

St. Albert the Great

THE PARADISE OF THE SOUL

Paradisus Animae, sive Libellus de Virtutibus

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Prologue

Of D. Albert the Great, Bishop of Regensburg, of the Order of Preachers, The Paradise of the Soul, or The Little Book on the Virtues.

Prologue.

A. There are certain vices that frequently put forward the appearance of virtues, so that, although they truly are vices, they are believed to be virtues. Thus severity is thought to be justice; bitterness of mind is called maturity; pleasant talkativeness is called affability; looseness is believed to be the joy of a spiritual mind; sluggishness or disordered sadness is judged to be gravity of morals; tepidity or torpor is believed to be discretion; superfluous adornment is believed to be cleanliness; overabundance in food and household is called honorableness; prodigality is called liberality; avarice is believed to be foresight; stubbornness is judged constancy; craftiness is called prudence; hypocrisy is called holiness; one uncaring in deeds is called meek; the curious person is called circumspect; the vainglorious person is called honorable; presumption is called hope; carnal love is judged charity; a forward accuser or corrector is called a zealot of justice; one who dissimulates is called patient; one fainthearted for correcting is called kind, meek, or peaceful; and so concerning similar things. But just as nothing good is bought with false coins, so neither is the kingdom of heaven obtained by false virtues.

B. There are also certain natural virtues, as though naturally inhering in human beings: such as natural humility, kindness, modesty, generosity, mercy, patience. By these, likewise, and by similar things, no one merits the eternal reward or the kingdom of God, but only by gratuitous virtues.

C. There are also certain gratuitous virtues that foolish people judge to be vices. Thus justice is judged to be severity; maturity among them is called bitterness of mind; foresight is called avarice; constancy is called stubbornness; and so concerning all the things said above. So too, what is done through humility is said to be done through vainglory. What is done through holiness, they say is done through hypocrisy or appearance. What is done by zeal for justice, they say is done by zeal of revenge. What is done from charity, they say is done from rancor or hatred. What is done through spiritual affection, they say is done because of carnal love. What is done with pure intention, they say is done for temporal consolation. And so concerning the others.

D. But since it is difficult to discern between vice and virtue, and since there are degrees in the several virtues, which first are infused into the soul from the mere liberality of God, when infused are rooted and increased, and when increased are perfected, one must behold most perfectly what are the true and perfect virtues of the soul, by which alone a human being is made pleasing before God. And first concerning charity, which is the mother and ornament of all the virtues,

Chapter I. On charity toward God.

Chapter I.

§ 1. On charity toward God.

True and perfect charity toward God exists when the soul, with all its powers, ardently pours itself into God, seeking in him no transitory or eternal advantage, but is affected toward God solely because of the goodness, holiness, perfection, and blessedness innate in him. For a delicate soul almost abominates loving God by way of advantage or reward. As God, with all his virtue, pours himself into the soul of a human being, never hoping for any usefulness from it, but desiring to communicate his natural blessedness to it. But one who loves God because he is good to him, and principally for this, that he may communicate his blessedness to him, is shown to have natural and imperfect charity.

B. The inducement of true charity is the true knowledge of God. For in him the matter of the whole affection consists: namely, nobility, holiness, power, wisdom, kindness, beauty, providence, etc. Likewise, the eternal, immeasurable, uninterrupted, and most faithful love of God toward us is inducive of true charity.

C. The Lord sets down the proof of true charity in John 14:21, saying: He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. D. Augustine is witness of this: "For," he says, "we love God insofar as we keep his precepts." The same must be understood of spontaneous vows, which bind equally with precepts. Blessed Gregory bears testimony to the Lord, saying: "Return inwardly to yourselves, dearest brothers. If you truly love God, examine it. Yet let no one believe himself, whatever his mind may have answered him without the attestation of work. Concerning love of the Creator, let tongue, mind, and life be examined. The love of God is never idle. For it works great things, if it exists. But if it refuses to work, it is not love." But this execution of works and observance of commandments must be purified in intention, lest they be done either from fear of some punishment or be fulfilled from love of reward, as D. Augustine testifies: "He loves God who keeps the things commanded, not because he is compelled either by the greatness of punishment or by greed for reward, but because what is commanded is best and honorable."

D. There are also two other signs of the truest charity toward God: namely, when a human being rejoices with God in all things that please him, by whatever person, at whatever time and hour, and in whatever place they are done. For natural love merits no praise from God, because it always bends back upon itself and seeks its own proper advantage; but only gratuitous love merits praise, which always tends into the other. The second sign is when a human being is saddened with God in all things that displease him, by whatever person, at whatever time and hour, and in whatever place they are done.

§ 2. On true charity toward one's neighbor.

A. True charity toward one's neighbor is to love one's neighbor as oneself, friend and enemy, as D. Augustine says: "To love one's neighbor as oneself, this is in God, unto God, and for the sake of God; for thus each person ought to love his neighbor as himself. For just as he desires every good for himself and flees every evil, so let him do for his neighbor." Or otherwise: as each person loves his own good in body and soul, in possessions and honor, and as each person in these four flees and hates every evil and loss of his own, so each person ought in these things to love every good of both friend and enemy, and to hate every loss. Although by precept he is not bound to be moved toward his neighbor as much, nor as ardently, as toward himself.

From love of a friend true charity cannot be discerned. For even the heathen love those who love them^[1]. But in love of an enemy true charity is discerned. For to love one loving us belongs to nature, which is not meritorious. But to love one not loving us belongs to grace. But still more excellently the truth of charity toward neighbor is discerned in the Gloss on Matthew, which says: "To love one loving us belongs to nature; but to draw one not loving us to love by benefits belongs to perfection." And although no one is bound by precept to love an enemy as much and as fervently as a friend, nevertheless happy and supremely perfect would he be who could love as much and more, and exhibit works of charity to an enemy as much as to a friend: to one reproving and correcting as much as to one flattering; to one insulting as much as to one praising. For as D. Chrysostom testifies: "There is nothing that makes one so like God as to be placable toward the malicious and those who harm." For certainly he would obtain greater grace and glory from persecution than from favor, if only he knew how to use these things in due manner. Thus enemies profited the holy martyrs much more for eternal glory than friends did.

B. Nature ought to induce us to love of neighbor, because every animal loves what is like itself, so also every human being loves a neighbor like himself^[2]. And because the image of God is in him. And the commandment is in Scripture.

C. The proofs of true charity toward neighbor are: truly to suffer with both enemy and friend in any adversity; truly and from the heart to rejoice together over every prosperity; these two things are very rare in the world.

D. The proofs of true hatred toward neighbor are when someone thinks of his neighbor with heaviness of mind; when he sees him with sadness of heart; when with bitterness of spirit he speaks with him, speaks about him, or hears him spoken about; when also he impedes every good of his, and what is useful to him, as much as he can; when he diminishes and perverts the good that is in him. The Lord Jesus did not do so to his betrayer Judas, for at the time of betrayal he refreshed him with his body and blood along with the other beloved apostles. And in the place of betrayal, not denying him a kiss, he greeted him most kindly, grieving more over his evil than over his own disadvantage, as D. Jerome says. But it is marvelous that anyone ever applauds himself concerning fraternal charity who bears these signs of hatred in his heart. It seems sufficient to many if they wish eternal life for their neighbors, which they can neither give nor take away, and which they would even wish well for Jews and pagans. Nor do they wish to remember that since the Lord laid down his soul for his enemies, we also are bound not only to love, but also to lay down our goods and our souls for Christian brothers in time of necessity. Prelates especially are bound to this.

E. Charity is fostered by two things. Toward God, by execution of the commandments, according to that: If you keep my precepts, you will remain in my love, as I also have kept my Father's precepts and remain in his love ^[3]. Toward neighbor, by compassion, according to that of Ecclesiasticus 7:38 and 39: Do not fail those who weep in consolation, and walk with those who mourn. Let it not weary you to visit the sick; for by these things you will be strengthened in love.

Notes

[1] Matthew 5:46 and 47. (*Matth. v, 46 et 47.*)

[2] Ecclesiasticus 13:19. (*Eccli. XIII, 19.*)

[3] John 15:10. (*Joan. XV, 10.*)

Chapter II. On Humility.

Chapter II.

On Humility.

A. True and perfect humility exists when glory already shown is despised and glory to be shown is not sought. The truly humble person always fears lest some glory be shown to him, and when it has been shown to him, shuddering, he is saddened in his marrow, knowing that glory and honor are due to God alone. The truly humble person never glories in any glory or grace, unless from this he intends to provide hearers with confidence toward God. But if something glorious about him, or some grace, is recited, he hears this with grief of heart and dejection of himself, knowing that what is ascribed to him belongs to God alone, to whom alone glory is to be given ^[1].

The truly humble person compares himself neither to a greater, nor to a lesser, nor to an equal; indeed, he believes no one inferior to himself, utterly despises no one, and unless he despises himself alone from the heart, and fervently desires to be despised by all, he greatly rejoices when he has been despised. Such a person fears no insult, because he loves no glory. There is one who wickedly humbles himself, and his inward parts are full of deceit ^[2]. But the truly humble person, as D. Bernard testifies ^[3], wishes to be thought vile, not to be proclaimed humble. One who loves humility ought to plant the root of humility in his heart, that is, to know his own frailty, so that he considers not only how vile he is, but also how vile he could be. Indeed also how vile he would become today, unless God violently drew him back from sins and withdrew temptations from him. There each person can know himself, and also from his frailty know himself to be disposed toward the abyss and whirlpool of all vices, according to that of Micah 6:14: Your humiliation is in

your midst.

B. Frequent exercise in despised works induces one to true humility, sacred Scripture saying that he who flees works of humility will never arrive at the virtue of humility.

C. True humility is fostered from this, that a human being truly knows that by himself he can conquer no carnal or spiritual temptation, nor can he complete even the least good work pleasing to God without the special help of Jesus Christ.

D. The proof of true humility is when a human being casts himself down so far that he feels himself unworthy of every grace, and does not even dare to desire any grace. And if some grace from God has flowed upon him without his desire, he receives it with fear. Indeed he judges it more praiseworthy to lack the grace of God than to have it, since he has so often in diverse ways demerited and defiled it, and never enjoyed it according to the ordinance of God. Likewise, a proof of true humility is always to seek the lowest place, the lowest companions, the lowest office, and the lowest garments.

E. Pride of mind can be recognized in two ways. By an extrinsic proof, according to that: The clothing of the body, the laughter of the teeth, and the gait of a human being declare concerning him ^[4]; as a good or bad tree is discerned from good or bad fruit, because all deeds proceed from the heart, or, in another reading, from thought, as D. Jerome says ^[5]. As a good or bad odor comes forth from an uncorrupted or corrupted stomach, as from good or bad spices placed in the stomach; and as an immodest eye, as D. Augustine testifies, is the messenger of an immodest heart, so exterior signs betray the intention of human beings.

Pride can be recognized by an intrinsic proof when someone in his heart is pleased with himself, prefers himself to others, and desires to be preferred; and when in his deeds he desires and affects to please human beings. Such a person does not agree with the humble master Jesus Christ, who did not please himself, as the Apostle Paul testifies, but awaited the reproach of men and misery ^[6]. Nor did he come to be over others, but to be under them, as he himself testifies: The Son of Man did not come to be ministered to, but to minister ^[7]. Therefore such a master scatters the bones of disciples who wish to please not God but human beings; these, as the Psalmist testifies, will at last be confounded, because God has despised them ^[8].

Notes

[1] 1 Timothy 1:17. (*I ad Timoth. I, 17.*)

[2] Ecclesiasticus 19:23. (*Eccli. XIX, 23.*)

[3] St. Bernard, Sermon 16 on the Song of Songs. (*S. Bernardus, Serm. 16 in Cantica.*)

[4] Ecclesiasticus 20:27. (*Eccli. XX, 27.*)

[5] St. Jerome, Letter to the virgin Principia. (*S. Hieronymus, Epist. ad Principiam virginem.*)

[6] Psalm 68:21. (*Psal. LXVIII, 21.*)

[7] Matthew 20:28. Compare Philippians 2:7. (*Matth. XX, 28. Cf. ad Philip. II, 7.*)

[8] Psalm 52:6. (*Psal. LII, 6.*)

Chapter III. On obedience toward God.

Chapter III.

§ 1. On obedience toward God.

A. True and perfect obedience toward God exists when a human being diligently and often reconsiders what most pleases God, and at any time and place, and to what the wise God has especially ordered him; and with his whole effort he always strives to fulfill this.

§ 2. On obedience toward superiors.

B. But true obedience toward the vicars of Jesus Christ, that is, prelates, exists when the subject faithfully and gladly executes what is most contrary to himself, never manifesting by sign, word, or deed that the precept is contrary to him. But true obedience cannot be discerned there where the subject thinks up the precept and himself dictates the work that has pleased him, as D. Augustine says: "Your best minister, O Lord, is he who does not look more to hear from you what he himself has wished, but rather to will what he has heard from you ^[1]."

The truly obedient person never waits for a precept, but knowing or believing only the will of the prelate, he fervently executes it as a precept, after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom the will and good pleasure of the Father was the highest command.

The truly obedient person never arranges concerning his own deeds, nor judges according to his own sense, nor indicates his sense about his deeds to anyone, since he has neither willing nor unwilling. But every ordering concerning himself he simply and securely commits to God and to the prelate.

The truly obedient person does not discern whether it is good or bad. Thus Abraham did not discern whether to kill his son, at the Lord's command, was good or bad. Nor does he discern between good and better, for he always judges what is commanded, even in doubt, to be best, unless the command should manifestly appear to be unjust. Then, according to the counsel of D. Gregory, "it must be known that evil must never be done through obedience, but sometimes a good that is being done ought to be omitted through obedience ^[2]." Again, D. Gregory says: "But because sometimes the prosperous things of this world, and sometimes adverse things, are commanded to us, it must be known above all that obedience sometimes, if it has something of its own, is nothing. But sometimes, if it does not have something of its own, it is least. For when success of this world is commanded, when a higher place is ordered, the one who obeys so as to receive these things empties out for himself the virtue of obedience if he also pants after these things from his own desire. For he does not direct himself under obedience who, for receiving the prosperous things of this life, serves the lust of his own ambition. Again, when contempt of the world is commanded, when reproaches and insults are ordered to be obtained, unless the soul seeks these things from itself, it diminishes the merit of obedience for itself, because it descends unwilling and reluctant to those things that are despised in this life ^[3]." And a little later: "Therefore obedience ought both in adversities to have something of its own, and again in prosperities to have absolutely nothing of its own. Thus in adversities it may be the more glorious insofar as it is joined even by desire to the divine order; and in prosperities it may be the truer insofar as it is thoroughly separated in mind from that present glory itself, which it receives divinely."

C. The inducement of true obedience is the highest obedience of Jesus Christ, who not only obeyed God the Father through all things, saying, Nevertheless not my will, but yours be done ^[4], but was also subject to good and bad human beings, indeed even to demons.

Likewise, because all sensible and insensible things obey God, and he subjected those things to the human being so that he might know that he must be subjected to God. The sun and moon obeyed Joshua. The earth obeyed Moses when it swallowed Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; the sea obeyed Peter for walking, and Moses when it submerged Pharaoh and his army. Serpents obeyed the magi in Egypt. Beasts obeyed hermits and the holy Fathers in Egypt, as is read in the Lives of the Fathers. Air, snow, and hail obeyed Samuel. Rain obeyed Elijah, and fire likewise obeyed him, which devoured two captains of fifty. Birds obeyed the most holy Father Francis; demons obeyed the Apostles; and illnesses obeyed holy men, by whom they were delivered. And many creatures obeyed Moses in Egypt. And because all things obey God in heaven, under heaven in purgatory, and in hell, therefore a human being ought deservedly to obey God in all things, by carrying out his precepts and will.

D. D. Bernard has the proof of true obedience: "The faithful obedient person knows no delays, flees tomorrow, is ignorant of tardiness, anticipates the one commanding; he prepares eyes for sight, ears for

hearing, tongue for voice, hands for work, feet for the journey; he gathers his whole self, so that he may gather the will of the one commanding ^[5]." And the same D. Bernard says: "Every good obedient person gives his willing and his unwilling, namely into the hands of his prelate, so that he can say: My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready ^[6]. Ready to do whatever you command; ready at a nod, more quickly than a nod, to obey; ready to be free for you, to minister to neighbors, to guard the mind, and to rest in contemplation of heavenly things ^[7]."

E. The proof of disobedience is when a subject considers the mandate of the prelate unjust and, because of this, murmurs in his heart. Then he excuses himself that he cannot and ought not fulfill the mandate. Afterwards he subtly thinks up diverse ways of escape. Finally he brings in some who by counsels or prayers may impede or retract the mandate. Abraham did not do so; he went by night so that he might fulfill the command suddenly, leaving the servants at the foot of the mountain lest they impede him in the killing of his dearest son; therefore he won a large blessing for himself and for his seed ^[8].

Notes

[1] St. Augustine, Confessions, book 10, chapter 26. (*S. Augustinus, Lib. X Confessionum, cap. 26.*)

[2] St. Gregory the Great, Moralia, book 35, chapter 14. (*S. Gregorius M., Lib. XXXV Moraliū, cap. 14.*)

[3] The same, in the same place. (*Idem, Ibidem.*)

[4] Luke 22:42. (*Luc. XXII, 42.*)

[5] St. Bernard, Sermon on the virtue of obedience and its degrees, fourth degree. (*S. Bernardus, Serm. de virtute obedientiae et ejus gradibus, gradu quarto.*)

[6] Psalm 107:2 and 56:8. (*Psal. CVII, 2 et LVI, 8.*)

[7] St. Bernard, Book of Meditations, chapter 4. (*S. Bernardus, Lib. Meditat. cap. 4.*)

[8] Compare Genesis 22:1 and following. (*Cf. Genes. XXII, 1 et seq.*)

Chapter IV. On Patience.

Chapter IV.

On Patience.

A. True and perfect patience exists when someone patiently sustains injuries, not only when he is guilty, but also when he is innocent, after the example of blessed Job saying: I have not sinned, and my eye remains in bitternesses ^[1]. And although injury is more intolerable to the innocent than to the guilty, nevertheless injury can and ought to be borne much more sweetly when nothing bites the conscience concerning any fault than if, some fault preceding, he had merited the trouble. Blessed Peter testifies, saying: Let none of you suffer as a homicide, or thief, or slanderer, or one coveting the things of others. But if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name ^[2]. And above: For it is better, doing good, if the will of God should will it, to suffer than doing evil ^[3]. Again above: For what glory is it if, sinning and being buffeted, you endure? But if, doing good, you endure patiently, this is grace before God ^[4].

B. That patience is praiseworthy which patiently bears injuries brought upon it not only by evil persons, but also by those who seem to be good and friends; and not only for evil works, but truly also for benefits. Then the soul that is a friend of God is among daughters like a lily among thorns ^[5]. For although a lily is pierced by thorns, nevertheless it retains its whiteness, emitting a stronger scent than if it were not pierced. So the soul, bride of God, if it is pierced by those who seem to be of the number and fellowship of God's children, is nevertheless not provoked to impatience, but tries most diligently to preserve the whiteness of a good conscience and the scent of a good reputation.

C. He is truly patient who not only patiently tolerates troubles brought upon him, but also desires troubles to be brought, after the example of Jesus Christ saying: My heart has awaited reproach and misery ^[6]. The truly patient person does not murmur amid lashes, after the example of Job, who amid pressures neither spoke any

foolish thing against God, but rejoices with a cheerful mind over the troubles brought upon him and gives thanks from the heart ^[7]. The truly patient person never excuses himself for an injury brought upon him, even when asked, committing himself in all things to the most faithful God, who surely in his own time will manifest the innocence of all; as the Lord Jesus, questioned by Pilate, did not answer. The truly patient person complains to no one about his injury, because the mind is sometimes lightened by complaint and excuse, and he does not care at all for that lightening. But alone with God he carries his trouble until the kind and faithful Lord drives it away by inward consolation.

D. There are three things that rightly induce to true patience. One is to know that, as our sins require, we have merited the eternal and most bitter punishment of Gehenna; in recompense for this we are afflicted with bodily trouble. Another is that the Lord Jesus Christ, over a long time, deserved many, various, and great injuries, so that, repaying him in turn, we may be troubled for a short time. The third is that God himself, the just one, according to the length, magnitude, and roughness of troubles, will repay every length, duration, and delight and sweetness of joys. The apostle Paul testifies, saying: For that which is at present momentary and light in our tribulation works in us above measure, in sublimity, an eternal weight of glory ^[8].

E. The proof of true patience is not to vindicate oneself when one can, and also to prohibit vengeance by others. After the example of David, who forbade Shimei to be killed, who, throwing stones and mud against him, called him a man of blood ^[9]. Rather, the truly patient person devoutly supplicates for those doing injury; the Lord Jesus Christ did this efficaciously, praying for his crucifiers ^[10], and blessed Stephen for those stoning him ^[11]. Indeed he also compels the Lord to pity those doing injury, as Moses did, saying: Either forgive them this fault, or if you do not, blot me out of your book that you have written ^[12]. God gladly hears such prayers and grants them. Hence these, namely David, Christ, and Stephen, were heard for their adversaries.

F. The proof of impatience is when someone, because of trouble brought upon him, from an interior movement spontaneously omits good works that he conveniently could and ought to do; for then God pays the trouble inflicted by a human being. And the same interior movement can scarcely hide itself unless it breaks out either in countenance, or in gestures, or in words. This is the most dangerous impatience, whose vengeance turns against innocent God.

Notes

[1] Job 17:2. (*Job, XVII, 2.*)

[2] 1 Peter 4:15 and 16. (*I Petri, IV, 15 et 16.*)

[3] The same, 3:17. (*Ibid., III, 17.*)

[4] The same, 2:20. (*Ibid., II, 20.*)

[5] Song of Songs 2:2. (*Cantic. II, 2.*)

[6] Psalm 68:20. (*Psal. LXVIII, 20.*)

[7] Job 1:22. (*Job. I, 22.*)

[8] 2 Corinthians 4:17. (*II ad Corinth. IV, 17.*)

[9] 2 Samuel 16:7. (*II Regum, XVI, 7.*)

[10] Luke 23:34. (*Luc. XXIII, 34.*)

[11] Acts 7:60. (*Act. VII, 60.*)

[12] Exodus 32:31 and 32. (*Exod. XXXII, 31 et 32.*)

Chapter V. On Poverty.

Chapter V.

On Poverty.

A. True and perfect poverty is to relinquish all things for God, spontaneously and gladly; to possess nothing except bare necessity, and to feel oneself unworthy of that same necessity; indeed sometimes, for God and for love of poverty, gladly to lack even that necessity itself. For where there is no necessity, there true poverty cannot be discerned. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ lacked the necessity of food, since neither he nor his disciples, rubbing ears of grain, could have bread. He similarly lacked the necessity of garments when, as D. Bernard testifies ^[1], before the cross he was utterly stripped. He also, thirsting on the cross, could not have a drink of water, nor a stone, nor a board, on which, dying, he might recline his crucified head. Alas! how often there is superfluity where true necessity is believed to be.

