

MEDITATIONS & READINGS

ST. ALPHONSUS

VOLUME II – PART I
SEXAGESIMA EASTER

Edited by Rev. J. B. Coyle, C.S.S.R.

VISITS TO THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT and TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, with Prayers for Mass, Preparation for Communion, Thanksgiving, etc. By ST. ALPHONSUS.

PRAYER. By ST. ALPHONSUS. Jubilee Edition.

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL SUCCOUR AND IRELAND. (ΔΗ ΜΑΡΙΣ-
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Meditations and Readings

FOR

EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

Selected from the Spiritual Writings of

SAINT ALPHONSUS

*Doctor of the Church and Founder of the Congregation
of the Most Holy Redeemer.*

VOLUME TWO.
PART I.

Edited by

JOHN BAPT. COYLE, C.S.S.R.

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MEDITATIONS & READINGS
FOR EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

VOLUME II.—PART I.

SEXAGESIMA :: EASTER

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KANSAS CITY, MO.

M. J. A. T.

SANT' ALFONSO — VIA MEBULANA.
ROMA,

23rd October, 1923.

MY DEAR FATHER COYLE,

I am very glad to hear that you have the first part of your "Meditations and Readings for every Day of the Year from the Writings of St. Alphonsus" ready for publication, and I wish this and the succeeding Volumes every success. It is difficult to exaggerate the value of these "Meditations and Readings" as is seen from the following statements of two Popes:

His Holiness Pope Pius IX., in speaking of the writings of St. Alphonsus, wrote: "The works of this most holy and learned man, written with extraordinary tender piety and devotion, breathes in every page a great love for Jesus Christ and great confidence in His mercy and merits. They also inspire their readers with the most ardent devotion to the Virgin Mother of God and to the Saints, and they inflame the hearts of men with the desire of receiving the Sacraments, as well as furnish a most abundant supply of excellent admonitions, counsels and directions to those who labour for the salvation of souls."

Pope Benedict XV. also wrote recently, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Doctorate of St. Alphonsus, that the excellence and utility of his teaching are becoming every day more apparent, and that his writings are helpful, not only to Theologians and Professors of the Sacred Sciences, but also to the faithful of every condition of life, to whom he points out the way to solid virtue, and smoothes for them the way to the highest Christian perfection. His Holiness adds that the Saint's one great ambition in all his writings was to make known to all men the infinite amiability of Jesus Christ.

ſiſti ſtat:

GULIELMUS LANDERS,
Censor Theol. Deput.

ſupprimi potest:

✠ EDUARDUS,
*Archiepiſcopus Dublinenſis
Hiberniæ Primas.*

Dublino,

die 18 Januarii, 1926.

ſermiſſu Superioris:

PATRITII MURRAY, C.SS.Red.
Superioris Generalis et Rectoris Majoris.

Romæ,

die 18 Januarii, 1926.

It is unnecessary for me to add anything to these words of two Popes. I wish only to say that this infinite amiability of Jesus Christ is particularly well shown in the present volume, for, in addition to the Meditations and Readings on the Religious State and on other subjects, there are given about forty Meditations on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, in which are contained some of the most beautiful and devotional pages written by the Saint. Moreover the division of the ascetic writings of the Saint into two Meditations and a Spiritual Reading for every day of the year, and this arranged in such a way as not to interrupt the sequence of any work of the Saint, will please many, both in the Cloister and in the world, who desire to know and follow in their spiritual life the teachings of this great Doctor of the Church and Director of Souls.

In conclusion, in the name of St. Alphonsus, I bless you and these Meditations and Readings with the hope that they may be everywhere known and read and well thought on so that all may know the infinite amiability and mercy of Jesus Christ and the unspeakable amiability and mercy of His Blessed Mother, and that they may thus seek and love and serve Them alone.

Your devoted servant and confrère,

PATRICK MURRAY, C.S.S.R.,

Sup. Gen. and Rector Major.

REV. J. B. COVLE, C.S.S.R.,

St. JOSEPH'S,

DUNDALK.

