secondly, a capital rule in time of consolation is to keep ourselves in humility, both internal and external. For, at this time, we are particularly exposed to pride. We ought to reflect that we have in no way deserved consolation, that it is a mere alms. For consolation in itself is no proof of merit, nor as such does it make us better in the sight of God. Hence it is foolish to be conceited on account of it. It would be like being proud of false hair, or false teeth, or of an alms we have received. We must consider, too, that consolation is a forerunner of desolation, and how miserable and wretched, how dejected and despondent we usually are, when in desolation.—We must, besides, apply ourselves to exterior acts of humility, because in time of consolation we are very much inclined to look down on others, to be too free in our conduct, to be talkative and anxious to communicate to others how favored we are. Then more than ever, therefore, ought we to cherish tranquillity, modesty and silence, and

not imitate the hen, which cackles as soon as she has laid an egg and thus loses it.

Rules 12, 13, 14 call our attention to some peculiar artifices of the enemy. In the first place, he acts like a woman; she is weak, when the man shows courage; but her anger, fury and insolence knows no bounds, as soon as he betrays timidity or irresolution. Should he take to flight, she is not content with looking complacently on, but she starts up in anger, fury and pride, to rush after him, *ferocia feminae est valde magna et prorsus sine mensura*. So it is with our enemy. In himself he is strong only in ill-will, but weak in the face of strength; and hence only strong against us, when we are timid and cowardly. We give him strength and power by foolishly imagining that he is powerful, and by entertaining the fear of him that grows out of this fancy. Then he is truly dreadful, and, as St. Ignatius has it, *non est bestia tam efferata super terram . . . cum malitia adeo magna*. Hence we may conclude that we ought not to be timid in our resistance, but fearless, doing resolutely the very opposite of what he desires us to do. Courage, however, does not consist in heedlessly exposing ourselves to temptations, but in fearlessly doing the opposite<sup>(1)</sup> of what the tempter suggests. We ought never for an instant to give room to the thought that there is a moment of such intensity in temptation, that we can no longer resist. This is a most mischievous imposition of the enemy. On the contrary, we should seek our "strength in God," as St. Ignatius puts it (Cfr. Reg. 7 et 11) and hence should have recourse to God in prayer; for prayer is the hand of God, which has allowed no one to go to ruin. Nothing is worse than despair, and yet one readily gives in to it, because it costs nothing at all and frees one from further efforts.

In the 13th rule we are told that the enemy acts also like a seducer who wishes, above all, that his advances should be kept secret. He cannot bear to have them made known, since he is aware that he will then be utterly unable to reach his end. The secret of our enemy's power lies in inducing us to keep his wiles to ourselves, and to say nothing about them. He has then a chance of continually annoying us

<sup>(1)</sup> Reg. Sum. 14.

with temptations, of doing us harm and of leading us in the end to our ruin; at least, he has fair hopes, whenever we remain silent and alone. He will certainly cheat us in the bargain. — The conclusion, therefore, is that we ought to manifest ourselves, to be open, and not to pretend to get on by ourselves. Even naturally, we find in him, to whom we manifest ourselves, a helper and fellow-combatant. Four eyes see better than two; and four hands can do more than two. It will be with us as with him who disputes under the guidance and protection of his master; we shall never be left in the lurch. Supernaturally, however, God blesses our humility and distrust of self. It is the way in which God wishes to lead us and to guide us easily and securely. How easy it is to go and manifest ourselves. Who would not visit his physician, if by merely presenting himself and disclosing his sickness, he should be restored to health? How often nothing else is required in spiritual sicknesses, but to seek the room of the spiritual director in order to be rid of temptation. It is, as we said, a beautiful act of humility, but surely it is no humiliation for us. On the other hand, however, not even to do so easy a thing would be unpardonable sloth. In any case, nothing is better calculated to vex the enemy and to put him to shame, than to be open and communicative.

To whom should we manifest ourselves? Not to every one. St. Ignatius says: *bono confessario, personæ spirituali, quæ cognoscit fraudes*. In bodily ailments we do not trust ourselves to every charlatan, but to reliable, learned physicians. We ought, above all, to have recourse to those persons, and to hold to them, whom God has appointed for us as confessors, or directors of conscience; in any case, we ought to have recourse only to men trained and experienced in things spiritual.<sup>(1)</sup> This is a very important hint for the spiritual life.

