

senses and our lower faculties under subjection to the will and the will to God.

CHAPTER IV

The Struggle against the Capital Sins¹

818. At bottom this struggle is but a species of mortification.

In order to complete the purification of the soul and prevent it from relapsing into sin, we must set upon the source of the evil in us, which is the threefold concupiscence. The general characteristics of this we have already described in numbers 193-209; but being the root of the seven capital sins, these evil inclinations must be known and attacked. They are tendencies rather than sins; however, they are called sins, because they lead to sins; they are termed capital, because they are the fountain-head or source of other sins.

These tendencies can be referred to the threefold concupiscence in this way: from pride are born *vain-glory*, *envy*, and *anger*; from the *concupiscence of the flesh* issue *gluttony*, *lust*, and *sloth*; lastly, the concupiscence of the eyes is one with *avarice* or the inordinate love of riches.

819. The struggle against the seven capital sins has always had a prominent place in Christian spirituality. Cassian treats of it at length in his *Conferences* and in his *Institutes*;² he enumerates eight instead of seven, because he distinguishes pride from vain-glory. St. Gregory the Great³ clearly distinguishes the seven capital sins, all of which he traces to pride. St. Thomas also traces them all to pride and shows how they can be logically classified, if account is taken of the special ends towards which man is drawn. The will may be drawn towards an object by a twofold motion, the search for some apparent good, or flight from an apparent evil. The apparent good sought by the will may be: 1) *praise* or *honor*, a spiritual good, pursued in an inordinate manner by persons who are vain; 2) the preservation

¹ CASSIAN, *De cœnobiorum institutis*, l. V, c. I, P. L., XLIX, 202 and foll.; *Collationes*, coll. V, c. X, *ibid.*, 621 and foll.; ST. JOHN CLIMACUS, *Scala Paradisi*, XXII, P. G., LXXXVIII, 948 and foll.; ST. GREGORY THE GREAT, *Moral.*, l. XXXI, c. XLV, P. L., LXXXVI, 620 and foll.; ST. THOMAS, I-II, q. 84, a. 3-4; *De Malo*, q. 8, a. 1; ST. BONAVENTURE, *In II. Sent.*, dist. XLII, dub. III; NOËL ALEXANDRE, *De Peccatis* (Theol. cursus Migne, XI, 707-1168); ALVAREZ DE PAZ, t. II, Lib. I, P. 2, De extinctione vitiorum; PHIL. DE LA S^{te} TRINITÉ, P. I, Tr. II, disc. II and III, De vitiorum eradicatione et passionum mortificatione; CARD. BONA, *Manuductio ad cælum*, cap. III-IX; ALIBERT, *Physiologie des Passions*, 1827; DESCURET, *La Médecine des Passions*, Paris, 1860; PAULHAN, *Les Caractères*, Paris, 1902; LAUMONIER, *La Thérapeutique des péchés capitaux*, Paris, Alcan, 1922.

² *De cœnobiorum institutis*, Lib. V, c. I; *Collat.*, col. V, c. X.

³ *Moral.*, C. XXXI, c. 45, P. L., LXXXVI, 620-622.

of self or of the race, *corporal* goods, sought after excessively by *gluttonous* and *impure persons* respectively; 3) *external* things, loved to excess by such as are *avaricious*. The apparent evil from which we flee may consist: 1) in the effort required for the attainment of good, which effort the *slothful* evade; 2) in the prospect of lost prestige, which both the *jealous* and the *irritable* dread, though in different ways. Thus, the differentiation of the seven capital sins is based on the seven special ends which the sinner has in view.

We shall follow that division which shows the connection between the capital vices and our threefold concupiscence.

ART. I. PRIDE AND THE VICES RELATED THERETO¹

§ I. Pride

820. Pride is a *deviation* of that legitimate sentiment which prompts us to prize what is good in us, and to seek the esteem of others in the measure in which this is useful. There is no doubt that we *can* and that we *must* prize the good which God has given us, acknowledging that He is its first principle and last end. This is a sentiment that honors God and makes for self-respect. We may also desire that others see and appreciate the good that is in us and that they give glory to God for it, just as we ourselves must in turn recognize and appreciate their good qualities. This mutual regard fosters good relations among men.

However, these two tendencies may either go astray, or go beyond due limits. At times we forget that God is the source of these gifts, and *we attribute them to ourselves*. This constitutes a disorder, for it denies, at least implicitly, that God is our first principle. In like manner we are tempted to act for self, or to gain the esteem of others; instead of acting for God, and of referring to Him all the honor. This is again a disorder, for it denies, at least in the same implicit manner, that God is our last end. Such is the twofold disorder found in this vice. We can, then, define pride as *an inordinate love of self, which causes us to consider ourselves, explicitly or implicitly, as our first beginning and last end*. It is a species of idolatry, for we make gods of ourselves, as Bossuet remarks (n. 204). The better to combat pride, we shall expose: 1° the *principal forms* it takes, 2° the *faults* it engenders, 3° its *malice*, 4° the *remedies* to be applied.