B. The true poor person desires no transitory things; indeed he rejects things offered, after the example of Elisha, who did not accept the gifts of Naaman ^[2], and the example of Daniel, who despised the gifts of King Belshazzar ^[3]. That person truly loves poverty who would rather merit through poverty a small glory in the heavenly kingdom than a great one through riches. And this because of conformity to Jesus Christ.

C. According to D. Bernard, three things ought to induce us to love of true poverty: "Nothing," he says, "is dearer to God, nothing more lovable to angels, nothing more fruitful to human beings, than to finish life in poverty by obeying." And that poverty pleases God the same Bernard testifies: "At the left hand of God," he says, "are riches and glory; at the right hand is length of life. The eternal abundance of all these things was available in the heavens, but poverty was not found in them. Moreover on earth this kind abounded and superabounded, and the human being did not know its price. Therefore the Son of God, desiring this, came down so that he might choose it for himself and by his own valuation make it precious also for us ^[4]."

There is also another inducement of true poverty, namely the glory of sitting beside the Lord, coming from the fact that poor ignoble persons will sit at the side of Christ in judgment, judging the noble and the rich. Ah, how praiseworthy it is before God purely to relinquish all things for him, spontaneously to become poor for love of God, and to trust in God above all things. He is so powerful that once or twice a day he can minister necessary things to the body, which are reckoned least before God. For he gives these more abundantly to enemies than to friends. Likewise he is powerful, day and night and at every moment, to minister to the spirit an abundance of spiritual gifts, which are greatest before God. Nor are these communicated to enemies, but only to the good, who are his friends.

D. The proof of true poverty is to have no solicitude about transitory things, but simply and securely to commit oneself to God, who always generously supplies necessary things to birds and worms. And especially to young ravens, crying in the nest from hunger; the old black raven, because of their whiteness, as if they were not his offspring, abandons them hungry. They are fed either from the largess of God or from the dew of the air until, when they grow black, the raven assists them; or they swallow gnats and flies that cling to the foam of their beaks, while, still hungry, they do not cease to cry strongly.

E. The proof of false poverty or avarice is gladly to ask for gifts beyond necessity, or gladly and frequently to accept them. Such a person sells his liberty, according to that saying of the Philosopher: "To accept gifts is to sell liberty ^[5]." Scripture also says: You shall not accept gifts, because they blind the eyes of the wise and change the words of the just ^[6]. For how is he a lover of poverty who wishes to sustain no lack, and gladly and frequently accepts gifts that are not necessary? Indeed he asks for them, extorts them with a certain subtlety, and keeps them beyond necessity.

Notes

[1] St. Bernard, Treatise on the Passion of the Lord, chapter 5. (*S. Bernardus, Tractatu de Passione Domini, cap. 5.*)

[2] 4 Kings 5:15 and following. (*IV Regum, V, 15 et seq.*)

[3] Daniel 5:17. (*Daniel, V, 17.*)

[4] St. Bernard, Sermon on the Vigil of the Nativity of Christ. (*S. Bernardus, Serm. in Vigilia nativitatis Christi.*)

[5] Publilius Syrus, the mime-writer. (*Publius Mimus.*)

Chapter VI. On Chastity.

Chapter VI.

On Chastity.

A. True and perfect chastity exists when not only the body is guarded from carnal pollution, but indeed also the soul is kept clean from carnal concupiscence^[18]. After the example of Sarah saying: You know, Lord, that I have never desired a man, and I have kept my soul clean from all concupiscence^[19]. Indeed also from those things that provide occasion for concupiscence. And this is what follows in the same place, 10:17: I never mixed myself with those playing, nor did I make myself a participant with those who walk in levity.

B. He truly loves chastity who, through virginal chastity, if it were possible, would rather choose a moderate grace in the present and glory in the future because of conformity to Christ Jesus than if he could merit greater grace and glory through the debt of marriage.

C. The example of our Lord Jesus Christ, of his mother, and of the holy virgins ought to induce us to love of chastity; they formerly, for the preservation of chastity, despised the kingdoms of the world and of their own accord lost life. Such were blessed Agnes, Catherine, Agatha, and countless others like these. And especially the chastity of pagan women and virgins, concerning whom D. Jerome writes that they chose death so that they might preserve modesty^[20]. Likewise, the cleanness and liberty following chastity ought to induce and invite us to chastity. Likewise, the glory promised to chastity by our Lord Jesus Christ: He who conquers, he says, namely the concupiscence of the flesh, I will grant to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat with my Father on his throne^[21]. For incorruption makes one be next to God^[22].

D. What preserve chastity, and are inducements of the same, are sparseness of food, vileness of dress, bodily discomfort, and fleeing place and time opportune for immodesty. If Dinah, daughter of Jacob, had done this, she would not have been captured when she came to the feast to see the women of that region^[23]. Likewise, one must avoid all suspect persons. Every male ought to be suspect to any female. For from this Tamar, daughter of David, was corrupted by her own brother Amnon, because she did not suspect him when she ministered to him alone as though to a sick man^[24]. Similarly any woman, even a holy one, ought to be suspect to each man, according to the counsel of D. Jerome saying: "If you wish to keep chastity, if you see a woman, however well-conducted, love her in mind, not by bodily presence."

But the chief preservative of chastity is to delight in the Lord; for then all other things grow worthless. "For once the spirit has been tasted, all flesh loses savor^[25]." Hence D. Gregory says: "For one who is conquered by love of earthly things is by no means delighted in God. Indeed the soul can never be without delight; for it is delighted either in the lowest things or in the highest. And the more it is exercised with higher zeal toward the highest things, the more it grows dull with greater distaste toward the lowest. And the more sharply it burns with care toward the lowest, the more in a damnable time it grows cold from the highest. For both cannot be loved simultaneously and equally."

E. The proof of true chastity is the restraint of the five senses from the enticements of the flesh, and the withdrawal of the heart from vanities, thoughts, and delights. For from delight of sight in seeing, of taste in tasting, of smell in smelling, of touch in touching, of feet in walking, of mouth in laughing and speaking, carnal desires are accustomed to be born, which either soften or incline the soul toward immodesty.

F. The proof or inducement of immodesty is intemperance of drink and food. For from this Noah was immodestly made naked^[26], and Lot committed incest with his own daughters^[27]. Therefore the Apostle commands, saying: Do not be drunk with wine, in which there is luxury^[28], namely by occasion.

Likewise, an immodest eye is the messenger of an immodest heart, as D. Augustine testifies. Similarly immodest words, an immodest gait, and conversation with women, as Ecclesiasticus testifies: Because of the appearance of a woman many have perished, and from this concupiscence blazes up like fire ^[15]. Similarly, conversation of a man inflames a woman.

Likewise, diligent consideration of the gait and form of another provokes to immodesty. Ecclesiasticus dissuades this, saying: Do not gaze at a virgin, lest perhaps you be scandalized by her beauty ^[16]. The same thing must be guarded by a woman toward a man: that she not think about the man, and that she not have her eyes toward him; and likewise by a man toward a woman. Job followed this saving counsel: I made, he says, a covenant with my eyes, so that I would not even think about a virgin ^[17]. This is more than merely guarding against the company of virgins.

Notes

[15] Matthew 5:46 and 47. (*Matth. v, 46 et 47.*)

[16] Ecclesiasticus 13:19. (*Eccli. XIII, 19.*)

[17] John 15:10. (*Joan. XV, 10.*)

[18] Tobit 3:16. (*Tob. III, 16.*)

[19] Tobit 3:16. (*Tob. III, 16.*)

[20] Compare St. Jerome, in the letter to Demetrias on preserving virginity, and in the letter to the widow Geruntia on monogamy. (*Cf. S. Hieronymum, In epist. ad Demetriadem de servanda virginitate, et in epist. ad Geruntiam viduam de monogamia.*)

[21] Revelation 3:21. (*Apocal. III, 21.*)

[22] Wisdom 6:20. (*Sapient. VI, 20.*)

[23] Genesis 34:1 and following. (*Genes. XXXIV, 1 et seq.*)

[24] 2 Samuel 13:1 and following. (*II Regum, XIII, 1 et seq.*)

[25] St. Bernard. (*S. Bernardus.*)

[26] Genesis 9:21. (*Genes. IX, 21.*)

[27] Genesis 19:30 and following. (*Genes. XIX, 30 et seq.*)

[28] Ephesians 5:18. (*Ad Ephes. V, 18.*)

[15] Ecclesiasticus 9:9. (*Eccli. IX, 9.*)

[16] The same, verse 3. (*Ibid., v. 3.*)

[17] Job 31:1. (*Job, XXXI, 1.*)

[18] 1 Corinthians 10:32 and 33. (*I ad Corinth. X, 32 et 33.*)

[19] Psalm 47, and 144:3. (*Psal. XLVII, et CXLIV, 3.*)

[20] St. Augustine, Confessions, book 1, chapter 4. (*S. Augustinus, Lib. I Confessionum, cap. 4.*)

[21] Genesis 16:12. (*Genes. XVI, 12.*)

[22] Compare Zechariah 2:8. (*Cf. Zachar. II, 8.*)

[23] Compare Matthew 27:51 and following. (*Cf. Matth. XXVII, 51 et seq.*)

[24] 2 Corinthians 11:29. (*II ad Corinth. XI, 29.*)

[25] Isaiah 53:4. (*Isa. LIII, 4.*)

[26] 1 Corinthians 12:26. (*I ad Corinth. XII, 26.*)

[27] Ecclesiasticus 7:38 and 39. (*Eccli. VII, 38 et 39.*)

[28] 2 Timothy 2:12. (*II ad Timoth. II, 12.*)

Chapter VII. On Abstinence.

Chapter VII.

On Abstinence.

True and perfect abstinence is only the use of necessary things, food and clothing, and a complete withdrawal of delightful and superfluous things, of those things that are made with much diligence and obtained at great expenses. After the example of St. John the Baptist, who ate locusts and leaves of milky trees having the taste of honey, drank water, and had clothing of camel hairs ^[1]. Hence the Apostle says: Having food and things with which we may be covered, let us be content with these ^[2]. For a servant of God ought not to have clothing for beauty or for delight, but to cover his nakedness, as the Ordinary Gloss says on Matthew concerning the clothing of John.

B. He keeps and loves true abstinence who not only gladly abstains from delightful things that he does not have and that are illicit for him, but also spontaneously and purely for God avoids delightful things that he has and can have, which he could use licitly and meritoriously, whether they are costly, or cheap, or delightful. For if someone were more delighted in porridge than in partridges, in water than in wine, it would be more acceptable to God for him to abstain from porridge than from partridges, from water than from wine. For D. Augustine says: "Any delicacies, if they are taken without desire, do no harm; and cheap foods accepted delightfully or appetitively impede the virtue of perfect abstinence. For David poured out water wrongly desired, which he did not dare to drink because he had desired it exceedingly ^[3]. Elijah ate flesh not desired, but sent by God through a raven ^[4]. Esau testifies to this, who lost an irrecoverable blessing not because of a hen but because of a lentil dish ^[5]." Nor must one abstain only from delights of the body, but also from those things that delight the soul, namely vanities, vain conversations, temporal joy, mortal sin, and carnal friendship. This abstinence is better and also more praiseworthy than the first.

C. There are two inducements of true abstinence: one, that we have never received the gifts of God with due gratitude, and we never enjoy them for the due end, nor according to divine ordering, and from this we incur the grave wrath of God. The other is that we must render a strict account concerning all gifts received, namely for what end we took them, whether for our necessity or for the common usefulness. But concerning those things from which each person abstains, he need not render an account.

A twofold usefulness follows from abstinence, namely knowledge of divine secrets and the hearing of desires. These two are evident in Daniel, who, when he did not wish to use the royal food and drink but water with vegetables, surpassed all magi and soothsayers in knowledge of visions and dreams. Second, because at his prayers the seven years during which Nebuchadnezzar had to live as a beast were changed into seven months. And when the same Daniel had obtained from God for kings the spirit of permitting the people to return to Jerusalem, he also obtained for the people the will of returning, when they were delaying to return. He was heard in many of his desires and mysteries because of abstinence. He himself testifies to this, saying: In those days I, Daniel, was mourning during the days of three weeks; I did not eat desirable bread, and flesh and wine did not enter my mouth; nor was I anointed with ointment ^[6]. And therefore the angel said to him: From the first day on which you set your heart to understand, so that you might afflict yourself in the sight of your God, your words have been heard ^[7]. A third can be added, that abstinence itself is an obtaining of God's mercy. This is clear in the Ninevites, who through abstinence obtained God's mercy when Jonah was preaching ^[8].

D. We can marvel at, but not imitate, the abstinence of the ancient priests. D. Jerome writes of them that they always abstained from meats and wine, because of the thinness of sense and dizziness of head that they suffered from little food, and especially because of the appetite of lust that is accustomed to be born from these foods and from this drink. They rarely ate bread, lest they burden the stomach. And if they sometimes ate, they took crushed hyssop together in the food, so that by its heat they might digest that heavier food. They knew oil only in vegetables, and even this little, for removing nausea and roughness of taste. What should I say about birds? Since they avoided eggs because of flesh, and milk; they said the one was liquid flesh, the other blood, with only the color changed.

E. The proof of true abstinence is when someone not only refuses to use costly and delicate things in health, but also receives them with grief of mind when sickness or another necessity compels. Likewise, when he not only abstains from delicate, costly, and superfluous things, but even sometimes withdraws necessary things from himself so that he can share with other needy persons. According to that saying of D. Jerome: "What you were about to eat if you were not fasting, give to the poor, so that the fasting of the body may be health of the soul, not profit of the purse, etc."

F. But the proof of false abstinence is to avoid costly and delicate things only at the time when they are not available; or because of vainglory, that one may be praised; or because of sparingness, lest one be impoverished; or because of avarice, that one may be enriched; or for avoiding bodily sickness; or for avoiding infamy and detraction; or for obtaining some dignity or transitory usefulness, and not for meriting grace in the present and glory in the future.

Notes

[1] Compare Matthew 3:4. (*Cf. Matth. III, 4.*)

[2] 1 Timothy 6:8. (*I ad Timoth. VI, 8.*)

[3] Compare 2 Samuel 23:15 and following, and 1 Chronicles 11:17 and following. (*Cf. II Regum, XXIII, 15 et seq., et I Paralip. XI, 17 et seq.*)

[4] Compare 1 Kings 17:6. (*Cf. III Regum, XVII, 6.*)

[5] Compare Genesis 25:29 and following. (*Cf. Genes. XXV, 29 et seq.*)

[6] Daniel 10:2 and 3. (*Daniel. X, 2 et 3.*)

[7] The same, verse 12. (*Ibid. v. 12.*)

[8] Jonah 3:5 and following. (*Jonae, III, 5 et seq.*)

Chapter VIII. On Prudence.

Chapter VIII.

On Prudence.

A. True and perfect prudence is always to strive toward knowledge of the divine nature and the depth of human misery. D. Augustine desired this prudence, saying: "O God, always the same, may I know myself, may I know you ^[1]."

B. He has true prudence who solicitously labors to know what is best, and embraces this with his whole effort, and what is worst, and detests this with his whole heart. He is truly prudent who frequently weighs what is to come for the good and what for the evil; how great a delight it is for the good to be united eternally to the highest good, and how great a bitterness for the evil to be separated eternally from the highest good. He enjoys true prudence who flees above all every thing that separates for a time from familiarity with God, namely venial sin, and that which always separates from the enjoyment of God, namely mortal sin. Likewise he uses true prudence who loves all things that bring one near to God, namely good works, and the things that unite eternally to God, namely the virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

C. The inducement of true prudence is the example of the philosophers, who labored so much for knowledge that, as D. Jerome writes, they fled the crowds of cities and people, and suburban little gardens, where the field is watered by streams, and the foliage of trees and whispering of birds, or enticements of the eyes, lest by luxury and abundance of resources the strength of the soul should be softened and its prudence defiled. For it is useless to see often those things by which you have at some time been captured, and to commit yourself to experience of those things which you can hardly do without. Similarly the Pythagoreans were accustomed to dwell in desert places. And we read that some dug out their own eyes, lest through the sight of them they be called away from contemplation of philosophy. But if someone thinks that he enjoys abundance of foods and drinks and can be free for wisdom, that is, to live amid delights and not be entangled or held by

the vices of delights, he deceives himself. For our sense thinks on what it sees, hears, smells, tastes, and handles, and appetite is drawn to that by whose pleasure it is captured. How much more we, who ought to study divine wisdom.

The damnation of many through imprudence ought to induce us to the same. According to that of Isaiah: Therefore my people were led captive, because they did not have knowledge ^[2]. And Baruch: Because they did not have wisdom, they perished through their own foolishness ^[3].

D. The office of prudence is to order the thoughts of the heart, lest they wander outside God; the affections of the mind, lest they be occupied about creatures; the wills, lest they be turned away from God; intentions, lest they be mixed, but purified; judgments and suspicions, so that they may be turned to the better. Likewise it ought to order all words, deeds, and gait, so that all things may be done for the due end, for common usefulness and the correction of all. For, as Solomon testifies, the wisdom of a human being shines in his face ^[4], that is, in exterior conduct. One so ordered has the proof of true wisdom. Likewise, D. Bernard says of this: "By daily discussion examine your life. Attend diligently how much you have advanced, how much you have fallen back; what kind you are in morals, what kind in affections; how like and unlike God. Study most diligently to know yourself, because you are much better if you have known yourself than if, neglecting yourself, you have known the courses of the stars and the powers of herbs."

E. The proof of false prudence is to strive to know the courses of the stars, the powers of herbs, and the virtues of gems only for profit. For such knowledge does not build up, but puffs up. Likewise, to be crafty in secular business indicates false prudence; indeed it is foolish, as the Apostle testifies, who says: The wisdom of this world is foolishness before God ^[5]. Alas, many are such; therefore the Lord Jesus complains, saying: The children of this age are more prudent than the children of light in their generation ^[6]. Likewise, others are subtle for thinking up wickednesses and new inventions, but blind for considering the will of God. Jeremiah says of such: They are wise to do evils, but they have not known how to do good ^[7]. Such persons, as the Apostle says, saying and believing themselves to be wise, have become foolish ^[8].

Notes

[1] St. Augustine, Soliloquies, book 2, chapter 1. (*S. Augustinus, Lib. II Soliloquiorum, cap. 1.*)

[2] Isaiah 5:13. (*Isa. V, 13.*)

[3] Baruch 3:28. (*Baruch, III, 28.*)

[4] Ecclesiastes 8:1. (*Eccle. VIII, 1.*)

[5] 1 Corinthians 3:19. (*I ad Corinth. III, 19.*)

[6] Luke 16:8. (*Luc. XVI, 8.*)

[7] Jeremiah 4:22. (*Jerem. IV, 22.*)

[8] Romans 1:22. (*Ad Roman. I, 22.*)

Chapter IX. On Fortitude.

Chapter IX.

On Fortitude.

A. True and perfect fortitude is to rule one's own soul when the soul is tempted by pride, envy, anger, lust, avarice, vainglory, complacency, and carnal delight, and the understanding reason in no way consents, but immediately represses. Hence that saying: The patient man is better than the strong man, and he who rules his own soul than the conqueror of cities ^[1]. Samson, though very strong, did not have this fortitude, although he tore apart the lion and struck down a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass, because afterwards, because of desire for a woman, he was deprived of all fortitude ^[2].

B. He has true fortitude who restrains his members and his senses from illicit things. David did not have that fortitude, though he killed the bear and the lion and slew Goliath; nevertheless he did not restrain his eyes from illicit sight ^[3]. Ah, of how much strength some are for fasting, watching, chastising their bodies with hair-shirts and scourges, and nevertheless they cannot restrain their feet from harmful vices, their hands from illicit work and touch, their ears from harmful hearing, and especially their tongue from damaging words, as blessed James says: Every nature of beasts, birds, serpents, and the rest are tamed and have been tamed by human nature, but no human being can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil, full of deadly poison ^[4], namely the tongue. Yet without this restraint there is no true religion, as the same James says: If anyone thinks himself to be religious, not restraining his tongue but deceiving his heart, this man's religion is vain ^[5].

C. The inducement of true fortitude is the tasting of spiritual sweetness. For this strengthens the mind for doing good things, tolerating adversities, and conquering vices and all harmful things. Jonathan prefigured this, for tasting a little honey, he was enlightened and strengthened to pursue enemies ^[6]. So Moses, receiving sweetness of mind from divine vision and conversation, was so strengthened that for forty days he did not need bodily food ^[7].

D. The office of fortitude is to make firm the intellect in knowledge of God and the affection in love of God and neighbor; to strengthen the mind amid adversities, lest it be terrified, and amid prosperities, lest it be softened. Likewise, to animate the mind so that it may always be exercised in good things, and to strengthen it so that it may never be conquered in evils. Paul and Stephen had the first fortitude. Mattathias and Eleazar, Job and Daniel had the second. Tobias had the third. Whoever feels this in himself is secure concerning the proof of true fortitude.

E. The proof of false, indeed worst, fortitude is to commit many and great sins against God. D. Anselm says concerning this: "To sin is not liberty, nor part of liberty. To sin is rather not to be able, than to be able. For whoever can do what is not expedient for himself, the more he can do this, the more adversity and perversity can act upon him." Hence Isaiah says: Woe to you who are powerful for drinking wine and strong men for mixing drunkenness ^[8]. The persecutors of the Church, kings and princes, once had this fortitude; and today Antichrist and his companions have it and will have it in the future.

Notes

[1] Proverbs 16:32. (*Proverb. XVI, 32.*)

[2] Compare Judges 14, 15, and 16. (*Cf. Judicum, XIV, XV et XVI.*)

[3] Compare 1 Samuel 17, and 2 Samuel 11:2 and following. (*Cf. I Regum, XVII, et II Regum XI, 2 et seq.*)

[4] James 3:7 and 8. (*Jacobi, III, 7 et 8.*)

[5] The same, 1:26. (*Ibid., I, 26.*)

[6] 1 Samuel 14:27. (*I Regum, XIV, 27.*)

[7] Exodus 24:18. (*Exod. XXIV, 18.*)

[8] Isaiah 5:9. (*Isa. V, 9.*)

Chapter X. On Justice.

Chapter X.

On Justice.

A. True and perfect justice toward God is the rendering of due praise in all things to the divine nature, of due thanksgiving for all goods and gifts conferred and evils endured, of due satisfaction for all things committed and omitted, and of due fervent sorrow for all graces neglected.

B. He has true justice toward God who is faithful to God always and everywhere in keeping all precepts and vows; who applies such diligence to his several works and times as though his whole salvation depended on

each one; who purely for God's sake does all his good works, not for any favor or usefulness of present or future life; and who receives each gift with due gratitude and enjoys it according to God's ordinance always and everywhere.

C. True justice toward neighbor consists in two things. Never to do to a neighbor what one justly does not wish to be done to oneself: that is, never to harm or offend the neighbor by word, deed, sign, or counsel, in possessions, body, or honor; never to suspect evil concerning him; never to detract from him; never to pervert or diminish his good; never to impede him in good. For no one wishes these things to be done to himself according to justice.