Lastly, the enemy imitates a general who, wishing to take and sack a place, searches for the most feebly guarded spots of the fortification and assaults them. In like manner does the enemy look out for our weak points, examine in what theological or moral virtue we are wanting, what are the weaknesses of our character, and therein he assails us. We

<sup>(1)</sup> Reg. Sum. 14.

must, therefore, if possible, expose no weak points, but fortify such as we find to be weak and render them impregnable by means of the Particular Examen, prayer, watchfulness and victory over self.

RULES FOR THE DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS,  
MORE SUITABLE TO THE SECOND WEEK

The rules for the first week are, as was observed, more general, and arm us against open and palpable difficulties. Those of the second week have reference to quite definite, individual phenomena, which come to light by various influences and effects in our souls. In this respect these rules are well determined, tangible and concrete; yet, on the other hand, they are often subtle and require much penetration and experience. Hence St. Ignatius says: *cum majore discretione spirituum*. They direct us to pay attention to various signs, from which we may infer the causes of the suggestions.

The 1st rule directs us to look to the nature, the character of the effect, whether it be true spiritual joy, or sadness and dejection. The former always comes from the good, the latter from the bad angel, always presupposing, however, the respective rules for the first week. For the enemy cannot endure this joy of our souls, and tries at any cost to do away with it; not only because, as we have seen, it is so very profitable to us, but because, in general, he begrudges us peace, wishes to torment us, make life bitter for us, and thus disgust us with the service of God. On this account he makes use of every seeming reason to trouble our joy. Such as: "How can you stand such a life? You will come to nothing. You have abused so many graces, etc., etc." Downright impostures! Even though they contained a grain of truth, the conclusion would be false. Let us have nothing to do with such suggestions, as soon as they rob us of our cheerfulness.

According to the 2nd rule, we are to examine the way in which these joyful moods take their rise. Two things may occur. If the suggestions arise suddenly, without being prepared by preceding meditations, it is a sign that God causes them. He alone can enter the soul and leave it, with-



out being hindred, and suddenly inflame it with love for him ; for he is the master of the house. It was thus that our Lord on the evening of Easter-day, suddenly, without passing through the doors, stood in the midst of his disciples to console them.

But, we are told in the 3d and 4th rules, when some preparation on our part has preceded, the cause of these suggestions is in itself still doubtful. Hence we ought to fix our eyes on their aim and scope. The good angel wishes to lead us from good to better, the bad angel from less good to bad. Even zeal for good, when the enemy meddles with it, tends to imperfection ; for example, our inclination to exterior penance tends to disobedience, to the injury of health ; love of prayer, to the neglect of zeal for souls ; zeal for souls, to distractions, attachments and sensuality ; humility, to a want of spirit in taking the initiative. But it is to be carefully noted, that this aim does not immediately come out clearly, for the enemy often adapts himself to the peculiarities of a man's character, to his favorite virtue, thoughts and inclinations ; he clothes himself, as it were, into our very selves, or even into an angel of light, and comes in by our door, that he may go out by his own.—In this case, yet another means is at hand.

For the 5th and 6th rules tell us that we shall do well to examine the whole course of our thoughts. If the whole series deals only with really good things, or even goes from good to better *ex integra causa*, it is an effect of the good angel ; but if it tends from good to less good, or bad, it is the device of the enemy.—The less good is manifold. Now it is distractions, now trifles that do not help on the end ; again a weakening or scattering of our forces, unfitting us for the performance of the duties of our state of life, as may happen when we inordinately desire to see God everywhere present, or to be ever renewing our intention, or to mortify ourselves in all things ; lastly, disquiet, which is always a sign of the enemy or of self-love. When we have discovered anything like this, we may be sure that the enemy has had a hand in it.—To gain an insight into such tricks of the enemy, we do well to go through the whole process in which we have surprised him, and to examine how he has, little by little, inter-

woven into it his own threads. This advice is not, however, to be followed by all, especially by the scrupulous, nor in every matter, particularly in what regards the sixth Commandment. The advice rather holds for other subjects that are not so open to temptations.

When the cause of the suggestion cannot be recognized from its character, we may then examine the manner of its coming in upon the soul. This is pointed out in the 7th rule. The good angel enters into good hearts gently and peacefully, without violence, or noise; the bad angel, on the contrary, like drops of rain that fall pattering upon a rock. The contrary happens to hearts that are in a bad state. And why? Because the opposite spirit meets with resistance and has to force an entrance. Why should the spirit that is master and at home in the soul enter with violence? No body knocks at his own door.