¹ ST. THOMAS, II^a II^a, q. 162, q. 132; *de Malo*, q. 8-9; BOSSUET, *Tr. de la Concupiscence*, c. 10-23; *Sermon sur l'Ambition*; BOURDALOUE, *Carême*, Sermon pour le mercredi de la 2^e sem.; ALIBERT, *op. cit.*, t. I, p. 23-57; DESCURET, *op. cit.*, t. II, p. 191-240; PAULHAN, *Les Caractères*, p. 167; BEAUDENOM, *The Path of Humility*; THOMAS, *L'Éducation des sentiments*, Paris, Alcan, 1904, p. 113-124, 133-148; LAUMONIER, *op. cit.*, C. VII.

I. *The Principal Forms of Pride*

821. 1° The first form of pride is to regard oneself, explicitly or implicitly, as one's own *first principle*.

A) There are but few who go as far as to consider themselves *explicitly* as their own first principle.

a) This is the sin of atheists, who wilfully deny God, because they want no master, "*No God, no Master.*" Of such the Psalmist speaks when he says: "*The fool hath said in his heart: there is no God.*"¹

b) This was, *equivalently*, the sin of *Lucifer*, who, desiring to be a *rule unto himself*, refused to submit to God; the sin of our first parents, who wishing to be like God wanted to know of themselves what is good and what is evil; the sin of *heretics*, who like Luther refused to acknowledge the authority of the Church established by God; the sin of *rationalists*, who in their pride of intellect refuse to submit their reason to faith. This is also the sin of *certain intellectuals*, who, too proud to accept the traditional interpretation of dogmas, attenuate and deform them to make them conform to their own views.

822. B) A greater number fall into this fault *implicitly* by acting as if the *natural* and *supernatural* gifts which God has freely bestowed upon them were in every sense their own. True, they recognize in theory that God is their first principle, but in practice they esteem themselves beyond measure, as if they were the source of the qualities they possess.

a) Some there are who *delight* in their qualities and their worth as if these were due solely to themselves. "The soul," says Bossuet, "seeing its own beauty, has delighted in itself and has become absorbed in the contemplation of its own excellence. It has failed for an instant to refer all it has to God; it has forgotten its own dependence; it has first centered upon self and then surrendered to it. But in seeking to free himself from God and the laws of justice, man has become the slave of his sin."²

823. b) Graver still is the pride of those who, after the manner of the Stoics, attribute to themselves the *virtues they practice*; the pride of those who imagine that the free gifts of God are the *wages due their own merits*, or that their good works are more their own than God's, Who in reality is their principal cause; the pride of those who look complacently upon such good works, as if these were wholly their own.³

824. C) By the same principle we *exaggerate our personal qualities*.

a) We close our eyes to our defects, we look at our good qualities through magnifying glasses, as it were, and we end by attributing to ourselves qualities we do not possess or, at least, qualities which have only the appearance of virtue. Thus, we give alms for show and we believe ourselves charitable when we are simply proud; we fancy we

¹ Ps. XIII, 1. — ² Tr. on *Concupiscence*, C. XI.
³ Ibid., C. XXIII; OLIER, *Introd.*, C. VII.

are saints because we enjoy sensible consolations, or because we have given expression to beautiful thoughts, or taken good resolutions, whilst in reality we have not advanced beyond the first few steps on the way to perfection. Others pride themselves on being broad-minded because they make little of small practices, wishing to sanctify themselves by doing great things. b) From this there is but one step to an *unjust preference of self to others*. We examine their defects with a microscope, and we are scarcely conscious of our own; we see the mote in the neighbor's eye, but not the beam in our own. At times we come, like the Pharisee, to despise our brethren;¹ at other times, without going that far, we unjustly lower them in our estimation, and we believe ourselves above, whilst in reality we are below them. It is by the selfsame principle that we seek to lord it over our brethren and have our superiority over them recognized. c) In relation to *Superiors*, this pride takes the form of censure and fault-finding, prompting us to scrutinize minutely all their acts, all their moves; we want to pass judgment on all things, to control all things. Thus we render obedience far more difficult for ourselves; we find it hard to submit to the authority and the decisions of superiors; to ask their permission becomes a hardship; we aspire to independence, that is, to be ourselves our own first principle.