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

IN this volume of *Meditations and Readings*, which embraces the eight weeks from Sexagesima to end of Lent, we have set forth, as matter for the Evening Meditations on the Passion of Our Lord some of the most beautiful and devotional pages St. Alphonsus ever penned. Truly, as Pope Benedict XV. said, "they make known the infinite amiability of Jesus Christ."

The loving Saint himself writes: "Oh, what beautiful flames of love has Jesus not enkindled in many souls, especially by the sufferings He chose to undergo at His Death, in order to prove to us the immeasurable love He bears us! And what multitudes of souls, happy in the Wounds of Jesus, as in burning furnaces of love, have been so inflamed that they have not hesitated to consecrate to Him all their goods, their lives, their entire selves, surmounting with great courage all the difficulties they had to encounter in the observance of the Divine law, filled, as they were, with the love of that Lord, Who, though He was their God, chose to suffer so much for the love of them!"

The Saint writes in another place. "Happy you, O loving souls, who frequently meditate on the Passion of Jesus! *You shall*, says Isaias, *draw water with joy out of the Saviour's fountains.*—(xii. 3). From the blessed fountains of the Saviour's Wounds you shall draw the waters of love and confidence . . . And how can even

the greatest sinner, if he repents of his sins, ever des- pair of Divine Mercy when he beholds Jesus crucified, and knows that the Eternal Father placed all our sins on His own beloved Son that He might atone for them. *And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* —(Is. liii. 6). . . . Let us beseech the Divine Mother Mary to obtain for us from her Son that we may enter into those furnaces of love, the Wounds of Jesus, in which so many loving hearts burn, in order that, our earthly affections being consumed, we also may burn in those blessed flames of love which render souls holy on earth and blessed in Heaven. Amen."

May the fire of God's love that filled St. Alphonsus' own heart fill the hearts of all the readers of this volume of MEDITATIONS AND READINGS.

THE EDITOR.

St. Joseph's, Dundalk.
Feast of the Holy Family, January, 1926.

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MEDITATIONS AND READINGS

Sexagesima Sunday

Morning Meditation

“GLADLY WILL I GLORY IN MY INFIRMITIES.”
—(Epistle of Sunday. 2 Cor. xi. 19, 33).

What greater joy can there be than to suffer some cross and to know that by embracing it we give pleasure to God? St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi felt such consolation in suffering whatever came to her by God's will that she used to be lost in an ecstasy of Divine love.

HOLY THURSDAY—

I.
He who is united to the will of God, enjoys a perpetual peace, even in this world: *Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad.*—(Prov. xii. 21); and it must be so, because a soul cannot have more perfect content than to see its every wish fulfilled; and he who wills nothing but what God wills, has all that he wishes, since whatever happens must be by the will of God. Solinus says, that when resigned souls receive a humiliation, they will it; if they suffer poverty, they wish to be poor; in short, they will whatsoever happens, and therefore they lead a happy life. Be the weather cold or hot, let the rain or the storm come, he who is united to God's will says: “I wish for this cold or heat (etc.), because God so wills

it." If loss or persecution, sickness or death, should come, he still says: "I am willing to be poor, persecuted, sick, or even to die, because such is the will of God." He who rests on the Divine will, and is pleased with whatsoever God may do, is as if he were placed above the clouds, and saw tempests raging below, but remained unhurt and undisturbed by them. This is the peace which, as the Apostle says, *surpasseth all understanding*—(Phil. iv. 7); which exceeds all the delights of the world, and is so steadfast as to admit of no change: *A holy man continueth in wisdom as the sun; but a fool is changed as the moon.*—(Ecclus. xxvii. 12). The fool, that is, the sinner, changes like the moon, which increases to-day, and wanes to-morrow; one day he laughs, the next he weeps; at one time he is mild and cheerful, at another violent and sad; for he changes according as pleasing or adverse things happen to him. But the just man is like the sun, even and uniform in his tranquillity whatever may happen; for his peace rests in conformity with the will of God: *And on earth peace to men of good will.*—(Luke ii. 14). We cannot help feeling some sting of pain from adversity in the inferior part of our souls; but peace will always reign in the superior part, when our will is united to that of God: *Your joy no man shall take from you.*—(John xvi. 22). How foolish are those who resist God's will, since what He appoints must nevertheless be fulfilled! *Who resisteth his will?*—(Rom. ix. 19). Those poor creatures must therefore endure their cross, but without fruit, and without peace: *Who hath resisted him, and hath had peace?*—(Job ix. 4).