Likewise, to do to one's neighbor what one would justly wish to be done to oneself: that is, to honor the neighbor, think good concerning him, turn all his deeds, even bad ones, to good, always rejoice together in his good and suffer together in his evil, always excuse his innocence and defend him when absent. For each person wishes these things to be done to himself according to justice. And it is said, according to justice, because a judge would not wish to be hanged in place of a thief, and nevertheless he ought to hang the thief, because that unwillingness is according to justice. And a robber would gladly wish to be despoiled, so that it might be lawful for him to despoil, which nevertheless he ought not to do, because that willing is not according to justice.

Likewise, he keeps true justice toward the dead who does not delay to carry out testaments according to their ordinance; who by fasts, prayers, and alms, according to their trust, alleviates and shortens their punishments as far as he can. D. Bernard says: "The punishments of those who are in purgatory are shortened through fasts, prayers, and alms ^[1]." Likewise, he keeps justice toward angels who, acquiescing in their saving counsels, does not delay the glory due to them from this, which they merit for the service bestowed on us.

D. The inducement of true justice is what David says: The Lord is just, and he has loved justices ^[2]. Likewise, hope and joy are promised to the just in the present, according to that: The just one will rejoice in the Lord and will hope in him ^[3]. Likewise, exultation and praise are enjoined upon the just, according to that: Exult, you just, in the Lord; praise befits the upright ^[4]. Likewise, security in judgment is foretold for the just, according to that: The just will stand in great constancy ^[5]. Likewise, the promise of eternal life is made to the just, according to that: The just will live forever ^[6]. And whatever good God promises in Scripture is acquired especially through justice.

E. The office of true justice is to rectify knowledges and affections so that they are always in God; the will, so that it is conformed to the divine will; intentions, so that they are always in God and we refer all things to his praise. Likewise, to direct all words and deeds so that they are always done for some special and right end. And in these is the proof of true justice.

F. But the proof of injustice is to usurp for oneself what properly belongs to God, namely love, praise, honor, vengeance; or what belongs to one's neighbor and is owed to the neighbor. O my God, direct my steps according to your word, so that no injustice may dominate me ^[7]!

Notes

[1] St. Bernard, Sermon 6 on the Song of Songs. (*S. Bernardus, Serm. 6 in Cantica.*)

[2] Psalm 10:8. (*Psal. X, 8.*)

[3] Psalm 62:11. (*Psal. LXII, 11.*)

[4] Psalm 31:1. (*Psal. XXXI, 1.*)

[5] Wisdom 5:1. (*Sapient. V, 1.*)

[6] The same, verse 16. (*Ibid., v. 16.*)

[7] Psalm 118:133. (*Psal. CXVIII, 133.*)

Chapter XI. On Temperance.

Chapter XI.

On Temperance.

A. True and perfect temperance is the just moderation of exterior movements and exterior works.

B. He has true temperance who not only moderates his heart from depraved and useless thoughts, but also keeps measure in good ones, lest good thoughts cling more often or longer than just time requires. For official thoughts, although useful, are nevertheless not to be treated during the divine office. According to what D. Bernard says: "At that hour the Holy Spirit does not receive whatever else than what you owe you have offered, neglecting what you owe. By his inspiration we can always do his will according to his will ^[1]." Similarly, the truly temperate person moderates his affections and passions: when he ought to hope or fear something or nothing, and how much and how long; concerning what he ought to rejoice or grieve something or nothing, and how much and how long; concerning what he ought or ought not to have love, hatred, or shame, and how much and how long.

Similarly he moderates the intellect, lest it occupy itself about understanding something for a longer time than is fitting. Similarly he moderates the will, what kind and how great it ought to be; and intention, what kind and how great it ought to be and toward what end. Similarly he weighs free choice, how much it ought to choose good and how much to reject evil. Likewise true temperance moderates the tongue: namely when one must speak, when be silent, and how long, that is, at an opportune time; to whom one must speak, namely to persons not suspect; when to speak and where, namely at a time and place not suspect; how and how much one must speak, namely maturely, with weight, number, and measure; why one must speak, namely because of necessity or usefulness; for what business, namely of soul and body. Similarly it moderates deeds and morals and the motion of all members, so that, according to the Apostle, all things may be done honorably and according to order ^[2], namely among you.

C. The most wise divine ordering, which disposed all things in measure, number, and weight ^[3], ought to induce us to true temperance. According to this ordering, every action of ours, our morals and our life, ought to be measured, numbered, and weighed: that is, in the virtue of the Father, to whom measure is ascribed; in the virtue of the Son, to whom number is ascribed; in the virtue of the Holy Spirit, to whom weight is ascribed.

The example of the Apostle's temperance ought to induce us to the same, when he says: Be without offense to Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God, just as I also please all in all things, not seeking what is useful to me, but what is useful to many, that they may be saved ^[4]. He was truly temperate who offended no one and strove to please all.

D. He has the proof of true temperance who moderates himself in food, clothing, sleep, every carnal convenience, and temporal joy, admitting no superfluity nor disordered love, but pure necessity in all these. The truly temperate person strives to keep measure in all things except in love and praise of God and thanksgiving. For great is the Lord and exceedingly praiseworthy ^[5]. Therefore he is to be loved and praised without mode, without measure, without end.

E. The proof of intemperance is when someone, having distorted morals, disturbs and disquiets all who live with him. He conforms himself to no one in anything, but what pleases himself he approves, and this he strives to accomplish. He is unbearable to all, intolerable to himself. Hence D. Augustine says: "You commanded, Lord, and so it was done, that every disordered soul should be its own punishment ^[6]." And how much more to others. Ishmael was such, of whom it is written: He will be a wild man, his hand against all, and the hands of all against him ^[7].

Notes

[1] St. Bernard, Sermon 47 on the Song of Songs. (*S. Bernardus, Serm. 47 in Cantica.*)

[2] 1 Corinthians 14:40. (*I ad Corinth. XIV, 40.*)

[3] Wisdom 11:21: You have disposed all things in measure, and number, and weight. (*Sapient. XI, 21: Omnia in mensura, et numero, et pondere disposuisti.*)

[4] 1 Corinthians 10:32 and 33. (*I ad Corinth. X, 32 et 33.*)

[5] Psalm 47, and 144:3. (*Psal. XLVII, et CXLIV, 3.*)

[6] St. Augustine, Confessions, book 1, chapter 4. (*S. Augustinus, Lib. I Confessionum, cap. 4.*)

[7] Genesis 16:12. (*Genes. XVI, 12.*)

Chapter XII. On Compassion.

Chapter XII.

On Compassion.

A. True and perfect compassion toward God is sadness being unceasingly wounded in the heart for all injuries inflicted on God, and still to be inflicted on him in himself and in his friends; whoever touches them is as one who touches the pupil of his eye^[1]. For all the elements suffered with Christ as he was dying on the cross^[2].

B. True compassion toward neighbor is to suffer from the marrow with the afflictions of neighbors, both spiritual and bodily, after the example of the Apostle saying: Who is weak, and I am not weak^[3]? Here the Gloss says: Who is weak either in faith or in some virtue, and I am not weak? that is, do I not suffer with him as with myself? Who is scandalized by some trouble, and I am not burned with the fire of compassion?

Toward neighbors who are in purgatory, true compassion is to be vehemently afflicted for the bitterness of the punishments that they sustain, and especially because meanwhile they are separated from the vision and enjoyment of God, and meanwhile God is not fully praised by them. And in that affliction and compassion one must unceasingly and ardently supplicate God, that he may deign to snatch them away from such bitterness and roughness.

C. The most abundant compassion of Christ toward us ought to induce us to true compassion. As D. Augustine testifies, he hastens so to absolve a sinner from the torment of his conscience as though compassion for the miserable person tortured him more than compassion for himself tortured the miserable person. Nor did he only suffer with us; indeed he himself truly took our weaknesses and he himself bore our sorrows^[4]. The same nature of members counsels this, as the Apostle testifies: If one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with it^[5].

Likewise, the usefulness of compassion is twofold, and ought also to entice us to compassion: namely confirmation of charity and reigning together with Christ. Of the first it is said in Ecclesiasticus: Do not fail those weeping in consolation, and walk with those mourning. Let it not weary you to visit the sick; for by these things you will be strengthened in love^[6]. Of the second the Apostle says: If we endure, we shall also reign together^[7]. The virtue of compassion is rare, the Lord complaining: I awaited one who would be saddened together with me, and there was none; and one who would console, and I did not find^[8].

D. The proof of true compassion is not only to suffer with friends, but also with enemies. Thus Joseph wept over each of his brothers, who had sold him for thirty denarii^[9]. And David lamented with great lamentation over the death of Saul, who had often proposed to kill him; indeed he had the children of Israel taught a song of lament over his death^[10]. So when Absalom died, who had wished to uproot him from the kingdom, he mourned him with covered head, saying: My son Absalom! Absalom my son! Who would grant me that I might die for you, Absalom my son! my son Absalom^[11]! And similarly Job says: I once wept over him who was afflicted, and my soul suffered with the poor man^[12].

E. The proof of false compassion is when someone utters words of compassion and shows a face of compassion, and nevertheless rejoices in his heart over the affliction of his neighbor. Or when he does not alleviate the affliction of his neighbor when he could. Or when he does not restrain those afflicting, when he can, but rather provokes and strengthens others to afflict by sign, word, or deed.

Notes

- [1] Compare Zechariah 2:8. (*Cf. Zachar. II, 8.*)
- [2] Compare Matthew 27:51 and following. (*Cf. Matth. XXVII, 51 et seq.*)
- [3] 2 Corinthians 11:29. (*II ad Corinth. XI, 29.*)
- [4] Isaiah 53:4. (*Isa. LIII, 4.*)
- [5] 1 Corinthians 12:26. (*I ad Corinth. XII, 26.*)
- [6] Ecclesiasticus 7:38 and 39. (*Eccli. VII, 38 et 39.*)
- [7] 2 Timothy 2:12. (*II ad Timoth. II, 12.*)
- [8] Psalm 68:21. (*Psal. LXVIII, 21.*)
- [9] Compare Genesis 45 and 37. (*Cf. Genes. XLV et XXXVII.*)
- [10] 2 Samuel 1:17 and following. (*II Regum, I, 17 et seq.*)
- [11] 2 Samuel 18:33. (*II Regum, XVIII, 33.*)
- [12] Job 30:25. (*Job, XXX, 25.*)

Chapter XIII. On Peace.

Chapter XIII.

On Peace.

A. True peace toward God exists when the five senses, the use of all the members, and all interior and exterior works are disposed at the nod of reason; and when all thoughts, affections, wills, intentions, and all exterior things are done according to the ordering of reason; and that reason is wholly ordered according to the will of God. But whenever anything is done without the consent of well-disposed reason, immediately the peace of the breast is disturbed.

B. He has true peace with God, as the Gloss says on that verse, Justified by faith, let us have peace toward God ^[1], "who does not contend against God's commands with a contrary will, who follows the Lord's commands and bends his choice to the divine precept. For true peace is to agree with upright morals and to fight with vices." He has true peace with neighbor who with his whole effort guards lest, by any occasion, he disturb anyone deliberately. For one who deliberately disturbs someone cannot by any means be without disturbance for any hour. For either, having been disturbed, if he can, he avenges himself, or if he cannot avenge himself, he dissimulates. Yet from the disturbance made he always carries with himself the sting and remorse of conscience.

He seeks true peace who continually considers only himself, and, leaving each person to his own judgment, after all transitory and temporal cares have been set aside, rests in the sole contemplation of God. For there alone true peace is found, as Augustine testifies, saying: "You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you ^[2]."

C. A twofold usefulness ought to induce us to love of true peace: namely sweetness and rest of mind that follows peace. This sweetness is as it were a part and beginning of eternal rest and sweetness. Or because it prepares for God an eternal and continual dwelling in the soul; because of his exceeding meekness he has a place and rests only in a quiet heart, as he himself testifies: In peace in the selfsame thing I will sleep and I will rest ^[3]. And again the Psalmist says: His place has been made in peace ^[4]. The Apostle also testifies to this, saying: Have peace, and the God of peace and love will be with you ^[5].

What D. Jerome says on the Epistle to the Ephesians preserves true peace: "If we love our good things mutually; if we tolerate until the last harvest sins that cannot be rooted out without damage to the wheat or with hope of correcting those to be saved; if also, lest the weak be scandalized, we decide not to do works of perfection that it is lawful to do and not to do."

D. He has the proof of true peace who avoids every place, all persons, and all actions from which disturbance can probably follow. Likewise, he has the most certain proof of true peace who always and everywhere keeps the precepts of God and vows, as the Psalmist testifies: Much peace have those who love your law ^[6]. The proof of the truest peace is when reason in all things is subjected to the spirit.

E. He has the proof of false peace who does not tear out all the roots of disturbance, which are always accustomed to sprout. These are one's own will, freedom of spirit, singularity of morals, and appetite for pleasantness, concerning which it has been written elsewhere. Likewise, peace is not true which is not had from one's own virtue but from the grace of others. For example, there are some who have firm peace so long as they feel nothing contrary, but they find in all things whatever pleases them. But when something occurs that they themselves do not think up, or that pleases them less, immediately they lose peace of heart. Then the virtue of peace is not in them, but rather in outsiders. And therefore outsiders take away that peace when they wish. But those who desire true peace ought not attend to what others do or say, whether they flatter or detract, but always think the things of peace; and thus the virtue of peace will remain truly and finally in them.

Notes

[1] Romans 5:1. (*Ad Roman. V, 1.*)

[2] St. Augustine, Confessions, book 1, chapter 1. (*S. Augustinus, Lib. I Confessionum, cap. 1.*)

[3] Psalm 4:9. (*Psal. IV, 9.*)

[4] Psalm 75:3. (*Psal. LXXV, 3.*)

[5] 2 Corinthians 13:11. (*II ad Corinth. XIII, 11.*)

[6] Psalm 118:163. (*Psal. CXVIII, 163.*)

Chapter XIV. On Mercy.

Chapter XIV.

On Mercy.

A. True mercy consists in three things: in giving, in forgiving, and in supererogating.

B. The truly merciful person, as long as he has anything, supplies necessary things to those in need; if he did not do this, he would not fulfill true mercy, as Chrysostom testifies: "But," he says, "you have given once; this is not almsgiving. For unless, as long as you have, you help the needy person, you will never fulfill the debt. For the virgins, namely the foolish ones, having lamps, had oil, but not sufficiently ^[1]." Job had this mercy when he said: If I denied to the poor what they wished, and made the eyes of the widow wait; if I ate my morsel alone, and the orphan did not eat from it; because from my infancy pity grew up with me, and it came forth with me from my mother's womb ^[2]. And a little later: The stranger did not remain outside; my door lay open to the traveler ^[3].

But one who gives substance and does not forgive injuries does no mercy, as D. Gregory says. Therefore the truly merciful person, spontaneously before he is asked, remits every injury from the heart, never about to avenge it, neither by himself nor through another. Indeed the truly merciful person is readier to remit than the injurer is to ask. For the truly merciful person grieves more over the sin of the one doing injury than over his own affliction, which he suffers from the one doing injury. Thus David from the heart forgave Shimei, who was cursing him and throwing stones against him, even though he did not ask. And lest he be killed by

David's enemies, David forbade it, saying: Let him go, that he may curse according to the command of the Lord. Perhaps the Lord will look upon my affliction, and the Lord will render good to me for this curse today^[4]. So also Joseph spared his brothers before they asked, weeping over each^[5].

Nor does this suffice for the truly merciful person, unless he also obtains pardon from God by his prayers for those doing injury. Thus Moses obtained grace for the Jews who wished to stone him, saying: Either forgive them this fault, or if you do not, blot me out of your book that you have written^[6]. So Stephen obtained pardon for those stoning him; so the Lord Jesus obtained pardon and grace for his crucifiers^[7]. Since each said: Forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing^[8]. Here those greatly doing injury are excused, as if they were saying: They have no sense, for they do not know what they are doing; and therefore it should deservedly not be imputed to them, but they should be mercifully spared.

C. This ought to induce us to love of true mercy, that God in his own nature is supremely merciful, and loves mercy in others beyond measure, as he himself said: But go and learn what this is: I will mercy and not sacrifice^[9]. Another inducement of mercy is that the merciful God in his judgment will judge without mercy unmerciful human beings, as James testifies: For judgment without mercy is for him who does not do mercy^[10]. And the merciful will copiously obtain mercy from God: He lends to the Lord who has mercy on the poor^[11], that is, with great interest and profit he will receive whatever is bestowed on the poor.

D. The office of mercy is to place each person before God according to his merits, according to that of Ecclesiasticus: Every mercy will make a place for each one, according to the merit of his works^[12].

E. The proof of true mercy is when someone withdraws from himself what, with life preserved, he can withdraw from himself. In addition he continually labors, even beyond his strength, so that he can help the needy more fully.

F. The proof of false mercy is when someone does not relieve the necessity of anyone as far as he can, but says to the needy that saying of James: Go in peace, be warmed and filled; but if you have not given them the things necessary for the body, what will it profit^[13]? Hence D. Chrysostom says: "There is need also not to be so sparing from your own. But since resources of the Lord have been entrusted to you, why are you so tenacious?" Likewise, when someone forgives those doing injury when he cannot avenge himself; or when he forgives those doing injury not from pure love, but because he knows that God will not forgive him unless he himself first forgives; or when with the voice alone he prays for those doing injury, yet inwardly rejoices over their confusion.

Notes

[1] St. John Chrysostom, Homily 76 on John. (*S. Joannes Chrysostomus, Homil. 76 in Joan.*)

[2] Job 31:16 and following. (*Job, XXXI, 16 et seq.*)

[3] The same, verse 32. (*Ibid.*, v. 32.)

[4] 2 Samuel 16:11 and 12. (*II Regum, XVI, 11 et 12.*)

[5] Genesis 45:15. (*Genes. XLV, 15.*)

[6] Exodus 32:31 and 32. (*Exod. XXXII, 31 et 32.*)

[7] Acts 7:60. (*Act. VII, 60.*)

[8] Luke 23:34. (*Luc. XXIII, 34.*)

[9] Matthew 9:13. (*Matth. IX, 13.*)

[10] James 2:13. (*Jacobi, II, 13.*)

[11] Proverbs 19:17. (*Proverb. XIX, 17.*)

[12] Ecclesiasticus 16:15. (*Eccli. XVI, 15.*)

[13] James 2:16. (*Jacobi, II, 16.*)

Chapter XV. On Concord.

Chapter XV.

On Concord.

A. True concord toward God is to be united to the divine will in prosperities and adversities, and, as far as one can, to be conformed to the divine manners and examples of Jesus Christ. For D. John the bishop, that is, Chrysostom, says: "Nothing is more worthy than that a human being should be an imitator of his author and, according to the measure of his own capacity, an executor of the divine work ^[1]." The Lord asks this union for us at the penultimate instant of his life, saying: As you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us ^[2].

Likewise, true concord toward neighbors is to think the same thing with all, in all things, and to feel the same thing in those things that are toward God. As in the primitive Church: The multitude of believers had one heart and one soul ^[3], namely with respect to all things that look toward God. Likewise, to conform oneself to others in food, drink, sleep, in morals and works that are not against God, nor against one's profession, nor against perfection, so that we may gain more people. As the Apostle says of himself: I became weak to the weak, that I might gain the weak; I became all things to all, that I might make all saved ^[4].

B. This ought to induce us to love of true concord, that concord of brothers is very praiseworthy to God and very pleasing, as he himself said through Solomon: In three things my spirit has been pleased, which are approved before God and human beings: the concord of brothers, and love of neighbors, and a man and woman agreeing well with each other ^[5]. For miserable and fragile human beings preserve on earth what the angels did not wish to preserve in heaven. The diligence of Jesus Christ ought to invite us to the same, for making concord between human beings and God, and among the Apostles, when there was a contention among them as to which of them seemed to be greater ^[6], and when the Apostles were indignant, namely about the brothers James and John, because they wished to sit at his right and left hand ^[7]. In all these things Christ brought them into concord.

C. The proof of true concord toward God is the testimony of conscience that the human being is not entangled in grave sins, as the Apostle had when he said: I am conscious of nothing to myself ^[8]. And Job: For my heart has not reproached me in my whole life ^[9]. Likewise, fervent desire of advancing in every life, in all good things, according to the ordinance of God.

He has the proof of true concord toward neighbor who conducts himself toward all so holily that no one raises a complaint about him, nor is anyone able even to speak an evil word about him. The parents of John the Baptist had both proofs: They were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord, with respect to the first; without complaint ^[10], with respect to the second. Likewise Judith had the proof of both, about whom it is written: She was most renowned in all things, because she feared the Lord greatly, and there was no one who spoke an evil word about her ^[11].

D. The proof of false concord between God and human beings is when someone does not solicitously examine his conscience. And thus through his erroneous conscience he believes that he pleases God, when he truly displeases him in all things.

Another proof of discord between God and a human being is when the divine ordinance concerning creatures, and the divine manners and examples, and the most holy works of Jesus Christ displease the human being. Hence it is written: "It displeases God when God displeases." He has the proof of false concord toward neighbor to whom the good works and holy manners of others displease in his heart, which nevertheless he sometimes commends with words. But he has the proof of discord who sets his own sense before others, and always strives or arranges to draw the sense of others after himself, and never proposes to unite his own sense to the sense of others.

Notes

[1] St. John Chrysostom, Homily 38 on Matthew, in the imperfect work. (*S. Joannes Chrysostomus, Homil. 38 in Matthaeum, in opere imperfecto.*)

[2] John 17:21. (*Joan. XVII, 21.*)

[3] Acts 4:32. (*Act. IV, 32.*)

[4] 1 Corinthians 9:22. (*I ad Corinth. IX, 22.*)

[5] Ecclesiasticus 25:1. (*Eccli. XXV, 1.*)

[6] Mark 9:33. (*Marc. IX, 33.*)

[7] Matthew 20:20 and following. (*Matth. XX, 20 et seq.*)

[8] 1 Corinthians 4:4. (*I ad Corinth. IV, 4.*)

[9] Job 27:6. (*Job, XXVII, 6.*)

[10] Luke 1:6. (*Luc. I, 6.*)

[11] Judith 8:11. (*Judith, VIII, 11.*)

Chapter XVI. On Constancy.

Chapter XVI.

On Constancy.

A. True and perfect constancy exists when a human being cannot be drawn back from perfection either in prosperities or in adversities. As Job says: Until I fail, I will not depart from my innocence. My justification, which I have begun to hold, I will not abandon ^[1]. Nor can he be induced by threats or flattery to transgression of vows and divine precepts. As the seven brothers in the book of Maccabees, whose tongues were cut out, the skin of their heads torn away, and the extremities of hands and feet cut off, were tortured alive in bronze cauldrons ^[2]. And Eleazar did not wish under simulation to eat illicit meats, but said that he wished rather to be sent ahead to hell ^[3].

B. He has true constancy who never ceases in divine praise, according to that of the Psalmist: I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise is always in my mouth ^[4], etc. Nor does he cease from fervent desire of advancing. For as Pope Leo testifies: "None of us is so perfect and holy that he cannot be more perfect and holier." Likewise: "They fall into the danger of failing where they have laid aside the appetite for advancing."