Lastly, that we may avoid error, the 8th rule directs us to be on the alert, when we have consolations that bear all the marks of the good spirit in their nature, in their rise and appearance in our souls, lest by degrees, when these consolations last a long while, the evil spirit mingle with them something of his own. We ought not, therefore, to receive unconditionally as an inspiration of God, whatever appears and asserts itself during a long course of time. We should here, again, apply the test of the other rules. The older the cake, the more easily it gathers mould.

## RULES ABOUT SCRUPLES

### I. Meaning and Division of the Rules about Scruples.

St. Ignatius in his inquiry into the discernment of spirits treats of scruples also. This is their proper place, because, as he says, they are real influences of the bad spirit upon us, and may be of great importance in the spiritual life. They are on this account treated of separately.—St. Ignatius distinguishes two kinds of scruples: some regard sinful, others good works. Rules 1-6 treat of the first, the 6th of the second kind.—Rules 1 and 2 explain what a scruple is; 3 tells us what to think of scruples; 4 and 5 show us how the en-

emy avails himself of them, and what we ought to do against him.

2. What is a scruple? Let us first see what it is not. It is no scruple, when in the exercise of our judgment and free will, *ex proprio judicio et libertate*, and almost without doubt and uneasiness, we form through ignorance a judgment that something is a sin, which is not a sin, e. g., when we believe it sinful to have trodden through oversight upon a cross formed by two straws. This is not a scruple, but merely an error. And even a simple doubt, without uneasiness and with the resolution to have it cleared up, is not a scruple, but only a want of practical judgment.—What, then, is a scruple? A scruple is a doubt concerning a sin, coming from without (*extrinsecus*),<sup>(1)</sup> bringing along with it uneasiness and perplexity. The elements of a true scruple are doubt and uneasiness, which have been thrown in upon us from without. In a word, a scruple is an uneasy, groundless fear of sin.<sup>(2)</sup>

It follows from this, that in itself the scruple is in no wise good, that it is worthy neither of regard nor of commendation, and wholly the work not of God but of the enemy. He is the author and promoter of scruples; he alone profits by them. St. Ignatius tells us as much in the very title: *scrupulos et suasiones inimici . . . tentatio, quam inimicus infert, etc.* We may judge as much from the uneasiness and perplexity which are always the devil's work, and conceal the bad intention to ruin us and to lead us into sin.

3. What therefore are we to think of scruples? Just what we are to think of every snare and temptation of the enemy, of everything God permits, of every cross and suffering. They can benefit or harm us according to the use we make of them. God permits them only that they may be of service to us. And they can be so, in as much as they exercise us in watching over ourselves, whetting our hatred for sin, enlarging our prudence and insight, cleansing us from pride

<sup>(1)</sup> St. Ignatius explains the word *extrinsecus* very well in n. 4, when he says: *inimicus, cum non possit efficere, ut cadat (anima) in aliquid, quod speciem peccati habet, procurat efficere, ut ipsa judicet esse peccatum, ubi peccatum non est.* Compare also: *Examen Conscientiæ Generale*, §§ 1 and 2.

<sup>(2)</sup> St. Antoninus defines the scruple thus: *Vacillatio quædam exsurgens cum formidine ex aliquibus conjecturis debilibus et incertis.*

and freeing us from the penalties that still remain due to sin. They are an affliction, and affliction purifies. But they may do harm.

4. How does the enemy manage to make them harm us? By trying to push us to extremes. Coarse consciences he would make still coarser, delicate consciences still more delicate, until they can go no further. The ship that has sprung a leak, he tries to sink by widening the leak, the ship that has a sharp keel, he tries to capsize.

5. What ought we to do against him? Simply the contrary to what he wishes us to do, without however falling into the opposite extreme. Let us strengthen ourselves so as to keep the just mean and to bring ourselves gradually to a well-regulated state of conscience. This state will be obtained when we are as far removed from anxiety as from thoughtlessness.