My Divine King, my beloved Redeemer, come, and from this day forward reign alone in my soul: take complete possession of my will that I may desire and wish nothing but what Thou wilt. In whatever shall befall me, I will always say: My God, I will only what Thou dost will. May Thy will be always done in me! *Thy will be done!*

II.

And what else does God will but our good? *For this is the will of God, your sanctification.*—(1 Thess. iv. 3). He wishes to see us holy by being content in this life, and happy in the next. Let us understand that all the crosses which come to us from God *work together unto good*—(Rom. viii. 28). Even punishments are not sent in this life for our destruction, but that we may amend, and thus gain eternal happiness: *Let us believe that these scourges of the Lord . . . have happened for our amendment, and not for our destruction.*—(Judith viii. 27). God so loves us, that He not only wishes, but eagerly desires, the salvation of each one among us: *The Lord is careful for me.*—(Ps. xxxix. 18). *He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also with him given us all things?*—(Rom. viii. 32). Let us, then, abandon ourselves always into the hands of that God Who ever desires our good while we are in this life, *casting all your care upon him, for he hath care of you.*—(1 Pet. v. 7). "Think of Me," said our Lord to St. Catherine of Sienna, "and I will always think of you." Let us say with the sacred Spouse: *I to my beloved, and my beloved to me.*—(Cant. vi. 2). My Beloved thinks of what is good for me, and I will think of nothing but of pleasing Him, and uniting myself to His holy will. And we should never pray, as the holy Abbot Nilus tells us, that God would do what we wish, but that we may do what He wills.

He who always does this will lead a happy life, and die a holy death; he who expires completely resigned to the Divine will, leaves a moral certainty of his salvation.

O Jesus, my Redeemer, Thou didst give up Thy life in agony on the Cross, that Thou mightest be the cause of my salvation; have pity on me, then, and save me; do not suffer a soul which Thou didst redeem with such anguish and such love to hate Thee for ever in hell. Thou canst do no more to make me love Thee, and Thou didst give me to understand this when, before

Thou didst expire on Calvary, Thou didst utter those loving words : *It is consummated.*—(Jo. xix. 30). But how have I acknowledged Thy love? For the past, I may truly say that I have done nothing but displease Thee, and force Thee to hate me. I thank Thee for having borne with me with so much patience, and for now giving me time to repair my ingratitude, and to love Thee before I die. Yes, I wish to love Thee, and do whatever is pleasing to Thee. I give Thee my will, my liberty, all that I have. I sacrifice to Thee from this moment my life, and accept that death which Thou shalt send me, with all the pains and circumstances which may accompany it. I unite this sacrifice with that great sacrifice which Thou, my Jesus, didst offer for me upon the Cross. I desire to die, to fulfil Thy will. Grant me, I beseech Thee, by the merits of Thy Passion, the grace to live always in resignation to the disposition of Thy providence; and when death arrives, grant that I may embrace it with the same submission to Thy good pleasure. I wish to die, my Jesus, in order to please Thee. I desire to die, saying : *Thy will be done.* Thus didst thou die, O Mary, my Mother; obtain for me the grace that I also may so die.

Spiritual Reading

THE UNHAPPY LIFE OF SINNERS.

And that which fell among thorns are they who have heard, and, going their way, are choked with the cares and riches of this life, and yield no fruit.
—(Gospel of Sunday. Luke viii. 4, 16).

In the Parable of to-day's Gospel, we are told that part of the seed which the sower went out to sow, fell among thorns. The Saviour has declared that the seed represents the Divine word, and the thorns, the attachment of men to earthly riches and pleasures,

which prevent the word of God bearing fruit for time or eternity. Oh, the misery of poor sinners! By their sins they not only condemn themselves to eternal torments in the next, but to an unhappy life in this world.