C. The constancy of the martyrs ought to induce us to true constancy, and especially of the virgins who in the fragile sex merited eternal glory through constancy. But the stubbornness of Jews and heretics, and the rashness of perverse human beings in their evils, ought to move us still more to constancy: for, because of the perfidy and stubbornness of their iniquities, they have grave torment in their conscience in the present and expect a most grave punishment of soul and body in the future.

D. The proof of true constancy is when someone, neither because of loss of body nor of possessions, ceases from all things that please God. Thus Tobias did not cease from the burial of the dead; because of this King Sennacherib took away all his goods and moreover ordered him to be killed ^[5]. Thus Daniel did not cease from prayer ^[6]. Thus the Apostles after the resurrection of Christ, neither because of scourging nor fear of death, ceased from the manifestation of the name of Christ, Peter and John saying to their adversaries: Whether it is necessary to obey God more, judge for yourselves. If it is just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ^[7]. Likewise Peter and the Apostles said to them: It is necessary to obey God rather than human beings ^[8].

E. The proof of inconstancy is when someone, because of human favor or some profit to be obtained, departs from the way of justice. Thus Balaam, because of the gifts and friendship of Balak, wished against the Lord's precept to curse the people Israel ^[9]. Or because of fear of temporal things, as that rich man withdrew sad from the Lord Jesus when he advised perfection to him, for he had many possessions and riches, which he loved ^[10]. Or because of fear of the body, as all the Apostles fled from their beloved Lord Jesus Christ ^[11].

But Mattathias, despising the honor shown by the messengers of King Antiochus and the gifts promised, left all things and fled into the mountains to preserve the law of the Lord ^[12]. Likewise, neither appetite for friendship nor fear of temporal things drew him back from the way of justice. Similarly, not even death of the body drew blessed Stephen back from the just way, but, gazing into heaven, amid the pressure of stones he remained fixed in Christ ^[13]. Similarly also Paul, who said: I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus ^[14].

Notes

- [1] Job 27:5 and 6. (*Job, XXVII, 5 et 6.*)
- [2] Compare 2 Maccabees 7:1 and following. (*Cf. II Machab. VII, 1 et seq.*)
- [3] Compare the same, 7:18 and following. (*Cf. ibid., VII, 18 et seq.*)
- [4] Psalm 33:2. (*Psal. XXXIII, 2.*)
- [5] Compare Tobit 1 and 2. (*Cf. Tob. I et II.*)
- [6] Compare Daniel 6:10 and following. (*Cf. Daniel. VI, 10 et seq.*)
- [7] Acts 4:19. (*Act. IV, 19.*)
- [8] The same, 5:29. (*Ibid., V, 29.*)
- [9] Compare Numbers 22:17 and 18. (*Cf. Numer. XXII, 17 et 18.*)
- [10] Matthew 19:22. (*Matth. XIX, 22.*)
- [11] Matthew 26:56. (*Matth. XXVI, 56.*)
- [12] 1 Maccabees 2:28. (*I Machab. II, 28.*)
- [13] Acts 7:55. (*Act. VII, 55.*)
- [14] Acts 21:13. (*Act. XXI, 13.*)

Chapter XVII. On Largesse.

Chapter XVII.

On Largesse.

A. True and perfect largesse exists when someone cheerfully administers temporal goods to all in need as far as he can. Indeed, when asked, he gladly communicates spiritual goods also to all in need, namely in confessions, preachings, counsels, and teachings. Nor is he ready only for those desiring such things; indeed even to those not desiring and not caring for teaching and preaching, according to the counsel of the Apostle, he shares opportunely and importunately ^[1]. Indeed, to those unwilling and ignorant he communicates prayers, groans, and tears before God. Nor does this suffice for the truly generous person unless he also pours out his whole self continually in study, meditations, and holy works for the salvation of neighbors.

B. Appetite for conformity to God ought to induce us to this largesse, because God so continually gives his temporal and spiritual gifts to all, even those not asking, and above all these things the flesh and blood of his most beloved Son Jesus Christ. Nor is it sufficient to him simply to give his gifts unless he also gives himself without measure in each gift. He commends his largesse in this, that he denies his gifts to no one, however much that person opposes him. Indeed many times by day and by night he generously grants his gifts to anyone, however much he is offended by anyone. He approves his largesse in this, that whenever he finds any opportunity in the receiver, immediately he cannot at all restrain himself from the outflow of spiritual gifts, although from divine wisdom he foreknows that the receiver is soon going to lose those gifts, or continually defile them, or attack him through the same.

This ought to induce us to the same, that the things we give belong to another. And there is a proverb that broad straps are cut from other people's hides. Hence D. Chrysostom says: "For there is need also not to be so sparing from your own; but since resources of the Lord have been entrusted to you, why are you so tenacious ^[2]?"

C. The proof of true largesse is when someone gives his own goods to the needy cheerfully, without anyone's merits, freely and without hope of recompense. Thus the Lord Jesus gave both himself and all his goods, and this belongs to the highest perfection. Nor is it sufficient for the truly generous person to give his goods; indeed for the salvation of neighbors, in time of necessity, he presents himself even unto death, as blessed John teaches, saying: In this we have known the charity of God, because he laid down his soul for us, and we ought to lay down our souls for the brothers ^[3]. Yet prelates are more bound to this. The Apostle had this largesse, saying: But I most gladly will spend and will be spent myself for your souls ^[4]. The same also says elsewhere: Daily I die by your glory, brothers ^[5], that is, I sustain dangers of death. The truly generous person, without hope of recompense, gives to the Lord all that he is, has, and can do, for the eternal increase of divine praise; to each angel and saint for perpetual exultation; to each sinner for conversion; to each just and perfect person for the conservation and confirmation of perfection; to each one being purged for the mitigation and shortening of punishments.

D. The proof of false largesse is when someone gives his goods so that he may be praised by others, or lest, when others give, he be regarded as more vile, or so that he may be freed from the cry of the poor; then he loses both the thing and the merit. Likewise, he is falsely generous who gives his goods because of coercion, or some favor, or because of hope of grace in the present and glory in the future, or because of fear of the Judge who commanded giving, the transgression of whose command he would not pass through unpunished.

Notes

[1] 2 Timothy 4:2. (*II ad Timoth. IV, 2.*)

[2] St. John Chrysostom, Homily 16 on John. (*S. Joannes Chrysostomus, Homil. 16 in Joannem.*)

[3] 1 John 3:13. (*I Joannis, III, 13.*)

[4] 2 Corinthians 12:15. (*II ad Corinth. XII, 15.*)

[5] 1 Corinthians 15:31. (*I ad Corinth. XV, 31.*)

Chapter XVIII. On Truth.

Chapter XVIII.

On Truth.

A. Just truth exists when mind, tongue, and works truly agree: so that what someone feels in the heart, this he brings forth with the mouth and accomplishes in work. After the example of the Apostle inviting: Be imitators of me, brothers, and observe them, that is, imitate them, who walk thus, as you have our form ^[1]. The Gloss says: that is, as I believe, teach, and live.

B. He is truthful who immutably keeps all vows to God and all human beings, and completes in work all his words once spoken, unless he sometimes changes them by salutary counsel. According to that of Isidore: "In evil promises break faith, and in a shameful vow change the decree ^[2]." Thus the Lord sometimes changed his own sentence, as is clear in Hezekiah and the Ninevites. For he foretold through Isaiah that Hezekiah would die, and nevertheless after his weeping added fifteen years to him ^[3]. And through Jonah he preached that Nineveh would be overthrown within forty days, but because of the humiliation of the king and people he allowed it to stand ^[4].

C. This ought to induce us to love of truth, that Christ is truth ^[5], and because truth is always lovable in itself. And although truth is sometimes heavy and intolerable to some, this is not on the part of truth but on the part of their depraved will, which they would gladly fulfill if they did not have contrary truth. Truth is lovable to the chaste and humble, because it commends chastity and humility and detests immodesty and pride, and because it is too contrary to the immodest and proud who have established themselves in the opposites. Likewise, because truth conquers all things, as was proved in Esdras ^[6]. And because truth is immutable, as the Lord Jesus says: It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one point of the law to fall ^[7]. And

in Matthew: Amen, indeed I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, one iota or one point will not pass away from the law until all things are done ^[8].

D. The proof of truth is when someone abandons truth neither because of anyone's favor, nor because of his own usefulness, nor because of loss of possessions or body; and neither dissimulates nor cloaks it in others; nor ever deliberately says anything false, nor proposes to say it; nor changes his words once spoken except because of a necessary cause. After the example of Balaam saying: If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I will not be able to change the word of my Lord, so that I speak either more or less ^[9]. And similarly after the example of Jeremiah, Micaiah, Daniel, and the other prophets, who could be conquered by no cause so that in words or deeds they would deviate in any way from truth.

E. The proof of falsity is to have one thing in the mouth and another in the heart, and easily, without useful and necessary cause, to change one's words. "Not only is that man a betrayer of truth," as D. Chrysostom says, "who, transgressing truth, openly speaks a lie in place of truth; but also he who does not freely pronounce the truth that ought to be freely pronounced, or does not freely defend the truth that ought to be freely defended, is a betrayer of truth. For just as a priest is debtor to preach freely the truth that he has heard from God, so a layman is debtor faithfully to defend the truth that he has heard indeed from priests and that has been proved in the Scriptures. But if he does not do this, he is a betrayer of truth ^[10]."

Notes

[1] Philippians 3:17. (*Ad Philip. III, 17.*)

[2] St. Isidore, Synonyms, book 2, chapter on lying. It is also found in the Decrees, Cause 22, Question 4, chapter In malis. (*S. Isidorus, Lib. II de Synonymis, cap. de mendacio. Habetur et in Decretis, Causa 22, Quaest. 4, cap. In malis.*)

[3] Compare Isaiah 38:1 and following. (*Cf. Isa. XXXVIII, 1 et seq.*)

[4] Compare Jonah 1:1 and following. (*Cf. Jonae, I, 1 et seq.*)

[5] John 14:6: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. (*Joan. XIV, 6: Ego sum via, et veritas, et vita.*)

[6] Compare 3 Esdras 3:11. (*Cf. III Esdrae, III, 11.*)

[7] Luke 16:17. (*Luc. XVI, 17.*)

[8] Matthew 5:18. (*Matth. V, 18.*)

[9] Numbers 22:18. (*Numer. XXII, 18.*)

[10] St. John Chrysostom, Homily 25 on Matthew, in the imperfect work. (*S. Joannes Chrysostomus, Homil. 25 in Matthaum, in opere imperfecto.*)

Chapter XIX. On Meekness.

Chapter XIX.

On Meekness.

A. True meekness or kindness exists when, because of injuries brought upon one, the mind is in no way embittered, nor is bitterness of heart shown outwardly, but one is like a human being not hearing and not having rebukes in his mouth ^[1]. After the example of Jesus Christ, of whom Isaiah says: And he did not open his mouth; like a sheep he will be led to slaughter, and like a lamb before the one shearing him he will be silent, and he will not open his mouth ^[2].

Hence the Gloss on Matthew says: "The meek person is one whom roughness of mind or bitterness does not affect, but whom simplicity of faith instructs for suffering every injustice. The meek person is one whom neither rancor nor anger affects, but who sustains all things with equanimity. The Lord made himself as it were master of this great virtue; he would not have done this unless this virtue were one of highest perfection. Learn from me, he says, because I am meek and humble of heart ^[3]. The meek person is not irritated, does not harm, and does not think to harm. He is gentle who rules over evil morals." All these things the Gloss says in the same place.

B. The beatitude promised from the person of Christ saying, Blessed are the meek, for they will possess the earth ^[4], ought to induce us to love of meekness. D. Augustine says: "I believe that earth of which it is said in the Psalm: You are my hope, my portion in the land of the living ^[5]." And a little later: "But blessed are the meek, for they will possess the earth from which they cannot be driven ^[6]." Of this earth the Psalmist says: But the meek will inherit the earth and will delight in the multitude of peace ^[7]. Likewise Proverbs 3:34 says: To the meek he will give grace and glory, namely God. Therefore, Let the meek hear and rejoice ^[8].

C. The proof of true meekness is when the mind in affliction does not murmur, nor bites back with words at those biting it, nor demonstrates any bitterness in the face, but always reserves a quiet soul for God to inhabit.

D. The proof of false meekness is when a human being utters soft and meek words, shows a meek face, and nevertheless carries grave bitterness in the soul.

Notes

[1] Psalm 37:15. (*Psal. XXXVII, 15.*)

[2] Isaiah 53:7. (*Isa. LIII, 7.*)

[3] Matthew 11:29. (*Matth. XI, 29.*)

[4] Matthew 5:4. (*Matth. V, 4.*)

[5] Psalm 141:6. (*Psal. CXLI, 6.*)

[6] St. Augustine, On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount, book 1. (*S. Augustinus, Lib. I de Serm. Domini in monte.*)

[7] Psalm 36:11. (*Psal. XXXVI, 11.*)

[8] Psalm 33:3. (*Psal. XXXIII, 3.*)

Chapter XX. On Faith.

Chapter XX.

On Faith.

A. True faith is to believe that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are one true God, and that in these three persons there is one indivisible Godhead, equal glory, coeternal majesty. Each of them is uncreated, immeasurable, eternal, supremely good, wise, almighty, God and Lord. Nor are there three uncreated, immeasurable, eternal, good, wise, almighty ones, or three Gods, or three Lords; but one is uncreated, immeasurable, eternal, good, wise, almighty, one God and Lord. And in these three persons none is prior or posterior, because they are coeternal; nor is any lesser or greater, because they are through all things and in all things equal. Yet they differ in properties, because the Father is unbegotten, having origin from no one; but the Son is begotten from the Father, light from light, true God from true God; the Holy Spirit is neither created nor begotten, but proceeds equally from both.

Likewise, true faith commands one to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true man: eternally born of the Father according to deity, but temporally born of the mother according to humanity, and in all things equal to the Father according to divinity. He assumed a soul from nothing and flesh from the most pure blood of the blessed Virgin Mary. He is impassible and immortal according to divinity, passible and mortal according to humanity. Likewise, one having true faith believes all the articles of faith firmly and undoubtingly, seven pertaining to the divinity and seven to the humanity of Jesus Christ.

B. The faith of the ancient faithful ought to induce us to true faith, namely Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and similar persons. Likewise the faith of unbelievers and gentiles, namely Job, Rahab the prostitute, and similar persons. Through this all the ancients pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God, as the Apostle says ^[1]. A twofold usefulness of faith ought to induce us to the same. For true faith can do all things and obtains all things, as our Lord Jesus Christ testifies, who says: All things are possible to one

believing ^[2]. And: Whatever things you ask praying, believe that you will receive, and they will come to you ^[3]. And: Amen I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, Be lifted up and cast into the sea, and has not hesitated in his heart, but has believed that whatever he has said will happen, it will happen to him ^[4]. Thus the Caspian mountains, at Alexander's request, were joined together ^[5].

C. The proof of true faith is frequent exercise in good works. For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead, as James says ^[6].

D. The proof of false faith is not to believe Scripture in all things, but to think that all things happen from fate or the course of nature, and not from God's providence. Likewise Chrysostom says: "He does not believe that God exists who, while God is present, does secretly those things that he fears to do publicly in the presence of human beings." Likewise Jerome says: "He is not truly Christian who does not dare to die in that state in which he dares to live." Alas, there were once many heresies, about which Jerome writes: "We confess free will in such a way that we say we always need the help of God. And both those err who with Mani say that a human being cannot avoid sin, and those who with Jovinian assert that a human being cannot sin, because each removes freedom of the soul. But we say that a human being can always sin and can not sin."

Notes

[1] Hebrews 11:6. (*Ad Hebr. XI, 6.*)

[2] Mark 9:22. (*Marc. IX, 22.*)

[3] Mark 11:24. (*Marc. XI, 24.*)

[4] The same, verse 23. (*Ibid., v. 23.*)

[5] Peter Comestor, in the Scholastic History, chapter 3. St. Antoninus and Johannes Nauclerus report the same. (*Petrus Comestor, In historia scholastica, cap. 3. S. Antonius... Joannes Nauclerus... idem referunt.*)

[6] James 2:17. (*Jacobi, II, 17.*)

Chapter XXI. On Hope.

Chapter XXI.

On Hope.

A. True and perfect hope is the certain expectation of future blessedness, coming from the grace of God and preceding merits. These two are necessary for hope. For the grace of God is preserved only through merits; but without grace no one is saved by merits. Therefore hope without merits is not hope, but presumption.

B. He has true hope who, although he frequently exercises himself in good works, nevertheless never trusts in his own merits, but only in the superabundant goodness and generosity of God, not knowing whether his good works please God, since all our justices are like the cloth of a menstruating woman ^[1]. He has true hope who offers a just sacrifice to God, according to that: Sacrifice the sacrifice of justice and hope in the Lord ^[2]. The just sacrifice is our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, who offered himself for the sins of the whole world to God the Father on the altar of the cross, offering a fuller amends than the whole world owed. For, as D. Ambrose says, one drop of such precious blood would have sufficed to redeem the whole human race. But he poured it out abundantly to show the abundance of his love. In this sacrifice is our whole hope and salvation, according to that saying of D. Bernard ^[3]: "I have sinned a great sin; conscience is disturbed, but not thrown into confusion, because I will remember the wounds of the Lord. Indeed he was wounded because of our iniquities. What is so unto death that it is not saved by the death of Christ? If therefore so powerful and so effective a medicine comes into mind, I can no longer be terrified by any malignity of disease. And therefore it is clear that he erred who said: My iniquity is greater than that I may merit pardon ^[4]."

And a little later: "But I confidently usurp for myself from the inward parts of the Lord what is lacking to me from myself, because mercies flow forth, nor are there lacking openings through which they may flow. They dug his hands and feet ^[5], and pierced his side with a lance, so that through the cracks it might be permitted me to suck honey from the rock and oil from the hardest stone ^[6], that is, to taste and see that the Lord is sweet ^[7]." And a little later: "But the key opening and the nail penetrating have been made for me, that I may see the will of the Lord. Why should I not see through the opening? The nail cries out, the wound cries out, that God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself." Again a little later: "The secret of the heart lies open through the openings of the body. That great sacrament of piety lies open. The inward parts of the mercy of our God lie open, in which the rising sun from on high has visited us ^[8]. Why should not inward parts lie open through wounds? For in what would it have shone forth more clearly than in your wounds that you, Lord, are sweet and mild and of much mercy? For no one has greater pity than that one lay down his soul for those condemned to death and damned. Therefore my merit is the Lord's pity." Thus far D. Bernard. The mercy of the Lord was evident in many things: for he fasted, watched, prayed, sweated, was wearied, wept, was scourged, suffered, and was crucified, so that in him we may have the supplement of all defects.

C. The most excellent love of Jesus Christ ought to induce us to true hope of blessedness; compelled by this love, with such great bitterness he merited our salvation for us. And lest the salvation obtained for us perish, he applied such diligence that he gave us angels for protection, Scripture for instruction, his own examples and those of his saints for showing the way, and his body and blood for strengthening.

D. He has the proof of true hope who manfully resists evils and is strengthened in goods; who is manly in undertaking arduous things and strong in persevering in them, according to that: Act manfully, and let your heart be strengthened, all you who hope in the Lord ^[9].

E. He has the proof of false hope who transgresses divine precepts and vows, not caring to correct his life according to Scripture, presuming too much without merits on the goodness of God. Such hope is vain, as it is said in the book of Wisdom: The hope of the wicked is like down that is taken up by the wind, and like thin foam that is scattered by storms, and like smoke that is diffused by the wind, and like the memory of a guest passing by for one day ^[10].

Notes

[1] Isaiah 64:6. (*Isa. LXIV, 6.*)

[2] Psalm 4:6. (*Psal. IV, 6.*)

[3] St. Bernard, Sermon 61 on the Song of Songs. (*S. Bernardus, Sermon. 61 in Cantica.*)

[4] Genesis 4:13. (*Genes. IV, 13.*)

[5] Compare Psalm 21:17. (*Cf. Psal. XXI, 17.*)

[6] Compare Deuteronomy 32:13. (*Cf. Deuter. XXXII, 13.*)

[7] Compare Psalm 33:9. (*Cf. Psal. XXXIII, 9.*)

[8] Compare Luke 1:78. (*Cf. Luc. I, 78.*)

[9] Psalm 30:25. (*Psal. XXX, 25.*)

[10] Wisdom 4:15. (*Sapient. IV, 15.*)

Chapter XXII. On Fear.

Chapter XXII.

On Fear.

A. Just fear is the diligent guarding, by faith and morals, of the divine precepts. Likewise, just fear is anxiety of heart drawing a human being back from illicit use of the members, the exterior senses, and interior affections, lest the soul be either wholly separated from God or be drawn somewhat away from his familiarity. It also guards lest the mind seek even the least delight in food, drink, sleep, or any creature, and

thus grow tepid from fervor. The bride has this anxiety toward the dearest bridegroom: lest in any movement, gait, word, or deed she offend him, whereby she incur his displeasure. Likewise, lest through some fault, even the least, she be less pleasing. Just fear compels one to abstain not only from grave sins but also from venial ones. For by habit of venial sins security of mind and familiarity with God are lost, and manifold grace is neglected.

B. Its manifold usefulness ought to induce us to just fear. For it is the beginning of wisdom, as the Psalmist testifies: The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord ^[1]. And the beginning of justice, according to that: He who is without fear will not be able to be justified ^[2]. Likewise, it is the seal and conclusion of all virtues and graces, according to that: The fear of God sets itself over all things ^[3]. Where there is no fear of the Lord, all grace is suddenly scattered and conscience is perverted, according to that: If you do not hold yourself instantly in the fear of the Lord, your house will quickly be overturned ^[4].

D. Bernard brings forward another usefulness of the fear of the Lord: "In truth I have learned that nothing is equally effective for meriting, retaining, and recovering grace as if at every time before God you are found not to be high-minded, but to fear. Blessed is the man who is always fearful ^[5]. Fear, therefore, when grace smiles upon you; fear when it goes away; fear when it returns again; and this is to be always fearful ^[6]." And a little later: "When it is present, fear lest you not work worthily from it." And a little later: "Fear when grace has been withdrawn, as if you are soon about to fall." And after a few words inserted: "Now if grace, having been propitiated again, returns, then one must fear much more, lest perhaps it happen that one suffer a relapse, according to that of the Gospel: Behold, you have been made well; now do not sin, lest something worse happen to you ^[7]."

The miserable fall of the angels ought to induce us to the same, concerning which Job says: Behold, those who serve him are not stable, and in his angels he found depravity; how much more those who dwell in houses of clay, who have an earthly foundation, will be consumed like a moth ^[8]. Likewise, the fall of holy men from the beginning of the world, such as Adam, Samson, Solomon, and all the Apostles. And alas, today most holy men are prostrated, according to that: A thousand will fall at your side, that is, those who ought to sit at the side of the judge in judgment, and ten thousand at your right hand ^[9], that is, those who ought to be placed at the right hand of Christ.