825. 2° The second form of pride consists in considering ourselves, explicitly or implicitly, as *our last end*, by performing our actions without referring them to God, and by desiring to be praised for them as if they were exclusively our work. This fault proceeds from the first, for whoever looks upon himself as his own first principle will also to be his own last end. Here we must recall the distinctions already made.

A) Hardly any one *explicitly* considers himself as his own last end, except an atheist or an unbeliever.

B) Yet, many behave in practice as if they shared in this error. a) They want to be praised, to be complimented upon their good works, as if they were themselves the principal authors, and as if they were responsible only to themselves. Instead of referring all to God, they expect congratulations for success, as if all the honor were due to them. b) They are prompted by *egotism*, they act for their own ends, caring little for the glory of God, and still less for the welfare of their neighbor. They even go so far as to take for granted that others must organize their lives to please and to serve them; thus they make themselves the *center*, and so to speak, the end toward which others are to gravitate. What else is this if not the unconscious usurpation of the rights of God? c) There are devout persons who, without going so far seek self in piety: they complain of God when He does not flood them with consolations; they pine with grief when in the midst of dryness, and thus form the false idea that the aim of piety is the enjoyment of consolations, forgetting that the glory of God must be the supreme end of all our actions, above all, of prayer and spiritual exercises.

826. We must, then, acknowledge the fact that pride, under one form or the other, is a very common fault, even

¹ Luke XVIII, 9-14.

among those who follow the path of perfection, a fault that stays with us through all the stages of the spiritual life and disappears only when we die. Beginners are hardly aware of it because their study of self does not reach deep enough. Their attention must be drawn to this point; the more common forms of this fault must be indicated to them, so that they may make these the subject of their particular examination.

II. Defects Born of Pride

The chief ones are *presumption*, *ambition*, and *vain-glory*.

827. 1° *Presumption* consists in an inordinate desire and hope whereby we want to do things which are beyond our strength. It proceeds from too high an opinion of ourselves, of our natural faculties, of our knowledge, of our strength, of our virtues.

a) From the *intellectual* point of view we think ourselves capable of approaching and solving the most difficult questions, or at least of undertaking studies which are beyond the reach of our talents. We easily persuade ourselves that we abound in judgment and wisdom, and instead of learning how to doubt, we settle with finality the most controverted questions. b) From the *moral* point of view we fancy that we are possessed of sufficient light to be our own guides, and that it is hardly profitable to consult a spiritual director. We convince ourselves that in spite of past faults we need fear no relapses, and we imprudently walk into occasions of sin, and then we fall. From this come discouragement and vexation that often result in fresh falls. c) From the *spiritual* point of view, we have but little relish for hidden and mortifying virtues, preferring those that are more brilliant: instead of building upon the sound foundation of humility, we dream about greatness of soul, about strength of character, about a magnanimous spirit, about apostolic zeal, and about the imaginary successes we lay in store for the future. The first serious temptations, however, make us aware that the will is still weak and wavering. At times we make little of the ordinary ways of prayer, and of what are called the little exercises of piety, aspiring to extraordinary graces while we are still only at the beginning of the spiritual life.

828. 2° This *presumption*, added to pride, begets *ambition*, that is to say, *the inordinate love of honors, of dignities, of authority over others*. Because we presume overmuch on our strength, and because we consider ourselves superior to others, we want to dominate them, to rule them and impose upon them our ideas.

This disorder, says St. Thomas,¹ may show itself in three ways: 1) One seeks for undeserved honors, honors which are above one; 2) one seeks them for oneself, for

¹ *Sum. theol.*, II^a, II^a, q. 131, a. 1.

one's own glory, and not for the glory of God; 3) one takes delight in honors for their own sake, without making them redound to the good of others, contrary to the order established by God Who requires superiors to procure the welfare of those under them.

This ambition invades every sphere of life: 1) the *political* realm, where men aspire to rule others, and that oftentimes at the price of so many meannesses, so many compromises, so many questionable practices, in order to secure the votes of constituents; 2) the *intellectual* domain, wherein men seek stubbornly to impose their ideas on others, even with regard to questions open to free discussion; 3) *civil* life, where men *vie* for the first places,¹ high office, and the plaudits of the crowd; 4) even the *ecclesiastical* state is not exempt, for as Bossuet² remarks, "How many safeguards have not been found necessary, even in ecclesiastical and religious elections, in order to curb ambition, to prevent factions, intrigues, underhand dealings, and the most criminal pledges and practices, simoniacal contracts, and other such irregularities too common in these matters? We cannot boast that these safeguards have uprooted such abuses; they have hardly done more than to conceal or to restrain them in part." And, as St. Gregory³ notes, are there not those, even in the ranks of the clergy, who want to be called doctors, and eagerly seek the first places and the praise of men? "They seek to appear learned, they long to excel others, and, as Truth bears witness, they crave the first salutations in public, the first places at table, the highest seats in councils."