The devil deceives sinners, and makes them imagine that, by indulging their sensual appetites they will lead a life of happiness, and enjoy peace. But there is no peace for those who offend God. *There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord.*—(Is. xlvi. 22). God declares that all His enemies lead a life of misery, and that they do not even know the way of peace. *Destruction and unhappiness in their ways: and the way of peace they have not known.*—(Ps. xiii., 5).

Brute animals, as they have been created for this world, enjoy peace in sensual delights. Give to a dog a bone, and he is perfectly content; give to an ox a bundle of hay, and he desires nothing more. But man, who has been created for God, to love God, and to be united to God, can be made happy only by God, and not by the world, though it should enrich him with all its goods. What are worldly goods? *All that is in the world,* says St. John, *is the concupiscence of the flesh,* or sensual delights, *and the concupiscence of the eyes,* or riches, *and the pride of life*—that is, earthly honours.—(1 Jo. ii. 16). St. Bernard says a man may be gluttoned with earthly goods, but can never be made content or happy by them : *Inflari potest, satuari non potest.* And how can earth and wind and fith satisfy the heart of man? In his comment on these words of St. Peter—*Behold we have left all things*—(Matth. xix. 27)—the same Saint says, that he saw in the world several different classes of fools. All had a great desire of happiness. Some, such as the avaricious, were content with *riches*; others, ambitious of honours and praise, were satisfied with *rank*; others, seated round a furnace, swallowed the *sparks* that were thrown from it,—these were the passionate and vindictive; others, in fine, drank *fetid water* from a stagnant pool,—and these were the voluptuous and unchaste. Oh, fools!

adds the Saint, do you not perceive that all these things, from which you seek content, do not satisfy, but, on the contrary, increase the cravings of your heart? Of this we have a striking example in Alexander the Great, who, after having conquered half the world, burst into tears because he was not master of the whole.

Many expect to find peace in accumulating riches, but how can these satisfy their desires? St. Augustine says: "Great wealth does not close, but rather extends the jaws of avarice." That is, the enjoyment of riches excites, rather than satiates, the desire of wealth. *Thou wast debased even to hell; thou hast been wearied in the multitude of thy ways; yet thou saidst not: I will rest.*—(Is. lvii. 9). Poor worldlings! They labour and toil to acquire an increase of wealth and property, but never enjoy repose: the more they accumulate riches, the greater their disquietude and vexation.

The rich have wanted, and have suffered hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good.—(Ps. xxxiii. 11). The rich of this world are, of all men, the most miserable; because the more they possess, the more they desire to possess. They never succeed in attaining all the objects of their wishes, and therefore they are far poorer than men who have but a competency, and seek God alone. These are truly rich, because they are content with their condition, and find in God every good. *They that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good.* To the Saints, because they possess God, nothing is wanting; to the worldly rich who are deprived of God, all things are wanting, because they want peace. The appellation of fool was, therefore, justly given to the rich man in the Gospel, who, because his lands brought forth plenty of fruits, said to his soul: *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer.*—(Luke xii. 20). But this man was rightly called a fool. *Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* And why was he called a fool? Because he

imagined that by these goods—by eating and drinking—he could be content, and could enjoy peace. *Rest, he said, eat and drink.* Says St. Basil of Seleucia: "Hast thou the soul of a brute, that thou expectest to make it happy by eating and drinking?"

But perhaps sinners who seek after and attain worldly honours are content. All the honours of this earth are but smoke and wind. *Ephraim feedeth on the wind.*—Os. xii. 1). And how can these content the heart of a Christian? *The pride of them, says David, ascendeth continually.*—(Ps. lxxiii. 28). The ambitious are not satisfied by the attainment of certain honours: their ambition and pride continually increase; and thus their disquietude, their envy, and their fears are multiplied.

They who live in the habit of sins of impurity feed on filth. How can this content, or give peace to the soul?

Ah! what peace, what peace can sinners at a distance from God enjoy? They may possess the riches, honours, and delights of this world; but they never shall have peace. No; the word of God cannot fail: He has declared that there is no peace for His enemies. *There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord.*—(Is. xlvi. 22). Poor sinners! They, as St. John Chrysostom says, always carry about with them their own executioner—that is, a guilty conscience, which continually torments them. St. Isidore asserts that there is no pain more excruciating than that of a guilty conscience.