Hence the Gloss says: "There are many who think that they will judge, and there are many more who think that they are to be placed at the right among those to be saved, but they are deceived, because those who presume concerning themselves, not having a root fixed on high, fall away from their thoughts." Examples of saints fearing God ought to induce us to the same, as Job says of himself: Like swelling waves over me, I feared God ^[10]. And on that saying of Job, All my things will descend into the deepest hell ^[11], the Gloss says: "Consider which of us is secure concerning rest, when that man trembles about it whom the judge praises."

D. Jerome, speaking of himself, says: "Whenever I think of the day of judgment, I tremble in my whole body ^[12]." What then are we miserable ones going to do, where such great men tremble?

C. He has the proof of just fear who is so solicitous for all things that are God's that at no time or place does he neglect anything of them that is possible for him; indeed, as far as he can, he fervently works all things. Hence it is said in Ecclesiastes: He who fears God neglects nothing ^[13]. And in Ecclesiasticus: He who fears God will do good things ^[14].

D. He has the proof of unjust fear who because of loss either of body or possessions, not for God's sake, does good things or omits evil, or does evil and omits good. The Lord prohibits this fear, saying: Do not fear those who kill the body ^[15]. And Isaiah says: Who are you, that you should fear mortal man ^[16]? To such persons the Lord says: Where are their gods, in whom they had confidence ^[17]?

Notes

[1] Psalm 110:10 and Ecclesiasticus 1:16. (*Psal. CX, 10 et Eccli. I, 16.*)

- [2] Ecclesiasticus 1:28. (*Eccli. I, 28.*)
- [3] Ecclesiasticus 25:14. (*Eccli. XXV, 14.*)
- [4] Ecclesiasticus 27:4. (*Eccli. XXVII, 4.*)
- [5] Proverbs 28:14. (*Proverb. XXVIII, 14.*)
- [6] St. Bernard, Sermon 54 on the Song of Songs. (*S. Bernardus, Sermon. 54 in Cantica.*)
- [7] John 5:14. (*Joan. V, 14.*)
- [8] Job 5:18 and 19. (*Job, V, 18 et 19.*)
- [9] Psalm 90:7. (*Psal. XC, 7.*)
- [10] Job 31:23. (*Job, XXXI, 23.*)
- [11] Job 17:16. (*Job, XVII, 16.*)
- [12] St. Jerome, Letter to Chromatius. (*S. Hieronymus, Epist. ad Chromatium.*)
- [13] Ecclesiastes 7:19. (*Eccle. VII, 19.*)
- [14] Ecclesiasticus 15:1. (*Eccli. XV, 1.*)
- [15] Matthew 10:28. (*Matth. X, 28.*)
- [16] Isaiah 51:12. (*Isa. LI, 12.*)
- [17] Deuteronomy 32:37. (*Deuter. XXXII, 37.*)

Chapter XXIII. On Joy.

Chapter XXIII.

On Joy.

A. True joy or gladness is to be consoled in those things that are God's. For the matter of all joy is in God: namely power, wisdom, goodness, largesse, beauty, blessedness, mercy, justice, truth, nobility, holiness, meekness, faithfulness, charity, humility, and any similar things. And all these are immense and eternal in God.

B. He has true joy who has a sincere conscience in all his deeds and never knowingly transgresses divine precepts and vows, but always intends to advance and to conform himself to the examples of Jesus Christ and the divine manners. The Apostle rejoiced and gloried in this conscience, saying: This is our glory, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity of heart and sincerity of God, and not in carnal wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in this world, and more abundantly toward you ^[1].

C. This ought to induce us to true joy, that God, good above all things, among all creatures united to himself the human creature alone to such an extent that God is truly said to be man, and man to be God. And whatever God has by nature, man has by grace: For he nowhere takes hold of angels, but he takes hold of the seed of Abraham, as the Apostle says ^[2]. Chrysostom says: "Is it not great and marvelous that our flesh sits above and is adored by angels and archangels?"

Another inducement is that God has made us certain of eternal blessedness, fortified by promises of the law and prophets and by oath, according to that: The oath that he swore to Abraham our father, that he would give himself to us ^[3]. By the privileges of the four Evangelists, by the testimony of the Apostles, by the pledge of the Holy Spirit in baptism, who is the pledge of our inheritance, by the earnest-money, that is, foretaste in devotion and sweetness of God, by the hostage, who is Christ, the only-begotten Son of God. To this twofold joy the Apostle exhorts us, saying: Rejoice in the Lord always, namely because of the divine union; again I say, rejoice, namely because of the certainty of eternal blessedness.

D. He has the proof and matter of true joy who through internal inspiration has been made certain of the remission of all sins by which he so gravely offended God and every creature, lost every grace conferred, and demerited grace to be conferred. Mary Magdalene had this certainty, to whom the Lord said: Many sins are forgiven her, because she has loved much ^[4]. And blessed Francis, concerning whom it is said: "It is revealed

to him that the very last farthing of faults is wholly forgiven him ^[5]."

Another proof and matter of joy is security in the mind that the human being is a son of God and heir of the heavenly kingdom. The Holy Spirit gives this security, as the Apostle says: For the Spirit himself gives testimony to our spirit that we are sons of God. But if sons, also heirs: heirs indeed of God, and coheirs of Christ ^[6]. The Apostle had this certainty when he said: I am certain that neither death nor life... nor any creature will be able to separate us from the charity of God ^[7], etc.

E. The proof of false joy is to delight in transitory things, whether they are temporal goods, carnal friendships, bodily convenience, or temporal gladness. This joy is a snare of sadness. For when those things pass, joy also passes and sadness follows. And unless such sadness withdraws from the heart, true joy will never enter, because they cannot exist together, like fire and water, which mutually expel each other.

Natural joy is also sometimes had when a human being thinks, speaks, hears speech, or reads about the perfection of God, or when it is had from appetite for the heavenly kingdom. For all naturally desire blessedness. This joy likewise is vain, and it is difficult to know when it is gratuitous and from God, and when

Notes

[1] 2 Corinthians 1:12. (*II ad Corinth. I, 12.*)

[2] Hebrews 2:16. (*Ad Hebr. II, 16.*)

[3] Luke 1:73. (*Luc. I, 73.*)

[4] Luke 7:47. (*Luc. VII, 47.*)

[5] Chronicle of the Order of St. Francis. Compare St. Bonaventure in the life of blessed Francis. (*Chronica ordinis S. Francisci. Cf. S. Bonaventuram in vita B. Francisci.*)

[6] Romans 8:16 and 17. (*Ad Roman. VIII, 16 et 17.*)

[7] The same, verses 38 and 39. (*Ibid., v. 38 et 39.*)

Chapter XXIV. On Sadness.

Chapter XXIV.

On Sadness.

natural. Happy would he be who could say with Isaiah: Rejoicing I shall rejoice in the Lord, namely the creator, and my soul will exult in my God, namely the redeemer, because he has clothed me with garments of salvation ^[1], etc.

A. True sadness is sorrow of heart for all injuries which God, suffering, has innocently endured from his creatures from the beginning of the world, and will endure until the end, both from spiritual persons and from secular persons. This sorrow ought to draw innumerable bloody tears from the eyes of each one who loves God.

Another part of true sadness is that frequently a human being is overcome in temptations without resistance. For when he sees or hears anything, both among flying creatures and among creeping things, which looks toward immodesty, immediately the mind is befouled with immodest thoughts, or pleasures, or affections. But when the soul perceives from the five senses what can move toward vain glory, envy, anger, rancor, detraction, avarice, levity, or carnal friendship, or some sin, immediately without battle it is cast down into one of the aforesaid things, doubtful whether it will ever rise again from such a sin. And if by the help of God it rises again, it is uncertain whether it will ever recover the grace which it had, and as much as it had before. For a human being can fall by himself, but by himself he can never rise again: And he remembered, namely God, that they are flesh, a spirit going and not returning ^[2].

Another part of true sadness is that manifold grace flowing out from the fountain of divine piety is reduced to nothing, because it does not return to its principle, whence it flowed, with manifold interest, according to the ordering of God. All creatures could not worthily weep over this.

B. The most holy example of the life of Jesus Christ ought to induce us to true sadness, for his soul was sad from the beginning of his life until death. He also confesses those who are sad to be blessed, saying: Blessed are those who mourn, for they themselves will be consoled ^[3]. Because joys can be found only through sadness, as a certain Gloss says on the canonical epistle of James.

The usefulness arising from it ought to induce us to the same. For true sadness is more useful than true gladness, according to that saying: It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting ^[4]. For frequently someone is pressed downward by sadness, but is lifted up by gladness. And what is more pitiable, sometimes a spiritual human being, after gladness and devotion of mind, becomes on that day more free and less cautious in his deeds than if he had had no gladness.

There is another usefulness of sadness: "Since prayer and the other good works anoint and soothe God, a tear, which is the effect of sadness, compels God, or pierces him, according to Bernard ^[5]."

C. He has the proof of true sadness whose mind is not afflicted by sorrow, but is lifted up; nor does he wish to be freed from sadness, but always desires greater sadness. But sadness by which the mind is afflicted, and from which someone suddenly strives to be freed, is unjust. Such is the sadness about which it is written: A sad spirit dries up the bones ^[6], namely of virtues. And James says: The anger of a man, coming from sadness, does not work the sadness of God ^{[7] [8]}.

He has the proof of true sadness who restrains his senses from every delicate thing: he does not see, does not hear, does not taste, does not smell, and does not touch anything by which sadness can be mitigated. He also flees every place and all persons from whose company the sorrow of the heart can be lessened. For he is certain that it is the safest way to finish life in true sadness, according to that saying: The heart of the wise is where sadness is, and the heart of fools where gladness is ^[9].

D. He has the proof of false sadness who, not considering the most wise ordering of God, is tormented over the loss of temporal things, or over the affliction or death of friends, or over the infirmity of his own body, or over his correction. Such sadness confers no grace, but tears the mind apart, according to that saying: As a moth harms a garment and a worm harms wood, so the sadness of a man harms the heart ^[10]. And elsewhere: In the sorrow of the soul the spirit is cast down ^[11].

Notes

[1] Isaiah 61:10. (*Isa. LXI, 10.*)

[2] Psalm 77:39. (*Psal. LXXVII, 39.*)

[3] Matthew 5:5. (*Matth. V, 5.*)

[4] Ecclesiastes 7:3. (*Eccle. VII, 3.*)

[5] Some attribute this sentence to Bernard, others to Jerome, others to Augustine (note of the Lyon editor). (*Hanc sententiam alii Bernardo, alii Hieronymo, alii Augustino tribuunt (Nota edit. Lugd.).*)

[6] Proverbs 17:22. (*Proverb. XVII, 22.*)

[7] The Vulgate has "justice." (*Vulgata habet justitiam.*)

[8] James 1:20. (*Jacobi I, 20.*)

[9] Ecclesiastes 7:5. (*Eccle. VII, 5.*)

[10] Proverbs 25:20. (*Proverb. XXV, 20.*)

[11] Proverbs 15:10. (*Proverb. XV, 10.*)

Chapter XXV. On Gratitude.

Chapter XXV.

On Gratitude.

A. True and perfect gratitude is to magnify the excellence of God's gifts in the soul, with annihilation of self and due reverence of heart. Thus David magnified the gifts of God's commandments, saying: I have loved your commandments above gold and topaz ^[1]. And Solomon extolled the house of wisdom, saying: Wisdom is better than all, namely than most precious riches, and every desirable thing cannot be compared to it ^[2].

B. He has true gratitude who feels himself unworthy of all the gifts of God. And the more unworthy of God's benefits he reckons and feels himself to be, by so much the more does gratitude of mind grow. Chrysostom says: "For all things which you have bestowed on us, O Christ, you ask nothing from us except to be saved, bestowing this very thing, and you give thanks to those receiving it."

C. Consideration of the giver ought to induce us to true gratitude: he is almighty, most noble, most loving, most faithful, best, most blessed, and most perfect.

Likewise, the greatness of the gifts. For there is no bodily or spiritual gift so small, flowing from God, in which the immeasurable God with every divine power is not included.

Likewise, the affection of the giver must be weighed. For he does not give himself by halves, or with indignation, so that he may be discharged by us, but from every divine desire, from all his love and goodness.

Likewise, the usefulness of the gifts must be weighed. For he gives each one toward knowing him, loving him, enjoying him, and toward making us blessed.

Likewise, one must weigh what compels him to give: not fear of any evil, or hope of any good; not any virtue of ours, but his eternal and immeasurable goodness.

Likewise, our unworthiness must be considered, for we are not worthy even of life itself, nor have we deserved to be worms among the other creatures.

Likewise, the usefulness of gratitude ought to induce us to this. "For it opens the fountain of piety and moves God to flow out, just as ingratitude dries up the fountain of divine piety, the dew of mercy, and the streams of grace ^[3]." For the greater the gratitude in the soul is, the more fit it becomes for receiving grace, and the more abundantly the most generous God is compelled to give.

D. He has the proof of true gratitude who, with each of the aforesaid things having been weighed, which are able to move one toward gratitude, gives thanks with his whole heart for each great gift, when he has received them reverently; and with his whole effort strives to keep the graces received from the most loving Lord unstained. For how was the gift of a friend grateful which he did not receive gratefully, and which he so suddenly defiles and loses by his own will? Nor do we need gratitude only in those things which are for our consolation, but also in those things which are for our affliction. For from the same goodness and charity God gives both. Hence Tobias says: I bless you, Lord God of Israel, because you have chastised me and you have saved me ^[4]. For God gives devotion and permits tribulation to happen to human beings for equal grace in the present and glory in the future. Or, for greater usefulness, as he permitted Job, who said: If we have received good things from the hand of God, why should we not receive evil things ^[5]? As if he were saying: We ought to receive both gratefully.

E. He has the proof of ingratitude when someone obstructs his heart with some evil will, or rancor, or levity, or temporal delight, or carnal friendship, because of which he cannot perceive spiritual gifts. Or when he does not care to preserve graces perceived, or to multiply those conferred; or he does not labor to enjoy them according to God's ordering for the common usefulness; or when, with gifts received from God in body and in soul and in the powers of the soul, he does not cease to attack God himself, as, alas, frequently happens. For then he deserves to lose all things, when he uses them against the giver.

Notes

[1] Psalm 118:127. (*Psal. CXVIII, 127.*)

[2] Proverbs 7:11. (*Proverb. VII, 11.*)

[3] Bernard, Sermon 51 on the Song of Songs. (*Bernardus, Serm. 51 in Cantica.*)

[4] Tobit 11:17. (*Tob. XI, 17.*)

[5] Job 2:10. (*Job II, 10.*)

Chapter XXVI. On Zeal for Souls.

Chapter XXVI.

On Zeal for Souls.

A. True and perfect zeal for souls exists when someone labors for the salvation of souls by holy meditations, fervent desires, tears, prayers, vigils, fasts, preachings, confessions, counsels, teachings, and other good works. How great this grace is, Bede describes thus: "What grace can be more sublime, and what manner of life more pleasing to God, than that of those who by daily exercise strive to convert others to the grace of their author, and by the frequent acquisition of faithful souls always to increase the joy of the heavenly fatherland?" Likewise St. Gregory says: "Indeed there is no sacrifice so great to almighty God as zeal for souls ^[1]." And this is because of the image of the Trinity impressed upon souls.

B. The example of Jesus Christ ought to induce us to zeal for souls. In his whole life he thirsted with such great fervor for the conversion of sinners and the perfection of the good that for the recovery of souls sold away he offered each of his members to a particular punishment, and at last his soul to a most shameful death. As St. Bernard testifies: "So great was his zeal for human reconciliation that he did not attend to his own pay while he gained the wandering one." O how great is the dignity of souls, and how great God's zeal for souls, for whose redemption the Son of God offered all his precious blood to God the Father, although one drop of such precious blood would have sufficed to redeem the whole human race, as St. Ambrose says; and especially since nothing of blessedness would increase or decrease for him. The wisdom of God knew this nobility of souls, which is unknown to us. St. Bernard laments this, saying: "Alas, how little we attend to the nobility of the soul, in whose presence the body lives, whose absence proves what its presence contributed; which God valued so greatly that he gave his only-begotten for it; which the devil reckoned so greatly that he offered the whole world for it."

C. He has the proof of true fervor who cares for neither his own life nor his body, so that he may win more souls for Christ. David had this zeal when he said: Who will grant me that I may die for you, Absalom my son! my son Absalom ^[2]. And the Apostle, when he says: But I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls ^[3]. And again: Daily I die by your glory, brothers ^[4], that is, I endure dangers of death. And blessed Dominic had it when he wished to sell himself for a certain captive whom the Saracens were holding, and again for another who remained among heretics because of sustenance; yet wise God kept him unsold for the salvation of many souls.

D. He has the proof of false fervor who is more solicitous about spiritual works for gifts than for souls. Such a one is not the devil, who is figured in the king of the Sodomites, who said to Abraham: Give me the souls, take the rest for yourself ^[5]. And he who labors more for the friendship or favor of human beings than for their holiness and perfection cannot say with the Apostle: I do not seek what is yours, but you ^[6].

It must be noted, moreover, that wherever two things move one to some work, namely God and something else, it is difficult to know which moves more. For example, someone is moved to hearing confessions, or to some spiritual thing, by the salvation of souls and by hope of gain, or favor, or pleasingness, or freedom, or some other delight: here it is difficult to discern which of these affects more the mind of the laborer. Yet it is an evident proof that one of the aforesaid things moves more than God or the salvation of souls when

someone more gladly hears the rich, the noble, the young, and the beautiful, than the poor, the ignoble, the old, and the deformed. And when he is more often and for a longer time delighted to be with these than with those, and perhaps with less fruit, although those have consciences as holy as these, or holier; and obey counsels as much as these, or more; and strive for perfection as much as these, or more; and please God as much as these, or more. James testifies: Has not God chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God has promised to those loving him? But you have dishonored the poor person ^[7], namely by not caring for him, in whom nevertheless Christ is chiefly honored, as is said in the homily on that saying: Honor all.

Likewise, it is a sufficiently evident proof when in our works we seek the part of God more than our own part. For for those works which have labor and some consolation, such as preaching, confession, prelacy, and similar things, although there is great danger in them, nevertheless anyone is ready for them. But from those works which contain only labor and not consolation, such as fasts, vigils, disciplines, and similar things, although there is no danger in them, nevertheless each person abstains from them as much as he can.

Notes

[1] St. Gregory the Great, Book 1 on Ezekiel, Homily 12 or the last homily. (*S. Gregorius M., Lib. I in Ezechielem, Homil. 12 sive ultima.*)

[2] 2 Kings 18:33. (*II Regum XVIII, 33.*)

[3] 2 Corinthians 12:15. (*II ad Corinth. XII, 15.*)

[4] 1 Corinthians 15:31. (*I ad Corinth. XV, 31.*)

[5] Genesis 14:21. (*Genes. XIV, 21.*)

[6] 2 Corinthians 12:14. (*II ad Corinth. XII, 14.*)

[7] James 2:5 and 6. (*Jacobi II, 5 et 6.*)

Chapter XXVII. On Freedom.

Chapter XXVII.

On Freedom.

A. True freedom is not to be bound by the chains of sins, which truly bind, according to that saying: His own iniquities seize the wicked, and he is bound by the ropes of his sins ^[1]. And they truly make a slave, according to that saying: Everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin ^[2]. For to sin is not freedom, nor a part of freedom, as Anselm says; rather it is the worst species of servitude. No one is freed from this species of servitude except by the help of the Son of God alone, as he himself testifies: If the Son frees you, you will truly be free ^[3].

B. He has true freedom who is not captured by desire for temporal things, nor by praise or favor of human beings, nor by his own pleasing of himself or another's displeasure, nor by carnal friendship, nor by servile fear, nor by delight in transitory joy.

C. Consideration of the divine ordering ought to induce us to love of true freedom, for it wills the human being to be free. As a sign of this, God gave free choice to the human being, assimilating him to himself most of all in this: that he can be compelled by no one, just as God too can be compelled by no one. God bestowed that free choice on the human being, saying in Ecclesiasticus: God from the beginning established the human being, and left him in the hand of his own counsel ^[4]. And a little later: He has placed before you water and fire; stretch out your hand to whichever you wish. Before the human being are life and death, good and evil; what has pleased him will be given to him ^[5].

One is brought without doubt to true freedom who binds himself by inviolable observance of the divine precepts and counsels and his vows; who restrains his mind and his senses from pleasures; who occupies his

members in no illicit things; who loves from the heart the yoke of obedience; who labors with his whole effort how he may please his God. The more one leans upon the aforesaid things, the more quickly he obtains true freedom, and the more strongly he is rooted in it. But he who in this world freely carries out his own will in all things and as much as he can, is entangled by various snares of the devil; and when he seems to be more free, then he is held more strongly and more certainly in the servitude and captivity of the devil.

D. He has the proof of true freedom who desires none of those things which alienate or distance the mind from familiarity with God, such as prelacy, frequent occupation about exterior things, excessive solicitude about the advantage of the flesh, dissolution of mind, distraction into diverse business, rash examination of another's life and conscience, excuse or lessening of one's own defects, and manifestation or aggravation of the defects of neighbors.

Another proof of freedom is security of mind concerning the remission of the whole fault and punishment, which comes from fervor of heart. This sometimes burns in the heart like fire in a furnace, and in prayer makes a human being who was before cold and pale become warm and red. This fervor consumes every stain and punishment, just as fire burns out the rust of iron.

E. He has the proof of servitude and captivity who detests the yoke of obedience; who abominates charitable and fraternal correction; who daily meditates revenge for his injuries; who is affected by praise and human favor; who knowingly and pertinaciously is occupied in something which is against God and conscience, or against the will of prelates; who is delighted in the receiving or conferring of little gifts or friendly letters. Hence a certain wise man says: "To receive little gifts is to sell freedom ^[6]." And Job says: Fire will devour the tents of those who willingly receive gifts ^[7], that is, the fire of false love; and consequently the bond of servitude follows that love. But concerning one who gives gifts Solomon says: He will acquire victory and honor who gives gifts; but he takes away the soul of the receivers ^[8]. Each of these takes freedom away from a human being and reduces him to miserable servitude. For he cannot in freedom of spirit be at leisure for God who is occupied in things of this kind.

Notes

[1] Proverbs 5:22. (*Proverb. V, 22.*)

[2] John 8:34. (*Joan. VIII, 34.*)

[3] John 8:36. (*Joan. VIII, 36.*)

[4] Ecclesiasticus 15:14. (*Eccli. XV, 14.*)

[5] The same, verses 17 and 18. (*Ibid., v. 17 et 18.*)

[6] Publilius Syrus, the mime-writer. (*Publius Mimus.*)

[7] Job 15:34. (*Job XV, 34.*)

[8] Proverbs 22:9. (*Proverb. XXII, 9.*)

Chapter XXVIII. On Religion.

Chapter XXVIII.

On Religion.

A. True religion, or spiritual life, is, as blessed James says: To visit orphans and widows in their tribulation, and to keep oneself unstained from this world ^[1]. He keeps himself unstained from this world who entirely renounces secular manners, and avoids, as much as he can, both carnal and spiritual sins.