This is what St. Ignatius says about scruples in connection with sin. He evidently has in view only mild scrupulosity which passes away. But there is another serious and harmful scrupulosity, about which we may here add a few remarks. It consists not in an isolated and occasional appearance of scruples but in a settled inclination and mania to give way to scruples. — The subject-matter of scrupulosity are, first of all, sins, already confessed or yet to be confessed; a groundless fear of having sinned in temptations, in our motives of action, in prayer; purely imaginary cases, and particularly predestination. — Signs of this scrupulosity are an excessive anxiety to secure certainty and evidence in all things, a morbid craving for self-examination, and a disposition to rehearse again and again the old story, to repeat confessions, and to exaggerate in confession. Next come certain principles. “I am not scrupulous; this is no scruple; the confessor does not understand me; he is no saint, else he would take it more seriously.” Lastly, outward, ridiculous gesticulations. — The sources and causes, without mentioning God who permits them, are the enemy, the faulty character of the scrupulous person, want of a clear mind and practical judgment, stubbornness (for the scrupulous are heretics in the moral domain), a melancholic, introspective and reserved temperament, an inclination to mistrust

and timidity. There is nothing childlike or devotional in scrupulosity. It wishes to come to terms with God as with an unpleasant creditor.—The motives for driving out scrupulosity with all our might are as plain as plain can be. Since we are to hold and maintain that even the transient scruple does not come from a good source, and has in it nothing to recommend it, no intellectual or moral value, how much more does all this apply in the present case. Scrupulosity is, moreover, a troublesome burden and a severe humiliation. The scrupulous person is a cross to himself, to his neighbor and especially to his confessor. Scrupulosity, too, serves God very poorly. If any progress be made at all, it is at best only such progress as is made when one walks with a pebble (scrupulus) in his shoe. The dividing lines between temptation and sin, between counsel and precept grow uncertain, hence the intellect ails; and lastly, scrupulosity may render a person a fit subject for the mad-house. We can hardly come off without sin. For scrupulosity is the hot-bed of obstinacy and disobedience. The semblance of sin is feared, but often not sin itself; and thus we “strain out a gnat and swallow a camel.” In the long run it must come to pass that languor and disgust enter into the spiritual life; for devotion and joy are absent. We have wasted our strength against imaginary enemies, and in the end have often none left against our real enemies. So we throw everything overboard. And it is precisely this our enemy has in view.—What remedies may be suggested against this kind of scrupulosity?—Persons inclined to be scrupulous should choose for prayer and meditation only cheering and encouraging subjects, accustom themselves to mild judgments, and labor perseveringly to secure confidence and childlike docility; they should obey blindly, not ask advice of many, especially of scrupulous persons, walk in the beaten path and act like other good people. They should not examine the state of their conscience too often, and last of all should give themselves earnestly to the occupations of their calling. Scrupulous persons, owing to their weakness, enjoy certain privileges which others do not. Thus, for example, they may follow, without fear, the direction of obedience, even in case they should imagine

they were committing sin. Indeed, they should regard themselves as incapable of deciding and judging for themselves and say to themselves: "You do not understand this; just do what others, who wish you well and are more intelligent than yourself, advise or command you." Moreover, they should believe that they have not sinned grievously unless they can swear to it. This, however, on the supposition that they habitually abhor mortal sin and, as a rule, avoid it. Lastly, they must not examine their conscience too much: for they are not capable of a very exact or searching examination of conscience. The spiritual director should be kind but firm in his treatment of the scrupulous person. He should never give reasons for his decision, because they only multiply scruples. Let his decision be short and unequivocal. So long as the scrupulous person obeys, let the director be mild; when decisions have already been given on the same point, let him be content with dismissing the subject. He should teach his penitent to despise scruples, and not let him know that he is improving.—The scrupulous person must submit to this treatment, if he wishes to be cured.<sup>(1)</sup>

6. But there are scruples about good works. Concerning them observe the following. First, examine whether it is really a scruple, i. e., a suggestion of the enemy. A scruple may be recognized principally by the uneasiness and confusion accompanying it. As long as these last, it would not be advisable to act, because we are not under the influence of the spirit of God.—When, however, great sacrifices are demanded of us, we should not confound the struggle of nature against making them with this uneasiness. This uneasiness is a petty, ridiculous dilemma, which we endure (*extrinsecus*) rather than desire; as, for example, "Shall I? Shall I not? Yes! No!"—so that even our prayer is disturbed.—Secondly, the enemy may be recognized by what he suggests. When it is something that would keep us from what our duty demands, or when it urges us on to something, which is not approved of in the Church, or is unsuited to our state of life, we may be sure that it is the enemy who

<sup>(1)</sup> Compare Father Faber's "Growth in Holiness," Chap. 17.

solicits us, and in this case we should not follow his suggestion. But if the thing suggested is not contrary to the obligations of our state of life and is approved of by the Church, then we ought to decide without uneasiness, or ask advice.