Evening Meditation

"MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE."
(Epistle of Sunday).

I.

Man knows not the value of Divine grace, and hence he exchanges it for a mere nothing. It is a treasure of

infinite value. *An infinite treasure to men, which they that use, become the friends of God.*—(Wis. vii. 14). The Gentiles said it was impossible for a creature to become the friend of God. But, no; Divine grace induces God to call the soul that possesses it, His friend: *You are my friends*—(Jo. xv. 14)—said our Blessed Saviour to His disciples.

When, therefore, O God, my soul was in the state of grace, it was Thy friend; but by sin it became the slave of the devil, and Thine enemy. I give Thee thanks for affording me time to recover Thy grace. I am sorry, O Lord, with my whole heart, for having lost it; in Thy pity, restore it to me, and suffer me not to lose it any more.

How fortunate should that man esteem himself who becomes the friend of his king. It would be presumption for a vassal to expect that his prince should make him his friend; but it is not presumption for the soul to aspire to be the friend of God. "If I would become a friend of Cæsar," said a certain courtier, as St. Augustine relates, "I should have great difficulty in becoming such; but if I would become the friend of God, I am already His friend." An act of Contrition and of Love makes us the friends of God. St. Peter of Alcantara said: "No tongue can express the greatness of the love of Jesus for a soul in the state of grace."

O my God, am I in Thy grace or not? I certainly know that at one time I had lost it, and who knows whether I have regained it? O Lord, I love Thee, and am sorry for having offended Thee; make haste to pardon me.

II.

Oh, how great, on the contrary, is the misery of a soul that is fallen from the state of grace! It is separated from the Sovereign Good. It belongs no more to God, and God belongs no more to it. It is no longer loved by God, but hated and abhorred by Him. Before, He blessed it as His Child; but now, He curses it as His enemy.

Such is the unhappy state in which I was, O God, when I had forfeited Thy grace. I hope I have arisen from my unhappy condition, but if I have not, hasten, O Jesus, to rescue me from it. Thou hast promised to love those who love Thee: *I love them that love me.*—(Ps. viii. 17). I love Thee, my Sovereign Good; do Thou love me; and may I never again be deprived of Thy love. Holy Mary, succour me, thy humble client; I commend myself to thy patronage.

Monday after Sexagesima

Morning Meditation

THE WILL OF GOD TO SAVE ALL MEN.

Our holy Redeemer has ransomed us from eternal death at the price of His own Blood, and He does not wish to see these souls of ours lost which have cost Him so much. When He sees souls that are constraining Him by their sins to sentence them to hell, He, as it were, weeps with compassion for them and says: *And wherefore will ye die, O house of Israel? Return ye and live!*—(Ezech. xviii. 31). My children, why will you destroy and damn yourselves when I have died upon a Cross to save you? Return to Me as penitents, and I will restore to you the life you have lost.

I.

The Apostle, St. Paul, teaches that God willeth the salvation of all: *He will have all men to be saved.*—(1 Tim. ii. 4). And St. Peter writes: *The Lord*

death patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.—(2 Peter. iii. 9). For this end the Son of God came down from Heaven, and was made Man, and spent thirty-three years in labours and sufferings, and finally shed His Blood and laid down His life for our salvation. And shall we forfeit our salvation?

Thou, my Saviour, didst spend Thy whole life in securing my salvation, and in what have I spent so many years of my life? What fruit hast Thou hitherto reaped from me? I have deserved to be cut off and cast into hell. But Thou *desirest not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live.*—(Ezech. xxxiii. 11). Yes, O God, I leave all and turn myself to Thee. I love Thee, and because I love Thee I am sorry for having offended Thee. Accept of me, and suffer me not to forsake Thee any more.

How much did not the Saints do to secure their eternal salvation! How many nobles and kings have forsaken their kingdoms and estates, and shut themselves up in cloisters! How many young persons have forsaken their country and friends, to dwell in caves and deserts! And how many Martyrs have laid down their lives under the most cruel tortures! And why?—to save their souls. And what have we done?

Woe to me, who, although I know that death is near at hand, yet think not of it! No, my God, I will no longer live at a distance from Thee. Why do I delay? Is it that death may overtake me in the miserable state in which I now am? No, my God, do Thou assist me to prepare for death.