B. The usefulness about which Scripture says, The Spirit is what gives life; the flesh profits nothing ^[2], ought to induce us to true spiritual life. And that saying of the Apostle: Those who are in the flesh cannot please God ^[3].

Likewise, he who wishes truly to become spiritual must flee and hate bodily advantage; that is, he must detest carnal desires, which war against the soul, as Peter says ^[4], and must desire roughness and bodily inconvenience. For this preserves grace, as thorns guard herbs in a garden. For grace flows out through the mouth, eyes, and ears. And as fire and water cannot exist together at the same time, so neither can carnal pleasure and spiritual pleasure, according to St. Bernard ^[5].

Likewise, he must know that a human being can do nothing good from himself, as the Apostle says: Not that we are sufficient to think anything from ourselves as from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God ^[6]. This removes presumption. And that he can do all things through Christ, in a greater and more perfect way than through himself, as the Apostle testifies: I can do all things in him who strengthens me ^[7]. This removes despair. These two, namely presumption and despair, are very harmful to spiritual persons and often attack them.

Likewise, he must always hold himself before God, not only considering how vile he is, but also how vile he can be and could have been, unless God had guarded him. And this removes swelling pride.

Likewise, that God will require an account of all evils committed, and of good things omitted, and of graces neglected both toward himself and toward the whole community. This introduces just fear.

Likewise, he must receive every good as from God giving it, and this excludes false love and introduces gratitude; and every evil as from God benignly permitting it for our usefulness, and this introduces patience. The more someone advances in these things, the more he is brought into spiritual life, and grows and is confirmed in it.

C. He has the proof of true spiritual life whose spirit entirely dominates the flesh; who feels spiritual inconvenience as quickly as bodily inconvenience; and who avoids the place, time, and persons where and through whom he can be harmed in spirit, just as he avoids where he can be harmed and offended in body; and who as quickly strives to heal the spirit as the flesh, and the spirit more than the flesh by so much as the spirit is more worthy than the body.

Likewise, he has the proof of true spiritual life who delights as much in spiritual foods as in bodily foods; and who would neglect spiritual food at any hour as unwillingly as bodily food; and who receives spiritual food as orderly as carnal food; and who compels himself to spiritual foods, when he does not desire them, as a sick man is compelled to bodily foods when he loathes them.

Another proof of spiritual life exists if a human being is as diligent concerning the flesh; if he is as ready in all things to obey a spiritual physician for the health of spirit and soul as a bodily physician for the health of the body. And if he is as solicitous to acquire the grace which he needs in adversity and prosperity, toward friends, toward enemies, when he is praised, when he is reviled, which he needs alone before God and which he needs among human beings, as he is solicitous about carnal or Lenten foods, or about summer or winter garments. If he is as eager to acquire, multiply, preserve, and usefully expend spiritual gifts as a secular person is with temporal goods. And he is more diligent in spirit than in body by so much as the spirit is more worthy than the body. Concerning all these things the Apostle says: Those who are according to the flesh savor the things that are of the flesh; but those who are according to the spirit savor the things that are of the spirit ^[8].

D. The proof of carnal life is to live according to the rule of the flesh. St. Augustine says: "He lives according to the flesh who lives according to himself: that is, he goes where he wishes; he sleeps when he wishes and as long as he wishes; he speaks the things he wishes, to whom he wishes, and where he wishes; he eats and drinks when he wishes and as much as he wishes; he laughs and is shamefully merry among whom he wishes and when he wishes; finally, whatever is pleasant to the nostrils he seeks, whatever is soothing to touch, whatever is pleasing to his body he practices and follows, how he wishes and when he wishes, because he

wills all lawful and unlawful things carnally. He delights in very beautiful garments, and horses and arms, as he wishes and when he wishes. And thus he does not live according to God, but carnally lives and delights, and he fulfills all the desires of the flesh as he wishes and when he wishes^[9]."

Another proof of carnal life is freedom of the tongue, which is followed by distraction of the heart, according to that saying: But if anyone thinks himself to be religious, not restraining his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this one's religion is vain^[10]. Therefore it is written: He who guards his mouth and his tongue guards his soul from distresses^[11]. And again: Death and life are in the hand of the tongue^[12].

Notes

[1] James 1:27. (*Jacobi I, 27.*)

[2] John 6:64. (*Joan. VI, 64.*)

[3] Romans 8:8. (*Ad Roman. VIII, 8.*)

[4] 1 Peter 2:11. (*I Petri II, 11.*)

[5] St. Bernard, Letter 2 to the boy Fulco. (*S. Bernardus, Epist. 2 ad Fulconem puerum.*)

[6] 2 Corinthians 3:5. (*II ad Corinth. III, 5.*)

[7] Philippians 4:13. (*Ad Philip. IV, 13.*)

[8] Romans 8:5. (*Ad Roman. VIII, 5.*)

[9] St. Augustine, Book on Saving Teachings, chapter 7. (*S. Augustinus, Lib. de salutaribus documentis, cap. 7.*)

[10] James 1:26. (*Jacobi I, 26.*)

[11] Proverbs 21:23. (*Proverb. XXI, 23.*)

[12] Proverbs 18:21. (*Proverb. XVIII, 21.*)

Chapter XXIX. On Maturity.

Chapter XXIX.

On Maturity.

A. True maturity exists when all the affections and powers of the soul are unanimously gathered into God. From this the mind is restrained from vanity, and the five senses are kept back from enticements. But when the soul withdraws from that blessed union, it is soon entangled by diverse vanities. For all things that are under heaven are vain, as Ecclesiastes says^[1].

B. The most holy example of Jesus Christ ought to induce us to true maturity. Concerning his seriousness St. Augustine writes thus: "We read that the Lord Jesus sorrowed, wept, was wearied from a journey, endured reproaches and injuries, received spits, scourges, and the cross; yet we never read that he laughed, nor that he prospered on earth. Plainly from this, from this all the elect rejoice in themselves, when they have begun to be wearied by the adversities of the world and not to be fallaciously deceived by any of its prosperities, knowing that another way remains^[2]."

Likewise, because Scripture greatly censures dissolution and laughter, according to that saying: I reckoned laughter an error, and to joy I said: Why are you deceived in vain^[3]? And elsewhere: Laughter will be mixed with sorrow, and mourning occupies the ends of joy^[4]. And the Psalmist speaks thus to the Lord: You have hated those observing vanities uselessly^[5]. And especially the threat of Jesus Christ, saying: Woe to you who laugh now, because you will mourn and weep^[6].

Likewise, because it draws each person much away from familiarity with God and obstructs the mind from receiving graces.

C. He has the proof of true maturity who by neither idle words, nor deeds, nor signs, nor dissolute gait, nor any occasion provokes anyone to levity, but always from the heart detests dissolution in himself and in others; who avoids all places in which he can be dissolved; and flees all dissolute persons so that he may

preserve maturity, knowing that he who touches pitch will be defiled by it ^[7], and he who associates himself with the dissolute will not escape dissolution. Such was blessed Job, who was so mature that even the dissolute fled his presence, as he himself says: Young men saw me and hid themselves ^[8]. And he had so great a habit of maturity that if the opposite had been seen in him, no one would have believed it. Hence he himself says: If at any time I laughed at them, they did not believe it, and the light of my face did not fall to the earth ^[9].

D. He has the proof of levity who is prone to laughing, playful in words, dissolute in manners, frequenting dissolute places, and often walking and living with the dissolute; who flees mature persons, and to whom maturity is burdensome to see, believing that from maturity the infirmity of his body comes. Such a person is described in Ecclesiastes: Rejoice, young man, in your adolescence, and let your heart be in good in the days of your youth, and walk in the ways of your heart and in the sight of your eyes, and know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment ^[10].

Notes

[1] Ecclesiastes 1:2 and following. (*Eccle. I, 2 et seq.*)

[2] St. Augustine, Sermon 35 on the Saints, which is the second on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (*S. Augustinus, Serm. 35 de Sanctis, qui est secundus de Assumptione B. V. Mariae.*)

[3] Ecclesiastes 1:2. (*Eccle. I, 2.*)

[4] Proverbs 14:13. (*Proverb. XIV, 13.*)

[5] Psalm 30:7. (*Psal. XXX, 7.*)

[6] Luke 6:25. (*Luc. VI, 25.*)

[7] Ecclesiasticus 13:1. (*Eccli. XIII, 1.*)

[8] Job 30:8. (*Job XXX, 8.*)

[9] The same, verse 24. (*Ibid., v. 24.*)

[10] Ecclesiastes 11:9. (*Eccle. XI, 9.*)

Chapter XXX. On Simplicity.

Chapter XXX.

On Simplicity.

A. True and perfect simplicity is to harm no one, but to benefit all, as the Gloss says on the Parables. This is the first virtue for which Job is commended: There was a man in the land of Hus, named Job, and that man was simple and upright ^[1], as if excelling in it before the other virtues.

The Lord commanded this when he sent the Apostles into the whole world to call unbelievers together to the unity of the Catholic faith, saying: Be prudent as serpents and simple as doves ^[2], where prudence is joined to simplicity. For prudence without simplicity is cunning, and simplicity without prudence is foolishness. A dove harms neither with beak nor with claw; so the truly simple person harms neither by word nor by deed.

B. He truly loves simplicity who is not occupied about many things, like Martha ^[3]. For folds are where there are many things. But he seeks only the one thing, concerning which the Lord says: But one thing is necessary ^[4]. Concerning this Mary Magdalene is praised, because she chose the best part, which will not be taken away from her ^[5]. This is the one good in which are all good things, eternal and immeasurable.

C. The usefulness arising from simplicity ought to induce us to love of simplicity. For it is written: And with the simple is his conversation ^[6], that is, the Lord's. For the Lord is familiar with the simple, to whom he does not disdain to reveal his secrets. Hence, when the Apostles were forbidding children to come to his presence, the Lord answered: Permit the little ones, and do not forbid them to come to me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven ^[7]. This is the virtue without which there is no salvation. For the Lord Jesus says: Unless you

become like little ones, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven ^[8]. He does not say, become little ones, but like little ones, that is, simple and innocent.

Another usefulness of simplicity is that of which it is said: He who walks simply walks confidently ^[9]. For the safest way to the kingdom of heaven is the way of simplicity. For it is written in Proverbs: He will protect those walking simply ^[10].

D. He has the proof of true simplicity who distorts the deeds of no one, but presumes good of all; who depraves the good of no one, lessens the good of no one; who desires the salvation of all, wishes evil to no one; and who does good things and does them well; and who thinks good things about the Lord and seeks him in simplicity of heart ^[11]; who subjects himself to his will and keeps his commandments.

E. He has the proof of duplicity who carries one thing in his mouth, another in his heart, and another in his work. Thus Joab, holding Amasa's chin, said: Hail, my brother, and meanwhile secretly drawing out a sword, killed him ^[12]. Against this the Lord Jesus says: Let your speech be: Yes, yes; no, no ^[13], that is, what you have in your heart, bring forth by mouth and exhibit in deed. And blessed James says: A man double in soul is inconstant in all his ways ^[14]. And the Lord curses the double, namely those who wish to serve God and the devil at the same time, that is, to exercise themselves in sins and good works. Against these the Lord says: No one can serve two masters ^[15], namely contrary masters; for virtue and vice, good and evil, are wholly opposed. But against those who intend to please God and the world, James says: Whoever wishes to be a friend of this world is made an enemy of God ^[16].

F. He has the proof of false simplicity who shows himself simple in exterior conduct and nevertheless bears deceit in the heart. Concerning this Jeremiah says: Let each one guard himself from his neighbor, and let him not have confidence in any brother, because every brother in supplanting will supplant, and every friend will walk fraudulently ^[17].

Notes

[1] Job 1:1. (*Job I, 1.*)

[2] Matthew 10:16. (*Matth. X, 16.*)

[3] Luke 10:40. (*Luc. X, 40.*)

[4] The same, verse 42. (*Ibid., v. 42.*)

[5] The same. (*Ibid.*)

[6] Proverbs 3:32. (*Proverb. III, 32.*)

[7] Matthew 19:14. (*Matth. XIX, 14.*)

[8] Matthew 18:3. (*Matth. XVIII, 3.*)

[9] Proverbs 10:9. (*Proverb. X, 9.*)

[10] Proverbs 2:7. (*Proverb. II, 7.*)

[11] Compare Wisdom 1:1. (*Cf. Sapient. I, 1.*)

[12] 2 Kings 20:9. (*II Regum XX, 9.*)

[13] Matthew 5:37. (*Matth. V, 37.*)

[14] James 1:8. (*Jacobi I, 8.*)

[15] Matthew 6:24. (*Matth. VI, 24.*)

[16] James 4:4. (*Jacobi IV, 4.*)

[17] Jeremiah 9:4. (*Jerem. IX, 4.*)

Chapter XXXI. On Silence.

Chapter XXXI.

On Silence.

A. True and perfect silence is not only to moderate the tongue from illicit words, such as detractions, lies, perjuries, immodest, light, angry, harmful, evil-speaking, idle words and similar things, but also from useful and lawful words, according to that saying: I was mute and humbled, and I kept silence from good things ^[24], namely from announcing them. The Gloss says: "He does not fall into illicit things who cautiously restrains himself from lawful things ^[25]." Spiritual grace is poured out not only through useless and harmful words, but also through useful words, when measure is not observed in speaking. This virtue, moderation of the tongue, is rare, as James testifies: Every nature of beasts and birds and serpents and the rest are tamed and have been tamed by human nature; but no human being can tame the tongue, an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison ^[26]. The Gloss says: "The tongue of the wicked surpasses beasts in ferocity, birds in levity, and serpents in venom." For they are bestial, who sharpened their tongues like a sword ^[27]. They are birds, who set their mouth in heaven ^[28], and whose mouth spoke vanity ^[29]. They are serpents, of whom it is said: The poison of asps is under their lips ^[30].

B. The most holy example of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to induce us to love of silence. In commending silence, when interrogated about the imposition of crimes, he would not excuse himself, nor did he wish to delay his death by a response.

The example of a certain hermit ought to induce us to the same; about him it is read that he carried a stone in his mouth for three years so that he might learn to keep silence ^[31]. For someone would learn to speak more quickly than to keep silence, according to that saying of the wise man: "Let him who knows how to speak learn also to be silent."

The usefulness arising from it ought to induce us to the same. For silence composes the distracted heart, brings in serenity of conscience, and makes the mind fit for receiving divine grace. But where there is no silence, there the human being is easily overcome by the adversary, according to that saying: Like a city lying open and without the circuit of walls, so is a man who cannot restrain his spirit in speaking ^[32]. For where there is no moderation of the tongue, there will never be perfection, according to that saying: If anyone does not offend in word, this one is a perfect man ^[33], and no other, says the Gloss. Where there is guarding of the tongue, there is blessedness, according to that saying: Blessed is the man who has not slipped by a word from his mouth ^[15]. And: He who guards his mouth and his tongue guards his soul from distresses ^[16].

C. He has the proof of true silence who, when he can speak freely, lawfully, and without offense, and when his words will be received with great desire, nevertheless is in no way, or rarely, induced to speak, considering that saying of St. Gregory: "If the holy Prophet Ezekiel had been sent to speak, and sat mourning and was silent for seven days, we must consider how great a fault it is for him not to be silent whom no necessity compels to speak ^[17]." And that evangelical word: But I say to you, that every idle word which human beings have spoken, they will render an account of it on the day of judgment ^[18].

D. The proof of false silence or loquacity is to speak insolently and loudly, so that someone may be seen among others; or to speak at an unsuitable time, although timely speech is best. Against this is that saying: A wise man will be silent until the time; but the wanton and imprudent will not observe the time ^[19]. Or to speak where no one listens or cares to hear. Against that is: Where there is no hearing

D. The proof of false silence or loquacity is to speak insolently and loudly, so that someone may be seen among others; or to speak at an unsuitable time, although timely speech is best. Against this is that saying: A wise man will be silent until the time; but the wanton and imprudent will not observe the time ^[20]. Or to speak where no one listens or cares to hear. Against that is: Where there is no hearing, do not pour out speech ^[20]. Or when someone answers before he hears or is questioned. Against this is that saying: He who answers before he hears shows himself to be foolish and worthy of confusion ^[21]. Or when he answers for another, not having been questioned. Against that is: Young man, speak scarcely in your own cause ^[22], namely when it is necessary.

E. The proof of false silence is to be silent not because of virtue, but lest they be confounded by the hearers; or so that one may be praised because of silence; or when, not knowing how to speak intelligibly or usefully, he is ashamed to speak; or so that by silence his foolishness may be covered over, according to that saying: If a fool is silent, he will be reckoned wise ^[23].

Notes

[20] Isaiah 61:10. (*Isa. LXI, 10.*)

[21] Psalm 77:39. (*Psal. LXXVII, 39.*)

[22] Matthew 5:5. (*Matth. V, 5.*)

[23] Ecclesiastes 7:3. (*Eccle. VII, 3.*)

[24] Psalm 37:3. (*Psal. XXXVII, 3.*)

[25] Gloss on Job 1:26, at those words: Did I not dissemble? (*Glossa in Job I, 26, ad illa verba: Nonne dissimulavi?*)

[26] James 3:7 and 8. (*Jacobi III, 7 et 8.*)

[27] Psalm 63:4. (*Psal. LXIII, 4.*)

[28] Psalm 72:9. (*Psal. LXXII, 9.*)

[29] Psalm 143:8 and 11. (*Psal. CXLIII, 8 et 11.*)

[30] Psalm 11:3. (*Psal. XI, 3.*)

[31] Marcus Marulus, Book 4 On the Institution of Living Well and Blessedly, chapter 6, and Peter de Natalibus, Book 1 in the catalogue of saints, chapter 38, report that Abbot Agatho learned to be silent by continually putting a little stone in his mouth. (*Agathonem abbatem lapillo assidue ori indito, didicisse tacere referunt Marcus Marulus, Lib. IV de Institutione bene beateque vivendi cap. 6, et Petrus de Natal. Lib. I in catalogo sanctorum, cap. 38.*)

[32] Proverbs 25:28. (*Proverb. XXV, 28.*)

[33] James 3:2. (*Jacobi III, 2.*)

[15] Ecclesiasticus 14:1. (*Eccli. XIV, 1.*)

[16] Proverbs 21:23. (*Proverb. XXI, 23.*)

[17] St. Gregory the Great, Book 1 on Ezekiel, homily 11. (*S. Gregorius M., Lib. I in Ezechiele homil. 11.*)

[18] Matthew 12:36. (*Matth. XII, 36.*)

[19] Proverbs 20:7. (*Proverb. XX, 7.*)

[20] Ecclesiasticus 20:7. (*Eccli. XX, 7.*)

[21] Proverbs 18:13. (*Proverb. XVIII, 13.*)

[22] Ecclesiasticus 32:10. (*Eccli. XXXII, 10.*)

[23] Proverbs 17:28. (*Proverb. XVII, 28.*)

[24] The same, verse 13. (*Ibid., v. 13.*)

[25] Galatians 5:19 and following. (*Ad Galat. V, 19 et seq.*)

[26] John 12:25. (*Joan. XII, 25.*)

[27] Luke 14:26. (*Luc. XIV, 26.*)

[28] St. Gregory the Great, Homily 37 on the Gospel. (*S. Gregorius M., Homil. 37 in Evangelium.*)

[29] Ecclesiasticus 18:31. (*Eccli. XVIII, 31.*)

[30] Judges 16:4 and following. (*Judicum XVI, 4 et seq.*)

[31] Thomas Hibernicus, in the book he entitled Flowers of the Doctors, and similarly Dominicus Nanus in the Polyanthea, both under the word abstinence, attribute this sentence to Isidore on the prophet Amos. (*Hanc sententiam Thomas Hibernicus in libro quem inscripsit Flores Doctorum, similiter Dominicus Nanus in Polyanthea, uterque verbo abstinentia, tribuit Isidoro in prophetam Amos.*)

[32] Jeremiah 6:26. (*Jerem. VI, 26.*)

[33] Joel 2:13. (*Joel II, 13.*)

Chapter XXXII. On Solitude.

Chapter XXXII.

On Solitude.

A. True solitude is to withdraw the mind from solicitude and occupation with exterior actions, from every delight in creatures, and unanimously to direct all affections, wills, and intentions, as much as it can, into God, so that it may become one spirit with him. Isaiah exhorts to this, saying: Enter into the rock, and hide in the pit of the ground ^[1]. Enter into the rock, that is, into the divinity of Christ; hide in the pit of the ground, that is, in the wounds of Christ. He who is in this rock is alone; he who is outside this rock is in the multitude. In this solitude of mind so much grace and illumination of mind is perceived that the one perceiving it is burdensome for others to look upon. Thus Moses, remaining alone on the mountain with God for forty days and nights, was so greatly illumined that light broke out on his face, and from the brightness of his face there proceeded as it were rays of the sun, which the children of Israel could not gaze upon until he veiled his face ^[2].

B. The most holy example of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to induce us to love of solitude. Although he could never be impeded from spiritual business by the company of anyone, nevertheless he often withdrew from the crowd because of love of solitude. And sometimes, when he could not do more, he withdrew from his dearest Apostles to pray, as far as the throw of a stone, as Luke writes ^[3], indicating through this that even holy men cannot familiarly be at leisure for God in a multitude, or they obtain slight or no effective grace among human beings. Hence Zacchaeus could not see the Lord Jesus in the crowd ^[4], but afterward he saw him and heard the voice of the Savior when he alone climbed the tree.

The usefulness of solitude ought to induce us to the same, concerning which the Lord says of the bride: I will lead her into solitude, and I will speak to her heart ^[5]. O how happy is one who even once hears the Lord speaking within! The speech of the Lord in the heart is to furnish security to the mind concerning lofty graces.

This also ought to induce us, that the holy hermits once ran and wandered in solitude, on mountains, in caves, and in caverns of the earth, so that they might be continuously at leisure for God; sometimes for forty years they saw no human being.

C. He has the proof of true solitude for whom it is a grave punishment to be with human beings, and who withdraws himself from others by whatever occasion he can. Behold, I have gone far away fleeing, and I have remained in solitude ^[6]. Thus it was a punishment for Mary Magdalene to see human beings after she could see Jesus no more; indeed even to see angels was penal for her. Hence, when the angels wished to console her about the Lord's departure from the sepulcher, she said: I seek the creator, and therefore it is grievous to me to see a creature. Therefore she fled into the wilderness because of love for Jesus Christ, lacking every bodily food and drink for thirty years; angels lifted her into the air at each hour appointed for prayer, in which prayer she took nourishment of soul and body.

D. He has the proof of false solitude who, although he is bodily alone before God, nevertheless his soul is occupied with various businesses in diverse parts of the world. These two, namely silence and solitude, effectively lift up to contemplation. Hence that saying of Lamentations: He will sit solitary and will be silent, because he has lifted upon himself ^[7].