## RULES AND PRINCIPLES

### FOR THINKING AND ACTING IN CONFORMITY WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

1. In a few very significant, practical rules and principles, St. Ignatius sketches the genuine Catholic spirit, the spirit of loyalty to the Church, and of the true Christian life, the exact Catholic coloring, which is so often wanting even in Catholics.

2. He shows the nature of this spirit in the most important points of the practical Christian life; in faith and in obedience towards the Church (1, 9, 13), in the practice and customs of the Church, in the use of the holy sacraments (2), in worship (3, 8), in discipline (7), in the religious orders (4, 5), in the disposition of the Church towards temporal authority (10), in her method of teaching (11), in her doctrines about predestination, faith, good works, grace, and the wholesomeness of the fear of God (14, 18).—St. Ignatius in these few rules proscribes all open as well as secret aberrations from the true spirit of the Church, all public and private corrupters of ecclesiastical life, who have appeared in these latter times: Luther, Calvin and Jansenius. He sketches the whole of modern Church history in these few lines, and discloses moreover the means of the true reformation, which the Catholic Church has effected within her own pale, since the time when so many countries unfortunately drifted away from her into Protestantism.

3. To know these rules and to be practically master of them is of the greatest importance for all, not only for us, religious and apostles, because we, as none else, ought to possess and diffuse their spirit, but for all others, that they may make this spirit their own and live according to it.

4. The 1st, 9th, and 13th rules treat of prompt and child-like submission to the Church in matters of faith and ecclesi-

astical discipline. St. Ignatius does two things here. First, he tells us, wherein this submission consists. It consists in giving up every private opinion, every private spirit, *deposito omni privato iudicio*, in matters of faith and discipline, *ut veritatem assequamur . . . laudare præcepta*. Thus the fundamental principle of Protestantism is swept away and the divine authority of the Church recognized.—This readiness should go so far that, on all occasions and as a matter of course, we take sides with the Church, that we renounce every private opinion, no matter how solid or safe it may seem to us—*animum paratum et promptum gerendo ad quærendas rationes ad defendendum, nullatenus ad impugnandum . . . album, quod ego videam*—and that we do this with our whole heart, so as to make it a point even to hunt up reasons for the views of the Church. Hence childlike and blind attachment and submission, but in the right sense. Strictly speaking, our submission to the Church is not blind and should not be blind, that is, with respect to the motives for submitting ourselves to the Church (Cfr. 13). We well know that the Church is guided by the Holy Ghost and cannot err; whereas we, with all our knowledge and good-will, are apt to err. In the motive of faith there is a firmness, such as is not found in any natural knowledge or conviction. The example of white and black is given only for the sake of comparison.—Secondly, St. Ignatius gives us beautiful motives for this attachment to the Church. They are to be found in the short and energetic expressions: *sponsa Christi*—Christ and the Holy Ghost will not abandon her—and: *sancta mater nostra*. And what is the mother to a child? Everything—catechist, pastor, pope; and the child obeys, simply because it is the mother that commands, and because it knows that what the mother wishes is always for the best.—Moreover, the Church is a holy mother. But would she be holy, if she taught what was not true?—She is the *hierarchica ecclesia*. Our Church is not like Protestantism, composed only of individuals of equal rights, without a divine mission or Orders; but it is a multi-form, mighty and wonderful organization, with divinely granted powers,—a Church whose pedigree goes back to Christ, a Church which moves us to submission in faith and obedience, by her divine unity, infallibility, and invincibility,



5. The reception of the sacraments (2) is a sure sign of the Catholic spirit—a gauge free from deception, . . . *confessio sacerdoti* . . . hence no Lutheran confession. St. Ignatius fixes the time,—at least once a year, better every month, and best of all, according to circumstances, every week.