II.

O God, how many graces has my Saviour bestowed on me to enable me to save my soul! He has caused me to be born in the bosom of the true Church; He has many times pardoned me my transgressions; He has favoured me with many lights in sermons, in prayers; in meditations, in Communion, and spiritual exercises;

and often has He called me to His love. In a word, how many means of salvation has He granted me which He has not granted others!

And yet, O God, when shall I detach myself from the world and give myself entirely to Thee? Behold me, O Jesus, I will no longer resist. Thou hast obliged me to love Thee. I desire to be wholly Thine: do Thou accept of me, and disdain not the love of a sinner who has hitherto so much despised Thee. I love Thee, my God, my Love, and my All. Have pity on me, O Mary, for thou art my hope.

Spiritual Reading

THE POWER OF THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST TO ENKINDLE DIVINE LOVE IN EVERY HEART.

Father Balthassar Alvarez, a great servant of God, used to say that we must not think we have made any progress in the way of God until we have come to keep Jesus crucified ever in our heart. And St. Francis de Sales said that “the love which is not the offspring of the Passion is feeble.” Yes; because we cannot have a more powerful motive for loving God than the Passion of Jesus Christ, by which we know that the Eternal Father, to manifest His exceeding love for us, was pleased to send His only-begotten Son upon earth to die for us sinners. Hence the Apostle says that God, through the excess of love wherewith He loved us, willed that the death of His Son should convey life to us: *For his exceeding charity wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ.*—(Ephes. ii. 5). And this was precisely the expression used by Moses and Elias on Mount Tabor, in speaking of the Passion of Jesus Christ. They did not

know how to give it any other appellation than an excess of love: *And they spoke of his excess, which he should consummate in Jerusalem.*—(Luke ix. 31).

When our Saviour came into the world, the shepherds heard the angels singing, *Gloria to God in the highest.*—(Luke ii. 14). But the humiliation of the Son of God in becoming Man, through His love for man, might have seemed rather to obscure than to manifest His Divine glory: but no; there was no means by which the glory of God could have been better manifested to the world than by Jesus Christ dying for the salvation of mankind, since the Passion of Jesus Christ has made us know the perfection of the Divine attributes. It has made us know how great is the Mercy of God, in that a God was willing to die to save sinners; and to die, moreover, by a death so painful and ignominious. St. John Chrysostom says, that the Passion of Jesus Christ was not an ordinary suffering, nor His death a simple death like that of other men.

It has made us know the Divine Wisdom. Had our Redeemer been merely God, He could not have made satisfaction for man; for God could not make satisfaction to Himself in place of man; nor could God make satisfaction by means of suffering, for He is impassible. On the other hand, had He been merely man, man could not have made satisfaction for the grievous injury done by him to the Divine Majesty. What, then, did God do? He sent His own very Son, true God with the Father, to take human flesh, that so as man He might by His death pay the debt due to the Divine Justice, and as God might make full satisfaction.

The Passion, moreover, made us know how great is the Divine Justice. St. John Chrysostom says, that God reveals to us the greatness of His Justice, not so much by hell in which He punishes sinners, as by the sight of Jesus on the Cross; since in hell creatures are punished for sins of their own, but on the Cross we behold a God cruelly treated in order to make satisfaction for the sins of men. What obligation had Jesus Christ to die for us? *He was offered because it was his own will.*—(Is.

lii. 7). He might have justly abandoned man to his perdition; but His love for us would not let Him see us lost: wherefore He chose to give Himself up to so painful a death in order to obtain for us salvation: *He hath loved us and delivered himself up for us.*—(Ephes. v. 11). From all eternity He had loved man: *I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*—(Jer. xxxi. 8). But then, seeing that His justice obliged Him to condemn man, and to keep him at a distance, separated eternally from Himself, His mercy urged Him to find a way by which He might be able to save him. But how? By making satisfaction Himself to the Divine Justice by His own death. And consequently He willed that there should be affixed to the Cross whereon He died the sentence of condemnation to eternal death which man had merited, in order that it might remain there, cancelled in His Blood. *Blotting out the writing of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. He hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross.*—(Colos. ii. 14). And thus, through the merits of His own Blood, He pardons all our sins: *Forgiving you all offences.*—(Colos. ii. 13). And at the same time He spoiled the devils of the rights they had acquired over us, carrying along with Him in triumph as well our enemies as ourselves, who were their prey. *And despoiling the principalities and powers, he hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in himself.*—(Colos. ii. 15). On which Theophylact comments: “As a conqueror in triumph, carrying with Him the booty and the enemy.”