Notes

[1] Isaiah 2:10. (*Isa. II, 10.*)

[2] Compare Exodus 34:28 and following. (*Cf. Exod. XXXIV, 28 et seq.*)

[3] Luke 22:41. (*Luc. XXII, 41.*)

[4] Luke 19:2. (*Luc. XIX, 2.*)

[5] Hosea 2:14. (*Osee II, 14.*)

[6] Psalm 54:8. (*Psal. LIV, 8.*)

[7] Lamentations 3:28. (*Thren. III, 28.*)

Chapter XXXIII. On Contemplation.

Chapter XXXIII.

On Contemplation.

A. True and perfect contemplation is a gathering of the affections and of all the powers of the soul toward knowing with delight and admiration of mind something about the divine nature: namely about power, wisdom, goodness, charity, nobility, largesse, and so on, or the hidden judgments of God, or his most holy will, or some perfection which tends into God. In this contemplation were the Patriarchs and Prophets and the holy Apostles. For he revealed his hidden things to the Patriarchs and Prophets through the Holy Spirit: to Noah concerning the flood ^[1], to Abraham concerning the overthrow of Sodom ^[2], to Jeremiah concerning the migration and captivity of the Jews, to Joseph concerning the famine of Egypt ^[3], to Daniel concerning the statue of Nebuchadnezzar ^[4], and so concerning the other Patriarchs and Prophets to whom he revealed other secrets, as diverse visions to Ezekiel ^[5]. Hence Amos says: The Lord God will not do a word unless he has revealed his secret to his servants the Prophets ^[6]. But to the Apostles through his only-begotten Son he indicated all his will and all perfection, as he himself says: All things whatsoever I have heard from my Father, I have made known to you ^[7], so that they too might reveal the same things to their descendants, which they also faithfully did. For their sound has gone out into every land, and their words to the ends of the world ^[8]. But among the other Apostles he revealed and indicated the most hidden things to blessed John the Evangelist and blessed Paul. Among other things he opened to them the eight beatitudes, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, because, etc.; Blessed are the meek, because, etc. ^[9]. These beatitudes contain great perfection in themselves and indicate the perfect will of God.

B. Contemplation, meditation, and thought differ. For in thought there is wandering of the mind; in meditation, investigation; in contemplation, admiration of mind. Thought is without labor and without fruit; meditation is with labor and fruit; contemplation is without labor and with fruit.

C. Three degrees ought to induce us to the contemplation of God, concerning which St. Gregory says: "The first is that it, namely the soul, gather itself to itself. The second, that it see what sort it is when gathered. The third, that it submit itself above itself, by applying itself to the contemplation of the invisible author. But it in no way gathers itself to itself unless it has first learned to restrain from the eye of the mind the phantasms of earthly and heavenly images: whatever from sight, whatever from hearing, whatever from smell, whatever from bodily touch and taste has occurred to its thought, to reject and trample down, so that it may seek itself inwardly as it is without those things. For when it thinks of these things, it turns within itself, as it were, certain shadows of bodies. Therefore all things must be driven away by the hand of discretion from the eyes of the mind, so that the soul may consider itself as it was created under God above the body: so that, being given life by the superior, it may give life to the inferior which it administers ^[10]."

Ineffable sweetness, which is perceived there, ought to induce us to the same; the admirable perfection which is learned there; the beginning of all blessedness which is found there. For the highest God, the fountain of all blessedness, is known there; and what is known is loved; and what is truly loved is desired; and that for which one labors zealously is at last acquired; and when at last it has been acquired, it is possessed with unending delight. Concerning this St. Bernard says: "For the soul which has once learned and received from the Lord to enter into itself, and always in its inmost parts to sigh after the presence of God and to seek his face: for God is spirit, and those who seek him must walk in spirit and not in flesh, so that they live according to the flesh. Such a soul, I say, I do not know whether it would think it more horrible or more penal to experience even hell itself for a time, than after once tasting the sweetness of this spiritual pursuit, to go out again to the enticements, or rather the troubles, of the flesh, and to seek again the insatiable curiosity of the senses; Ecclesiastes says: The eye is not filled with sight, nor the ear with hearing ^[11]. Hear, indeed, an experienced man speaking what he says: You are good, Lord, to those hoping in you, to the soul seeking you

^[12]. If anyone tried to turn that holy soul away from this good, I think it would receive it no otherwise than if it saw itself thrown down from paradise and from the very entrance of glory. Hear still another like him: My heart said to you, he says, my face has sought you; your face, Lord, I will seek ^[13]. Hence he used to say: But for me it is good to cling to God ^[14]. And likewise, speaking to his soul, he says: Return, my soul, into your rest, because the Lord has done good to you ^[15]. Therefore I say to you, there is nothing which anyone who has once received this benefit fears so much as lest, being abandoned by grace, he must go out again to the consolations of the flesh, indeed to desolations, and again endure the tumults of the carnal senses ^[16]." St. Augustine was in this contemplation when he said: "But what I was doing in the world was displeasing to me, and it was very burdensome to me, with desires no longer inflaming me, as they had been accustomed, by hope of honor and money. For those things no longer delighted me, before your sweetness and the beauty of your house, which I loved ^[17]."

D. He has the proof of true contemplation whom it wearies to live in the misery of this world, saying with blessed Tobias: It is expedient for me to die rather than to live ^[18]. And with Job: My soul is weary of my life ^[19]. And with blessed Paul: Unhappy man that I am! who will free me from the body of this death ^[20]? And who thirsts for the fountain of life, saying with the Psalmist: As the deer longs for the fountains of waters, so my soul longs for you, O God ^[21]. Hence St. Gregory says: "The contemplative life is indeed to retain charity of God and neighbor with the whole mind, but to rest from exterior action, to cleave to the desire of the creator alone, so that it now ought to do nothing; but with all cares trampled down, the soul burns to see the face of its creator, so that it now knows how to bear with sorrow the weight of corruptible flesh, and with all desires to desire to be present among those hymn-singing choirs of angels, to be mingled with heavenly citizens, and to rejoice over eternal incorruption in the sight of God ^[22]."

E. He has the proof of false contemplation who knows something about God, or about some perfection of his, to which the truth of sacred Scripture is opposed, and nevertheless rashly defends this by reasons. From this heresies once proceeded, namely that of Arius, who denied the Son to be coeternal and consubstantial with the Father, and that of Sabellius, who confused the persons in the Trinity, positing only a nominal difference, although they truly differ in properties. For the Father properly has unbegottenness, the Son properly birth, and the Holy Spirit procession.

Notes

[1] Compare Genesis 7:13 and following. (Cf. *Genes. VII, 13 et seq.*)

[2] Compare Genesis 18:1 and following. (Cf. *Genes. XVIII, 1 et seq.*)

[3] Compare Genesis 41:1 and following. (Cf. *Genes. XLI, 1 et seq.*)

[4] Compare Daniel 4:1 and following. (Cf. *Daniel. IV, 1 et seq.*)

[5] Compare Ezekiel 1:4 and following. (Cf. *Ezechiel. I, 4 et seq.*)

[6] Amos 3:7. (*Amos III, 7.*)

[7] John 15:15. (*Joan. XV, 15.*)

[8] Psalm 18:5. (*Psal. XVIII, 5.*)

[9] Compare Matthew 5:3 and following. (Cf. *Matth. V, 3 et seq.*)

[10] St. Gregory the Great, Book 2 on Ezekiel, homily 17. (*S. Gregorius M., Lib. II in Ezechiel., homil. 17.*)

[11] Ecclesiastes 1:8. (*Eccle. I, 8.*)

[12] Compare Lamentations 3:25. (Cf. *Thren. III, 25.*)

[13] Psalm 26:8. (*Psal. XXVI, 8.*)

[14] Psalm 72:28. (*Psal. LXXII, 28.*)

[15] Psalm 114:7. (*Psal. CXIV, 7.*)

[16] St. Bernard, Sermon 33 on the Song of Songs. (*S. Bernardus, Serm. 33 in Cantica.*)

[17] St. Augustine, Confessions, Book 8, chapter 1, and Book 9, chapter 10. (*S. Augustinus, Lib. VIII Confessionum, cap. 1, et Lib. IX Confessionum, cap. 10.*)

[18] Job 3:6. (*Job, III, 6.*)

[19] Job 10:1. (*Job X, 1.*)

[20] Romans 7:24. (*Ad Roman. VII, 24.*)

[21] Psalm 41:2. (*Psal. XLI, 2.*)

[22] St. Gregory the Great, Book 2 on Ezekiel, homily 14. (*S. Gregorius M., Lib. II in Ezekiel., homil. 14.*)

Chapter XXXIV. On Discretion.

Chapter XXXIV.

On Discretion.

A. Discretion is prudently to judge between creator and creature: what the creator is and what the creature is. Likewise, to judge what is good, what is better, and what is best; what is evil, what is worse, and what is worst; how much the good is to be desired and how much the evil is to be detested. Likewise, how much reverence a human being owes to a superior, how much clemency and compassion to an inferior, and what sort of fellowship to an equal. How he ought to have himself toward the dead, how toward the living; how toward predecessors and how toward successors. How toward friends, that they may be loved in God, and how toward enemies, that they may be loved because of God. How secretly before God and how openly with human beings. What refreshment must be expended on the flesh and what on the spirit. With what garments one must be clothed. When one must eat, when drink, when abstain, and how much, and from what foods. When one must watch, when sleep, how much and how long. When one must pray, when weep, and when do some work. How one must behave toward praise and how toward rebuke. When to speak and when to be silent: how much, for what reasons, with whom, in what place, and at what time. When to receive, when to retain, and how much to give generously; and how much, to whom, and at what time. To judge about all these things in an ordered and prudent way is true discretion.

This virtue is the mistress of all virtues, setting measure and order for all. But where discretion is not, there charity does not keep order, what is to be loved first and what last; nor does it know measure, what is to be loved less and what more. Nor is order kept there, as St. Augustine testifies: "Where," he says, "humility is kept excessively, the authority of the ruler is broken. There obedience is blind and foolish when it is believed that one must obey even in evils. There also largesse pours itself out excessively when it is given to actors without necessity. There fear is cast down into despair, hope is turned into presumption. There justice shows excessive severity. There patience, mercy, meekness, benignity, goodness, dissemble unjust things. There religion is dissolved, truth is falsified, chastity is violated, maturity is made light, constancy is changed ^[1]."

This virtue grows from the defect of other virtues. For when a human being often falls from humility into pride or vain glory, from charity into envy, from patience into anger, from meekness into rancor, from fervor into tepidity, from chastity into carnal concupiscence, from love of poverty into avarice, from peace into disturbance, from union into discord, from obedience into rebellion, from maturity into levity, from religion into dissolution, from silence into loquacity or detraction, from spiritual love into carnal love, from hope into presumption, from just fear into human and servile fear, from justice into severity, from mercy into softness, from constancy into mobility, from truth into falsity, then for the first time he becomes more cautious in avoiding, more solicitous, and more discreet in all things.

B. Constant reading and meditation in the Scriptures can and ought to induce us to true discretion, continual investigation concerning the examples of the saints, frequent counsel from discreet men, according to that saying: Always seek counsel from a wise man ^[4]. Hence the Lord said to Paul: Rise and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do ^[2]. Similarly he sent the lepers, saying: Go, show yourselves to the priests ^[3], not only to one, but to many, so that if one is less discreet, another more discreet may be sought.

C. He has the proof of true discretion who considers all his deeds with the counsel of discreet persons. If he cannot always have them, he discusses each of his works and affairs in his conscience before God, with true

discretion and mature deliberation, according to that saying: Son, do nothing without counsel, and after the deed you will not repent ^[4]. Yet in this he should not always believe his own conscience unless he has manifest testimony of Scripture; nor should he in any way twist Scripture back to his own sense, but should conform his sense to Scripture.

D. He has the proof of indiscretion who labors above his strength with fasts, vigils, prayers, disciplines, and tears, destroying himself in a short time so that for many years he becomes useless in the service of God. But alas, there are not a few human beings of this time who exceed in things of this sort.

E. He has the proof of false discretion who, wishing to guard against the destruction of his body, neglects none of those things which are advantageous to the body, saying to the Lord: I will keep my strength for you ^[5]; and meanwhile the spirit, without spiritual food, fails and wastes away, which cannot be had at all without labor. Hence St. Augustine says: "While we fear the infirmity of our flesh, we neglect the salvation of the soul." Because the flesh, if it is delicately nourished, kills the spirit, as St. Augustine testifies: "As a moth devours wool, and fire consumes wood, hay, and straw, so delicate flesh burns up and consumes the soul. Such a person does not think that finally the flesh will be destroyed, even if it enjoyed every convenience. Just as secular persons who expend every pleasure upon the body do not serve God more, but are more frequently made sick. But it is better that a living spirit, filled with grace, be in a languid body, than that a languid or dead spirit be in a healthy body ^[6]."

Notes

[1] Job 4:19. (*Job IV, 19.*)

[2] Acts 9:6. (*Act. IX, 6.*)

[3] Luke 17:14. (*Luc. XVII, 14.*)

[4] Ecclesiasticus 32:24. (*Eccli. XXXII, 24.*)

[5] Psalm 58:10. (*Psal. LVIII, 10.*)

[6] St. Augustine, Book on Saving Teachings, chapter 65. (*S. Augustinus, Lib. de Salutaribus documentis, cap. 65.*)

Chapter XXXV. On Congratulation.

Chapter XXXV.

On Congratulation.

A. True congratulation toward God is to rejoice together with God in every blessedness and perfection innately his eternally: namely concerning omnipotence, wisdom, goodness, and so on, and that he needs no one, but suffices for himself and for all creatures.

Likewise, to rejoice together with God concerning the ordering of heaven and earth and of all things which are in them, and concerning all his works from the beginning of the world until the end of the age, especially concerning the works of his incarnation, circumcision, passion, resurrection, ascension, and the sending of the Holy Spirit, and concerning all judgments, manifest and hidden, about demons, about souls in hell, in limbo, in purgatory, and about evil human beings in the world.

Likewise, to rejoice together with God over whatever praise and reverence he has from angels and saints in heaven, and from human beings on earth.

Likewise, true congratulation toward neighbors is to rejoice together with individual angels and saints concerning glory in heaven. Likewise, with sinners concerning conversion; with the just concerning strengthening and the preservation of graces; with the Church concerning the sacraments and gifts of the Holy Spirit. And to rejoice together with all holy human beings in the Church and on earth, namely the blessed Virgin Mary, the Patriarchs and Prophets, the Apostles and each of the elect, concerning gifts received and to be received by each from God.

B. The greatest usefulness arising from it ought to induce us to true congratulation. For whatever of perfection, goodness, and blessedness almighty God naturally has in himself, whatever of glory the angels and saints have in heaven, whatever of grace and virtue in the Church and the faithful have in it, all this becomes proper to each person through congratulation.

This ought to induce us to the same, that the congratulation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the origin of all creatures. And it always has been, and now is, the beginning of all divine works.

C. He has the proof of true congratulation who delights through all things in all things that are in God; to whom the ordering of the Church, all the works of God, judgments, divine manners, and the most holy examples of our Lord Jesus Christ and of all his friends are pleasing from the heart; and he commends all these things in words and manifests them to others.

Likewise, he to whom spiritual joy is generated from each natural, spiritual, and gratuitous gift of angels and saints in heaven, and of individual human beings on earth; and he always and everywhere cooperates with all these things as far as he can.

D. He has the proof of false congratulation who commends with the mouth every divine ordering in heaven and on earth, and the works of the just and their virtues and holy life, but reviles all these things in the heart. The Lord reproaches such persons in Isaiah: That people draws near with its mouth, and with its lips glorifies me, but its heart is far from me ^[1]. Such persons are cut off from the body of the Church, and they do not share in the goods of the body.

Notes

[1] Isaiah 29:13. (*Isa. XXIX, 13.*)

Chapter XXXVI. On Confidence.

Chapter XXXVI.

On Confidence.

A. True and perfect confidence is security of mind that almighty and faithful God never abandons his friends, according to that saying: No one has hoped in the Lord and been confounded. For who has remained in his commandments and been abandoned ^[1]?

B. He has true confidence who is certain that the good God is always present to his own in tribulations, and is always ready to free them from temptations and to glorify them when freed. According to that saying: I am with him in tribulation; I will rescue him and glorify him ^[2]. So he was with Daniel in the den of lions, with Noah in the ark, with Joseph in the cistern, with the three boys in the furnace of fire, and he most benignly freed all these. Hence blessed Peter says: The Lord knows how to rescue the pious from temptation ^[3]. And in Tobit Sarah says: Everyone who worships you holds this as certain, that if his life is in trial, it will be crowned; if it is in tribulation, it will be freed; and if it is in correction, it will be allowed to come to your mercy. For you do not delight in our destructions, because after storm you make calm, and after tears and weeping you pour in exultation ^[4].

He has true confidence who does not doubt that all his prayers and all his just desires are heard. For St. Chrysostom says: "If with this zeal of mind you approach and say: I will not withdraw, namely unless I receive, you will certainly receive, if you ask such things as it befits him who is asked to give, and as it is expedient for you who ask to receive ^[5]." This virtue is very praiseworthy and of great merit before God. About it the Apostle exhorts, saying: Do not lose your confidence, which has a great recompense ^[6].

C. This ought to induce us to true confidence, that the most generous God, without our desire, often gives us greater things from his mere and incomprehensible goodness than we would dare to desire. For the Father

created us to the image of the Trinity; and his most holy Son gave us his flesh for food, his blood for drink, and his soul as the price of redemption. Who would ever, even once, dare to think about things of this sort?

The disposition of Christ on the cross ought to induce us to the same. For concerning this St. Bernard says: "For who would not be carried away to hope and to confidence of obtaining, if he attended to the disposition of Christ's body on the cross? See the head inclined to kiss, the arms extended to embrace, the hands pierced to give generously, the side opened to love, the stretching out of the whole body to expend his whole self."

D. He has the proof of true confidence who is not bitten in conscience concerning mortal sins. John testifies: If our heart does not rebuke us, let us have confidence toward God, and whatever we ask, we shall receive from him ^[7]. Hence it is read about Susanna: Her heart had confidence in the Lord ^[8], because she knew herself innocent of the charge brought against her.

He has another proof of true confidence who continuously exercises himself in good works, and especially in spiritual almsgiving, which is to forgive injuries and to add prayers beyond obligation. Concerning this it is said in Tobit: Almsgiving frees from every sin and from death, and it will not suffer your soul to go into darkness; almsgiving will be great confidence before the most high God for all those doing it ^[9].

He has another proof of true confidence concerning the remission of sins who in his youth and health presents himself to true penance for sins. Augustine testifies: "If someone placed in the last necessity of his sickness wished to receive penance, and receives it, and will soon be reconciled and goes hence, I confess to you, we do not deny him what he asks; but we do not presume that he leaves here well. I do not presume; I do not deceive you, I do not presume. A faithful person living well leaves here secure. One baptized at the hour leaves here secure. One doing penance and reconciled while he is healthy, and afterward living well, leaves here secure. One doing penance at the last and reconciled, if he leaves here secure, I am not secure ^[10]." And a little later: "Do I say, he will be damned? I do not say it. But do I also say, he will be freed? No. And what do you say to me? I do not know. I do not presume, I do not promise, I do not know. Do you wish to free yourself from doubt? Do you wish to escape what is uncertain? Do penance while you are healthy. For if you do true penance while you are healthy and the last day finds you, run so that you may be reconciled; if you act thus, you are secure. Why are you secure? Because you did penance at the time when you could also sin. But if you wish to do penance itself then when you cannot sin, the sins have dismissed you, you have not dismissed them. But how do you know, you say, whether perhaps God may forgive me? You speak truth. How? I do not know. I know that; I do not know this. For therefore I give you penance, because I do not know. For if I knew that it profits you nothing, I would not give it to you. Likewise, if I knew that it profits you, I would not admonish you, I would not frighten you. There are two things: either it is forgiven you, or it is not forgiven. Which of these is to be for you, I do not know. Therefore hold the certain thing; dismiss the uncertain." Those who wish to obtain true penance must convert their powers to spiritual works, according to that saying of Isaiah: Those who hope in the Lord will change strength, they will take wings like eagles, they will run and not walk, they will walk and not fail ^[11], so that those who before were strong for bodily labors may afterward be strong for spiritual labors.

E. He has the proof of distrust who, despising the grace of redemption, knowingly lies in sins. Hence in the Gospel: We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does his will, he hears this one ^[12]. And in the Psalm: If I have looked upon iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear ^[13]. And Isaiah says: Your iniquities have divided between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you ^[14].

F. He has the proof of false confidence who thinks that the most just God is conquered by mercy and piety to such a degree that he will save both the good and the evil on the day of judgment, because he died for all. Against this the Lord says: These will go into eternal punishment, but the just into eternal life ^[15].

He has the proof of false confidence who thinks that a sinner can merit first grace when it pleases him. Likewise, if someone believes that one who abounds here in temporal goods will afterward also abound in everlasting joy in the future. Against this it is said in the Psalm: The just will see, namely the rich man in hell, and will fear; and over him they will laugh and say: Behold the man who did not set God as his helper, but hoped in the multitude of his riches, and prevailed in his vanity ^[16].

Notes

[1] Ecclesiasticus 2:12 and 13. (*Eccli. II, 12 et 13.*)

[2] Psalm 90:15. (*Psal. XC, 15.*)

[3] 2 Peter 2:9. (*II Petri II, 9.*)

[4] Tobit 3:21 and 22. (*Tob. III, 21 et 22.*)

[5] St. John Chrysostom, Homily 24 on Matthew, on those words: Which of you is a father, etc. (*S. J. Chrysostomus, Homil. 24 in Matthaëum, in illa verba: Quis ex vobis pater, etc.*)

[6] Hebrews 10:35. (*Ad Hebr. X, 35.*)

[7] 1 John 3:21 and 22. (*I Joan. III, 21 et 22.*)

[8] Daniel 13:35. (*Daniel XIII, 35.*)

[9] Tobit 4:11 and 12. (*Tob. IV, 11 et 12.*)

[10] St. Augustine, Book 1 of Homilies, Homily 40. (*S. Augustinus, Lib. I Homil., Homil. 40.*)

[11] Isaiah 40:31. (*Isa. XL, 31.*)

[12] John 9:31. (*Joan. IX, 31.*)

[13] Psalm 65:18. (*Psal. LXV, 18.*)

[14] Isaiah 59:2. (*Isa. LIX, 2.*)

[15] Matthew 25:46. (*Matth. XXV, 46.*)

[16] Psalm 51:8 and 9. (*Psal. LI, 8 et 9.*)

Chapter XXXVII. On Contempt of the World.

Chapter XXXVII.

On Contempt of the World.