6. The 5th and 8th rules have reference to divine service, held publicly in the church. Here St. Ignatius enters into greater detail—*longas orationes* . . . *auditionem Missæ frequentem, psalmos, horas canonicas, omne officium divinum, omnem orationem*. Much prayer is in itself certainly according to the spirit of the Church. We see this in the Saints and in all good Christians. Nevertheless, the Church as such is very reasonable and short in her public, official service, so that nobody has a right to complain. Local excesses are not to be put to the account of the Church. We should, however, beware of criticising before others abuses on this point. Some persons always find divine service too long ; but the people are rather fond of long services.

7. In rules 4-8, St. Ignatius touches upon customs and institutions of ecclesiastical life, respect and high esteem for which are indubitable signs of the Catholic spirit—such as vows, the religious state, the veneration of Saints and relics, pilgrimages, indulgences, fasting and abstinence, and in general exercises of penance, exterior as well as interior.—The Catholic honors and loves all these as precious heirlooms of his Church, as blossoms of the spirit of God and of the Gospel. Protestantism will have nothing to do with them, and so has cast them off. We ought, therefore, to have a high esteem for, and to recommend the state of virginity, continence, works of supererogation, and bodily mortification according to the true spirit and mind of the Church.

8. In the 10th rule, St. Ignatius lays down a strong conservative principle, to wit, great respect for and submission to all authority, not only in sentiment, but also in our words. He says that we should always take sides with authority, honor and uphold its commands, and never criticise them before the people, so long as they contain nothing wrong, and even though they be not at all times the best or the most

prudent. Such criticism, says St. Ignatius, is always harmful, because it weakens the respect due to authority. In fact, to fulfil an imprudent command does less harm than to speak against it in the wrong place. Should we, however, be able to give better advice, or remove an evil, we may address ourselves to authority itself, or to such as are able to devise means. Had this been done, the so-called Reformation would never have been brought about, but in its stead there would have been a beneficent reform within the bosom of the Church.

9. The 11th rule contains a hint about the Church's method of teaching. We should approve of and praise not only the positive method—i. e. the method which is engaged not so much in proving and strengthening the doctrines of faith, as in turning them to good account for the Christian life, to the praise and service of God—but also the scholastic method, which was introduced by the later Doctors of the Church. The object of this method is to define exactly the teachings of faith and morals, to explain them, and by reasoning upon them to bring them nearer to our understanding. We must approve of this method, too, because the Church has approved, adopted and used it; because the Holy Ghost does not abandon the Church, but according to the needs of the times ever furnishes her with new and suitable means, and cares for her steady progress.—This progress is shown also in that the Doctors of later times have at their disposal, not only Holy Writ and the writings of the holy Fathers, but also the decisions of Councils, the Constitutions of the Church, and her varied experience. The scholastic method, besides, is more useful for exposing and refuting errors. It is on this account, that the opponents of the Church have an instinctive abhorrence of it. The arrogant self-sufficiency of the self-taught man, with his foggy jumble of phrases and mere erudition, cannot stand its ground before it. Every heretic has proved his opinion from the Bible and the holy Fathers.—This rule lately received a solemn sanction in the Encyclical of our holy Father Leo XIII, proclaiming St. Thomas the Patron of the philosophy and theology of the Church, and thereby sanctioning the scholastic method,

10. In the 12th rule, St. Ignatius warns us against speaking indiscreetly, imprudently, or in an exaggerated manner, by comparing living men with Saints. This is imprudent ; for we ought not to praise anyone before his death ; it is a mark of irreverence towards the Saints, and at best is wholly useless.

11. In the rules 14-18, St. Ignatius gives us some hints against Calvinistic, Jansenistic, and Lutheran principles concerning predestination, faith and grace. He remarks, that we should not ordinarily or *habitually* speak of predestination, on account of the danger of misunderstanding and scandal, and because it is of no advantage whatever. Just as little should we speak of faith and grace in a manner that might weaken zeal for good works, or the conviction of the existence and necessity of human freedom and its co-operation. We must believe, but with a living faith, i. e. in charity ; we must trust in God, yet co-operate with him as if everything depended upon ourselves. It is certain that no one will be saved without being predestined, but it is just as certain, that no one will be predestined without being obliged to co-operate for the attainment of his salvation.

12. In the 18th rule, the use of the servile fear of God is recommended ; not indeed the slavish (*serviliter servilis*), but that fear which strengthens the will against sin and contains the beginning of love.—Filial fear is the best, because it is always joined to love ; but if we are not able to attain to it, we should use servile fear, because it helps greatly to lift us out of sin and in the end leads to love. Justice also is an attribute of God and we worship and glorify it by fear.