Evening Meditation

FRUITS OF MEDITATION ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

I.

The Lover of souls, our most loving Redeemer, declared that He had no other motive in coming down

win to Thyself our hearts, by showing us the immense love Thou didst bear us in accomplishing a Redemption which has brought to us a sea of benedictions, and which cost Thee a sea of pains and ignominies. It was principally for this end that Thou didst institute the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in order that we might have a perpetual memorial of Thy Passion: "That we might have for ever a perpetual memorial of so great a benefit," says St. Thomas, "He gives His body to be the food of the faithful"; which St. Paul had already said: *As often as you shall eat this bread, you shall show the death of the Lord.*—(1 Cor. xi. 26). Oh, how many holy souls hast Thou persuaded by these prodigies of love, consumed by the flames of Thy love, to renounce all earthly goods, in order to dedicate themselves entirely to loving Thee alone, O most amiable Saviour! O my Jesus, I pray Thee make me always remember Thy Passion; and grant that I also, a miserable sinner, overcome at last by so many loving devices, may return to love Thee, and to show Thee, by my poor love, some mark of gratitude for the excessive love which Thou, my God and my Saviour, hast borne to me. Remember, my Jesus, that I am one of those sheep of Thine, to save which Thou didst come down on the earth, and didst sacrifice Thy Divine life. I know that, after having redeemed me by Thy death, Thou hast not ceased to love me, and that Thou dost still bear to me the same love which Thou hadst for me when Thou didst die for my sake. Oh, permit me not any longer to lead a life of ingratitude towards Thee, my God, Who dost so much deserve to be loved, and hast done so much to be loved by me.

And thou, O most holy Virgin Mary, who didst take so great a part in the Passion of thy Son, obtain for me, I beseech thee, through the merits of thy sorrows, the grace to experience a taste of that compassion which thou didst so sensibly feel at the death of Jesus; and obtain for me also a spark of that love which wrought all the martyrdom of thy afflicted heart. Amen.

"Let my mind, O Lord Jesus Christ, I beseech Thee,

upon earth to become man, than to enkindle in the hearts of men the fire of His holy love: *I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled.*—(Luke xii. 49). And, oh, what beautiful flames of love has He not enkindled in so many souls, especially by the pains that He chose to suffer in His death, in order to prove to us the immeasurable love which He still bears to us! Oh, how many souls, happy in the Wounds of Jesus, as in burning furnaces of love, have been so inflamed with His love, that they have not refused to consecrate to Him their goods, their lives, and their whole selves, surmounting with great courage all the difficulties which they had to encounter in the observance of the Divine law, for the love of that Lord Who, being God, chose to suffer so much for the love of them! This was just the counsel that the Apostle gave us, in order that we might not fail, but make great advances in the way of salvation: *Think diligently upon him who endureth such opposition from sinners against himself, that you be not wearied, taming in your minds.*—(Heb. xii. 3).

Wherefore St. Augustine, all inflamed with love at the sight of Jesus nailed on the Cross, prayed thus sweetly: Imprint, O Lord, Thy Wounds in my heart, that I may read therein suffering and love: suffering, that I may endure for Thee all suffering; love, that I may despise for Thee all love. Write, he said, my most loving Saviour, write on my heart Thy Wounds, in order that I may always therein behold Thy sufferings and Thy love. Yes, in order that having before my eyes the great sufferings that Thou, my God, didst endure for me, I may bear in silence all the sufferings it may fall to my lot to endure; and at the sight of the love which Thou didst exhibit for me on the Cross, I may never love or be able to love any other than Thee.

II.

O Saviour of the world, O Love of souls, O Lord most lovely of all beings, Thou by Thy Passion didst come to