A. True contempt of the world is to renounce the temporal things of the world, the pomps of the age, dignities, and spiritual prelacies, and to withdraw oneself from all carnal friends and secular manners because of hope of eternal blessedness. Blessed John warns us to this in his canonical epistle, saying: Do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world ^[1]. St. Augustine had this contempt when whatever was done in the world displeased him, and when he conversed very sweetly with his mother, the world with its delights displeased him and grew vile to him amid their words ^[2]. Similarly blessed Agnes, Catherine, Cecilia, and other virgins despised the kingdom of the world and every adornment of the age because of love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

B. This ought to induce us to contempt and hatred of the world, that it shows such great faithlessness to its lovers in the end. For this also was done by worldly persons to the creator. On Palm Sunday they received him gloriously, going out to meet him and singing: Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest ^[3]! But afterward on Friday they came forward crying before Pilate: Let him be crucified! Let him be crucified! If he were not this evildoer, we would not have handed him over to you ^[4]. And when he hung on the cross, they derided him, saying: Save yourself; if you are the Son of God, come down from the cross ^[5]. And the one whom they received with palms, flowers, and branches, they crowned with green thorns, and struck with rods and scourges. And the one for whom they spread garments in the way, before the cross they stripped and despoiled of all garments; and they changed the glory exhibited to him into insult.

The danger arising from love of the world ought to induce us to contempt and hatred of the same. For James testifies: Do you not know that friendship of this world is an enemy of God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of this age is made an enemy of God ^[6]. And because the world hated the Lord Jesus and all his friends, as he himself said to the Apostles for consolation: If the world hates you, know that it had me in hatred before you ^[7].

C. He has the proof of true contempt who does not care for nobility of family, does not seek pleasure of the flesh, does not desire riches, and does not desire the summit of honor. Such was Moses, concerning whom the Apostle says: By faith Moses, when grown up, denied that he was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, against nobility; choosing rather to be afflicted with the people of God than to have the pleasure of temporal sin, against pleasure; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure of the Egyptians, against riches; for he looked to the rewarder ^[8].

He has another proof of true contempt of the world who is neither soothed by the flatteries of the age, nor terrified by threats, nor moved by blame and human praise. The Apostle was in this contempt when he said: I have made all things loss, and I reckon them as dung, that I may gain Christ ^[9].

D. He has the proof of false contempt of the world who first abstains from love of the age and the enticements of the world when because of old age and poverty he is not able to exercise himself in them. For then he does not leave the world, but is left by the world. Thus, alas, very many are those who first cease to sin when they can no longer sin.

Notes

[1] 1 John 2:15. (*I Joannis II, 15.*)

[2] St. Augustine, Confessions, Book 8, chapter 1, and Book 9, chapter 10. (*S. Augustinus, Lib. VIII Confessionum, cap. 1, et Lib. IX Conf. cap. 10.*)

[3] Matthew 21:9. (*Matth. XXI, 9.*)

[4] John 18:30. (*Joan. XVIII, 30.*)

[5] Matthew 27:40. (*Matth. XXVII, 40.*)

[6] James 4:4. (*Jacobi IV, 4.*)

[7] John 15:18. (*Joan. XV, 18.*)

[8] Hebrews 11:24 and following. (*Ad Hebr. XI, 24 et seq.*)

[9] Philippians 3:8. (*Ad Philip. III, 8.*)

Chapter XXXVIII. On Maceration.

Chapter XXXVIII.

On Maceration.

A. True maceration of the flesh exists when someone voluntarily chastises his body with fasts, vigils, prayers, hair-shirts, disciplines, abstinence from delightful food and drink, so that in all things the flesh may be subject to the spirit. The Apostle does this when he says: I chastise my body and reduce it into servitude, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should be made reprobate ^[1]. And Judith, who was beautiful and young, widowed and rich, after she had remained with her husband three years from her virginity and six months, had a hair-shirt over her loins and fasted on all days except solemn days ^[2].

B. The great usefulness arising from it ought to induce us to love of maceration of the flesh. For from maceration of the flesh the spirit is strengthened in spiritual business. According to that saying of the Apostle: For when I am weak, in the flesh, then I am powerful, in the spirit ^[3]. And conversely, from softness of the flesh the vigor of the spirit is dulled in spiritual things. According to that saying of St. Augustine: "Delicate flesh burns up and consumes the soul, as fire consumes straw" ^[4].

C. The proof of true maceration is when no pleasure but only necessity is expended upon the flesh, according to that saying of the Apostle: We are debtors not to the flesh, that we should live according to the flesh ^[5]. For pleasure demands many more delicate things than necessity requires, but necessity is content with few. And the Apostle adds the evil following upon pleasure, saying: If you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh, you will live ^[6]. And the same says: The works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, service of idols, sorceries, enmities, contentions, rivalries, angers, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, homicides, drunkennesses, feasting, and things similar to these; I proclaim these to you, as I have foretold, that those who do such things will not obtain the kingdom of God ^[7].

Another proof exists when someone, according to the counsel of Jesus Christ, hates his soul in this world ^[8]. For the Lord himself says: If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and still also his own soul, he cannot be my disciple ^[9]. St. Gregory, explaining this, says: "For then we hate our soul well, when we do not acquiesce in its carnal desires, when we break its appetite and resist its pleasures. Therefore it, being despised, is led to what is better, and is, as it were, loved through hatred ^[10]." But he who does not restrain his soul from concupiscences throws himself into the snares of the devil, according to that saying of Ecclesiasticus: If you grant your soul its concupiscences, it will make you a joy to your enemies ^[11]. Thus Delilah handed over the strongest Samson to the Philistines to be mocked ^[12].

D. He does not have the proof of true maceration who restrains only his belly and mouth from the pleasure of food and drink, and does not restrain his tongue from illicit words; nor restrains sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch from delights, nor the heart from voluptuous thoughts and affections. For it is little to restrict mouth and belly from foods where the heart and five senses are fed with delights. Hence St. Chrysostom says: "Those who abstain from foods and act badly imitate demons, to whom food is not present, but wickedness is always present ^[13]."

Notes

[1] 1 Corinthians 9:27. (*I ad Corinth. IX, 27.*)

[2] Compare Judith 8:4 and following. (*Cf. Judith VIII, 4 et seq.*)

[3] 2 Corinthians 12:10. (*II ad Corinth. XII, 10.*)

[4] St. Augustine, Book on Saving Teachings, chapter 65. (*S. Augustinus, Lib. de salutaribus documentis, cap. 65.*)

[5] Romans 8:12. (*Ad Roman. VIII, 12.*)

[6] The same, verse 13. (*Ibid., v. 13.*)

[7] Galatians 5:19 and following. (*Ad Galat. V, 19 et seq.*)

[8] John 12:25. (*Joan. XII, 25.*)

[9] Luke 14:26. (*Luc. XIV, 26.*)

[10] St. Gregory the Great, Homily 37 on the Gospel. (*S. Gregorius M., Homil. 37 in Evangelium.*)

[11] Ecclesiasticus 18:31. (*Eccli. XVIII, 31.*)

[12] Judges 16:4 and following. (*Judicum XVI, 4 et seq.*)

[13] Thomas Hibernicus, in the book he entitled *Flowers of the Doctors*, and similarly Dominicus Nanus in the *Polyanthea*, both under the word abstinence, attribute this sentence to Isidore on the prophet Amos. (*Hanc sententiam Thomas Hibernicus in libro quem inscripsit Flores Doctorum, similiter Dominicus Nanus in Polyanthea, uterque verbo abstinentia, tribuit Isidoro in prophetam Amos.*)

Chapter XXXIX. On Contrition.

Chapter XXXIX.

On Contrition.

A. True contrition is sorrow for sins voluntarily assumed, according to the quantity and quality of crimes, with a purpose of confessing and making satisfaction, coming from gratuitous grace. For natural sorrow, or sorrow without grace, profits or avails nothing. Jeremiah expresses the quantity of sorrow when he says: Make mourning for yourself as for an only-begotten ^[9]. The Lord commanded this in Joel, saying: Rend your hearts ^[10]. Thorns, nails, rods, scourges, the cross, and the lance, which were rending the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, avail for this rending.

True contrition is rare, as St. Gregory testifies. It must be known that there are some who, even leaving the age, indeed offer all that they have, and yet in the goods that they do they are not pierced with compunction. Nor must it always be believed that compunction is true where groans and tears appear, for such things often are accustomed to come from fear of hell, or from consideration of some loss, or from natural sorrow, or from natural compassion, when someone recalls the enormity of his crimes or the most bitter passion of Jesus Christ. For true contrition sorrow is required concerning all sins committed, and concerning all good things omitted, and concerning all graces neglected toward oneself and the whole community, and also concerning those things which on one's occasion could have been committed or neglected.

B. This ought to induce us to true contrition, if we faithfully think what we have lost through sin, namely the Holy Spirit with his gifts, and all

B. This ought to induce us to true contrition, if we faithfully think what we have lost through sin, namely the Holy Spirit with his gifts, and all gratuitous graces, the friendship of the Trinity, and the fellowship of the heavenly court. Likewise, what we have acquired through sin, namely eternal death, the curse of God the Father; the Psalmist testifies: Cursed are those who turn aside from your commandments ^[11]; the hatred of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hates all workers of iniquity; distancing from the Holy Spirit, who even takes himself away from thoughts that are without understanding, as is said in the book of Wisdom ^[12], and much more from these evil works. For these things are worse and more horrible than the very punishment of hell, as St. Chrysostom says ^[13].

The greatest usefulness arising from it ought to induce us to the same. For the least contrition wipes away all stains of the soul, kills eternal death, confers the blessing of God the Father, returns the friendship of the Son of God, and restores familiarity with the Holy Spirit and the fellowship of the citizens above. And however small contrition may be, it satisfies more than the greatest giving of alms. All these things, often weighed in the scales of the heart, are inducements of true compunction.

C. He has the proof of true contrition who detests the uncleanness of sin so much that he would more gladly choose every punishment of purgatory than ever bring about any sin against the most benign God. And who would rather present himself to infernal punishment, like Eleazarus, than ever thereafter commit any sin by intention. St. Augustine says that this too is to be chosen ^[14]. And who would most gladly endure the punishment of all martyrs, so that through this he could merit never thereafter to perpetrate any sin. And who would offer himself to every affliction of the sick and poor, so that he could worthily satisfy God for offense.

D. He has the proof of false contrition who, although he vehemently weeps over committed sins, nevertheless immediately after the sorrow does not fear to commit the same or other sins. Against this it is said in Ecclesiasticus: He who is baptized by a dead man and again touches him, what does his washing profit ^[15]?

Similarly, he who grieves over past sins and does not intend to dismiss sins thereafter, namely pride, envy, carnal friendship, delight of the flesh, unjust possession. Concerning this St. Augustine says: "The sin is not remitted unless what was taken away is restored ^[16]." Against this it is said in Ecclesiasticus: One building and one destroying: what profits them, except labor ^[17]? He destroys who grieves over sins; he builds who remains in the will of sinning. Concerning such building St. Augustine says: "From a perverse will, lust was made; and while lust is served, custom was made; and while custom is not resisted, necessity was made ^[18]."

Notes

- [11] Ecclesiasticus 20:7. (*Eccli. XX, 7.*)
- [12] Proverbs 18:13. (*Proverb. XVIII, 13.*)
- [13] Ecclesiasticus 32:10. (*Eccli. XXXII, 10.*)
- [14] Proverbs 17:28. (*Proverb. XVII, 28.*)
- [15] Isaiah 2:10. (*Isa. II, 10.*)
- [16] Compare Exodus 34:28 and following. (*Cf. Exod. XXXIV, 28 et seq.*)
- [17] Luke 22:41. (*Luc. XXII, 41.*)
- [18] Luke 19:2. (*Luc. XIX, 2.*)
- [9] Jeremiah 6:26. (*Jerem. VI, 26.*)
- [10] Joel 2:13. (*Joel II, 13.*)
- [11] Psalm 118:21. (*Psal. CXVIII, 21.*)
- [12] Wisdom 1:5. (*Sapient. I, 5.*)
- [13] St. John Chrysostom, Homily 48 to the people of Antioch. (*S. J. Chrysostomus, Homil. 48 ad populum Antiochenum.*)
- [14] St. Augustine, Tractate 11 on the Gospel of John. (*S. Augustinus, Tract. XI in Evangel. Joannis.*)
- [15] Ecclesiasticus 34:30. (*Eccli. XXXIV, 30.*)
- [16] St. Augustine, Letter 54 to Macedonius. (*S. Augustinus, Epist. 54 ad Macedonium.*)
- [17] Ecclesiasticus 34:28. (*Eccli. XXXIV, 28.*)
- [18] St. Augustine, Confessions, Book 8, chapter 3. (*S. Augustinus, Lib. VIII Confessionum, cap. 3.*)

Chapter XL. On Confession.

Chapter XL.

On Confession.

A. True confession is the sincere manifestation of sins without covering before a legitimate priest. The Lord commanded this when he says to the lepers: Go, show yourselves to the priests ^[1]. And blessed James says: Confess your sins to one another ^[2].

B. For true confession it is required that it be whole, pure, discreet, faithful, and perfect, according to that saying of Lamentations: Pour out your heart like water before the sight of the Lord ^[3]. In pouring out, integrity is marked. For sins about which confession has never been made are not to be said by drops on purpose, but whatever can be thought together ought all at once to be poured out together before one priest.

Like water. There it is marked that it ought to be simple and pure: confession is not to be made from servile fear or compulsion, but purely and simply because of God.

Your heart. There discretion is marked. For not only words and deeds, commissions and omissions, are to be confessed, but also unclean thoughts and lingering affections, disordered intentions, harmful wills, perverse judgments, and rash suspicions. For Origen says that on that day thoughts will accuse souls and will defend them; not thoughts that will then exist, but those that are now in us, certain marks of which will be left in the heart as in wax ^[4].

Before the sight of the Lord. There faithfulness and perfection are marked. Indeed all things must be considered according to the knowledge of God. For where we recognize one sin, he in wisdom knows a thousand.

C. Certain remission of sins and cleansing of the soul ought to induce us to true confession, according to that saying: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, so that he may remit our sins for us and cleanse us from every iniquity ^[5]. And because the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are bound to remission and propitiation, according to that saying: And although God knows all things, nevertheless he awaits the voice of confession.

For Christ has a cause to intercede for you. And the Father has a cause for forgiving. And whatever the Son wills, the Father and Holy Spirit also will.

D. He has the proof of true confession who pours out all sins like water: not so that color remains, as in the pouring out of milk; nor fatness or taste, as in the pouring out of oil or blood; nor smell, as in the pouring out of wine or vinegar. Color remains when the sin is said and the occasion or provocation to sinning is kept silent, as happens in gluttony or fornication. Fatness or taste remains when the sin is said and the quantity or length of delight, in which reason is wholly absorbed, is kept silent, according to that saying of the Psalmist: And it entered like water into his inward parts, and like oil into his bones ^[6]. Smell remains when the sin is said and infamy, or evil example and scandal of others, is kept silent. But one truly confessing manifests the sin itself, and the things preceding the sin, and the things following it.

The proof of true confession is when someone confesses his sins in number, weight, and measure. It must be confessed in number, that is, the times of sins, because a wound renewed more often is healed more slowly. Likewise in measure, when someone confesses the length of the sin; for one who is sick longer dies more quickly. In weight, that is, in gravity. For sin is aggravated by a sacred place, such as a cemetery or church; by a sacred time; or by a person, as if the one harmed is a cleric, or if she with whom sin is committed is a nun or married woman.

E. The proof of false confession is when someone confesses for this reason, lest he be called unfaithful; or so that he may be reckoned holier; or lest holy communion be denied to him with confusion. Saul confessed in this way, lest he be confounded by the Prophet Samuel before the people ^[7].

Notes

[1] Luke 17:14. (*Luc. XVII, 14.*)

[2] James 5:16. (*Jacobi V, 16.*)

[3] Lamentations 2:19. (*Thren. II, 19.*)

[4] Origen, On chapter 2 of the Epistle to the Romans, on these words: For when the gentiles. (*Origenes, In cap. II epist. ad Romanos, in haec verba: Cum enim gentes.*)

[5] 1 John 1:9. (*I Joannis I, 9.*)

[6] Psalm 108:18. (*Psal. CVIII, 18.*)

[7] Compare 1 Kings 15:11 and 12. (*Cf. I Regum, XV, 11 et 12.*)

Chapter XLI. On Penance.

Chapter XLI.

On Penance.

A. True exterior penance is abstinence from lawful things, when pardon is sought for unlawful things, as Scripture says. Thus penitents and cloistered persons abstain from meats, cast off delicate garments, keep fasts, persist in vigils, afflict themselves with disciplines, keep silence, break their own will, and abstain from many delights that would be lawful for them if they had never committed unlawful things. The Lord and blessed John the Baptist commanded this, saying: Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near ^[1].

B. Necessity ought to induce us to true penance. For without it there is no salvation, as the Lord says: Unless you do penance, you will all perish in the same way ^[2]. And St. Augustine says: "Sins, whether small or great, cannot be unpunished. Hence the Lord imposed penance on David for his sin, because he numbered his people: either that he should endure famine over the earth for seven years, or vengeance of enemies for three months, or pestilence for three days. And David chose for himself and the people the common plague of death. Through this it is signified that necessarily each person will be punished for his sins in hell, which the seven years of famine signify, or in purgatory, which the violence of enemies for three months signifies, or

by temporal punishment, which the pestilence of three days signifies. Thus it is useful for us to choose penance that is very light and quickly passing ^[3]."

C. The proof of true penance is due measuring of punishment against fault: so that according to the quantity of fault there may be the quantity and gravity of punishment; according to the delight of fault, the bitterness of punishment; according to the length of fault, the length of punishment; and according to the multiplicity of fault, the multiplicity of punishment, according to that saying of John: Make fruit worthy of penance ^[4]. For just as individual infirmities of the body necessarily have individual medicines, and none is so effective that it heals all sicknesses, so also individual kinds of sins have special penance. For pride is not directly amended through almsgiving, rancor and envy through prayer, avarice through fasting, immodesty through vigils, and so on. But satisfaction is made directly for pride through humility; for avarice through generous giving of alms; for immodesty through chastisement of the flesh in hair-shirt and discipline; for gluttony through fasting; for loquacity through prayer; for envy through charity and forgiveness of injury; for robbery and unjust possessions through restitution, and so on. But if someone, as St. Chrysostom says, cannot fulfill the whole order of making satisfaction, then the benign Lord receives whatever amendment there is. Then for unjust things fasting avails, if he cannot restore; if he cannot fast, prayer avails; if he cannot pray because of infirmity, a good will suffices for God.

D. Innocent sets down the proof of false penance: "Penance is false when the penitent does not withdraw from an office or courtly business which in no way can be conducted without sins; or if he has carried hatred in the heart; or if he does not satisfy anyone offended; or if, when offended, he does not forgive the one offending; or if someone bears arms against justice."

Likewise, penance is false when one sin is amended and another is not cared for.

Notes

[1] Matthew 3:2 and 4:17. (*Matth. III, 2 et IV, 17.*)

[2] Luke 13:5. (*Luc. XIII, 5.*)

[3] In the book of Sentences from Augustine, Sentence 210. (*In librum sententiarum ex Augustino. Sent. 210.*)

[4] Matthew 3:8 and Luke 3:8. (*Matth. III, 8 et Luc. III, 8.*)

Chapter XLII. On Perseverance.

Chapter XLII.

On Perseverance.

A. True perseverance is frequent exercise in good works, continual zeal toward perfection, and most diligent observance of spiritual graces and virtues until death. The Lord invites us to this in the Apocalypse: Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life ^[1]. Job had this when he said: Until I fail, I will not withdraw from my innocence ^[2]. And Tobias, who hid the bodies of the dead in his house and buried them in the middle of the nights, although because of this the king ordered him to be despoiled and killed ^[3].

B. The greatest usefulness arising from it ought to induce us to love of perseverance. For from it every good work and every virtue will be crowned, and our whole salvation consists in it, according to that saying of our Lord Jesus Christ: He who perseveres until the end will be saved ^[4]. Without it no virtue or work is rewardable. Without it every perfection is reduced to nothing. For what did it profit the Apostle and traitor Judas that the Lord had chosen him from the world? What did the long duration of familiarity with Jesus Christ profit? What did the holy preaching that he had often heard from him profit? What did the examples, virtues, and miracles that he had seen from him profit? What did the fellowship of the Apostles profit? What did the grace conferred on him for preaching and for doing miracles profit? For to him with the other Apostles he said: Going, preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven has drawn near. Heal the sick, raise the

dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons ^[5].

C. He has the proof of true perseverance who withdraws from rectitude neither by love of life, nor by fear of death, nor by threats, nor by promises. Thus Susanna, not fearing death, said: If I do this, that is, sin, it is death for me ^[6]. And Mattathias said: Even if all nations obey King Antiochus, so that each may depart from the service of the law of his fathers and consent to his commands, I and my sons and my brothers will obey the law of our fathers. May God be propitious to us ^[7]!

D. He has the proof of false perseverance who falsely presumes concerning his holiness that he cannot fall. From this liberty of spirit is born; from there he has no guarding of himself; and thus it is impossible for a human being to be able to persevere in holiness. And if the Apostles were in the world and did not have guarding of themselves, they could fall. The example is David, who perpetrated homicide and adultery because he was negligent in guarding his eyes ^[8].

Notes

[1] Apocalypse 2:10. (*Apocal. II, 10.*)

[2] Job 27:3. (*Job XXVII, 3.*)

[3] Compare Tobit 1:20 and following. (*Cf. Tob. I, 20 et seq.*)

[4] Matthew 10:22. (*Matth. X, 22.*)

[5] The same, verses 7 and 8. (*Ibid., v. 7 et 8.*)

[6] Daniel 13:22. (*Daniel XIII, 22.*)

[7] 1 Maccabees 2:19 and following. (*I Machab. II, 19 et seq.*)

[8] Compare 2 Kings 11:2 and following. (*Cf. II Regum, XI, 2 et seq.*)

Epilogue

Epilogue.

A. I confess to you, most holy God, with all the tears and bloody drops of your most beloved Son, that I have not yet arrived at the beginning of any virtue in that perfection as it is written here. Nevertheless I rejoice that we will have all virtues more perfectly than human understanding is able to apprehend. I confess to you, Lord, that he is blessed in the present and will be more blessed in the future who has these virtues in that perfection as they are written here, although perhaps they suffice for salvation in a lesser degree.

B. I also ask, Lord, with every desire of your Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and of all creatures, that you give me discretion between gratuitous and natural virtues and likenesses of virtues. And whoever reads this material, or hears of it, or thinks about it, may you, almighty God, confer on him at least one single, true, and perfect virtue. I am certain that whoever has one from you, Lord, has all at the same time ^[1]. And whoever grows in one grows in all at the same time; and whoever decreases in one decreases in all at the same time; and whoever lacks one has none, because all are united in grace ^[2]. Amen.

Notes

[1] Philo Judaeus, On the Life of Moses, Book 2. St. Ambrose, On Duties, Book 2, chapter 9. St. Jerome, Letter to Fabiola. St. Augustine, On the Trinity, Book 6, chapter 4. (*Philo Judaeus, de vita Moysis, lib. II. S. Ambrosius, Lib. II Officiorum, cap. 9. S. Hieronymus, Epist. ad Fabiolam. S. Augustinus, Lib. VI de Trinitate, cap. 4.*)

[2] St. Gregory the Great, Moralia, Book 21, chapter 3. (*S. Gregorius M., Lib. XXI Moraliu cap. 3.*)