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## A SHORT ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF THE EXERCISES

### ARRANGED FOR INSTRUCTIONS

The Book of the Exercises is a practical course for the whole spiritual life.

The spiritual life comprises the end of the spiritual life and the means to the end.

I. The end of the spiritual life, which must ever be present to our minds, is contained in Annot. 1.

II. The means of the spiritual life are divided into general and particular.—The general means consist in prayer and self-conquest; the particular, in directions for special conditions and occurrences in the spiritual life.

#### A.—GENERAL MEANS

##### I.—PRAYER

The Book of the Exercises teaches us especially the end of prayer and its various kinds.

a) The end of prayer, to wit, devotion, is explained in the 1st Annot. (definition of the Spiritual Exercises), as also, in the title of the Book of the Exercises: *exercitia spiritualia, ut homo se vincat*. Cf. Reg. Summ. 21, 22.

b) Kinds of prayer. We distinguish ordinary and higher prayer. In the ordinary, moreover, we have vocal and mental. We find the material and formal elements of vocal prayer in the third method of prayer and in the various additions for the Three Methods of Prayer.

##### *Mental Prayer*

a) Nature of mental prayer—Annot. 2, 3; exercit. 1 et 2 Hebd. 1<sup>o</sup>, where the different parts of meditation are examined.

β) Kinds of mental prayer. See the Chapter following the Three Methods of Prayer, page 127.

γ) Helps to mental prayer: The Additions. Time and duration of meditation, Annot. 12, 13.—Matter of mental prayer: the truths of faith of the four weeks, contained in the Gospel.

### *The Higher Prayer*

See the Chapter following the Three Methods of Prayer, page 128.

### 2.—SELF-CONQUEST

a) The place which self-conquest occupies in the spiritual life; its importance: in Annot. 1, tit. Exercit. It is the proximate end of the spiritual life.

b) Its nature, scope, which is, *ordinare vitam, quin se determinet ob ullam affectionem inordinatam*—hence, not blind rage, not the destruction of nature, but its purification, support, etc. Besides, not the rooting out, but the ennobling of the passions. Cfr. Addit. 10: *citra nocumentum*.

c) Division: interior and exterior, Addit. 10.

d) Practice: motives throughout the four weeks.

e) Principles: taking the offensive, Annot. 13; Reg. 8 de Victu. — Reg. 6 de Discr. Spir. Hebd. 1; de Regno Christi: *agere contra*;—3<sup>m</sup> Gradus Humilitatis.

Method for interior self-conquest: the Particular and General Examen.

Method for exterior self-conquest: Addit. 10; Reg. de Victu.

### B.—PARTICULAR MEANS

1. Rules for the Election.
2. Rules for the Discernment of Spirits; consolation and desolation.
3. Rules about Scruples.
4. Rules for thinking and acting in conformity with the Catholic Church.

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Such is the explanation of the Book of the Exercises. As we remarked in the beginning, it is a complete hand-book of the spiritual life, and especially of the asceticism of our Order. The Society, in its nature, end, and means, is founded on it, and came forth from it as from its mould. The Exer-

cises are the great military school, from which came forth the great apostles of our Order, who setting out to the east and west rescued so many nations and kingdoms from hell, and reconquered them for Christ and the Church. Even before our Rules existed, the schooling in the Exercises brought it to pass, that the members of the Society, though scattered all over the world, fought like one man, in the same spirit, with the same weapons, and with the same results. Divine Providence, too, in its kindness has made use of these Exercises as an instrument by no means unimportant in the glorious reform, which the Church has worked out within herself after the sad revolt of the North of Europe.

We ought, therefore, to welcome and honor it as a special mark of divine mercy towards us, that God in these latter days should have raised up in the Society, in the person of Very Rev. Father Roothaan, so incomparable a teacher and interpreter of the Spiritual Exercises, and through him should have so powerfully contributed to further our understanding of them. Nothing is more in keeping with our vocation, than to exert ourselves to gain a more profound knowledge of this book, and to fit ourselves for communicating to the world with a liberal and untiring hand the treasures we ourselves have acquired, for the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be honor and glory for ever.

*Hæc meditare, in his esto, . . . insta in illis. Hæc enim faciens et teipsum salvum facies et eos, qui te audiunt* (I. Tim. iv. 15, etc.).

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