This fault, then, in more general than one would at first sight believe, and is closely allied with vanity.

829. 3° *Vanity* is an inordinate love for the esteem of others. It differs from pride, which is pleasure taken in one's own excellence; it generally springs from pride. When one has conceived too high an esteem for oneself one naturally desires the approbation of others.

830. A) *The Malice of Vanity*. We may rightfully desire the esteem of others, if we wish that our qualities, natural or supernatural, be acknowledged in order that God be glorified and that our influence for good be extended. Such a desire is not sinful, for it is in order that what is good should be esteemed, provided we acknowledge God as the author of that good and that He alone must be given the praise for it.⁴ The most that can be said against such desires is that it is dangerous to center our thoughts upon them, because we run the risk of seeking the esteem of others for selfish purposes.

¹ It is not solely among the learned and the wealthy that this defect is found, Bossuet speaks (*Tr. on Concupiscence*, C. XVI) of the country-folk who peevishly contend for the more honorable places in the churches, going so far as to say that they will cease to attend divine services unless their wishes are given heed.

² *Tr. on Concupiscence*, C. XVI. — ³ *Pastoral*, P. I, C. I, P. L., LXXVII, 14.

⁴ Cf. ST. THOMAS, II^a II^a, q. 132, a. 1.

The disorder, then, consists in wanting to be held in esteem *for one's own sake*, without referring this honor to God, Who has placed in us whatever good we possess; it may also consist in wanting to be esteemed *for the sake of vain things*, undeserving of praise; or it may consist in seeking the esteem of those *whose judgment is worthless*, of wordlings for instance, who hold in esteem only vain things.

No one has given a better description of this fault than St. Francis de Sales: "We call that glory *vain* which we assume to ourselves, either for what is not in us, or for what is in us, and belongs to us, but deserves not that we should glory in it. The nobility of our ancestors, the favor of great men, and popular honor, are things, not in us, but either in our progenitors, or in the esteem of other men. Some become proud and insolent, either by riding a good horse, wearing a feather in their hat, or by being dressed in a fine suit of clothes; but who does not see the folly of this? for if there be any glory in such things, the glory belongs to the horse, the bird, and the tailor... Others value themselves for a well-trimmed beard, for curled locks, or soft hands; or because they can dance, sing or play; but are not these effeminate men, who seek to raise their reputation by so frivolous and foolish things? Others, for a little learning, would be honored and respected by the whole world, as if every one ought to become their pupil, and account them his masters. These are called pedants. Others strut like peacocks, contemplating their beauty and think themselves admired by every one. All this is extremely vain, foolish, and impertinent; and the glory which is raised on so weak foundations is justly esteemed vain and frivolous."¹

831. B) Faults that spring from vanity. Vanity produces many *faults* which are but its outward manifestation. The principal ones are *boasting*, *ostentation* and *hypocrisy*.

1) *Boasting* is the habit of speaking of self or of those things that can redound to our advantage with a view to gaining the esteem of others. There are those who speak of themselves, of their family, of their success with a candor that amuses their hearers; others cleverly turn the trend of conversation to a subject wherein they can display their knowledge; others timidly speak of their defects, harboring the secret hope that these will be excused and their good qualities thereby made more apparent.²

2) *Ostentation* consists in drawing to self the attention of others by a certain way of acting, by pompous display, and by singularity.

3) *Hypocrisy* takes on the outward appearance of virtue to cover very real vices.

III. The Malice of Pride

To form a right idea of this malice we may consider pride *in itself* and in its *effects*.

¹ *Devout Life*, III, C. IV.

² *Spirit of St. Francis de Sales*, c. XIX.

832. 1° In itself: A) Pride properly so called, that pride which consciously and wilfully usurps, even if implicitly, the rights of God, is a grievous sin, nay it is the gravest of sins, says St. Thomas,¹ because it is a refusal to submit to God's sovereign will.

a) To want to be *independent*, to refuse obedience to God or to His lawful representatives, in a serious matter, constitutes a mortal sin, since one thereby revolts against God, our rightful Sovereign.

b) To attribute to oneself what evidently comes from God, and especially the gifts of grace, constitutes likewise a grievous fault, for this is to deny implicitly that God is the first principle of whatever good is in us. Some are guilty of this, for example, those who say that they have "made themselves what they are."

c) One sins gravely, again, when one wants to act *for oneself to the exclusion of God*, for this is to deny God His right to be our last end.

833. B) Mitigated pride, which indeed acknowledges God as the first principle or last end but does not render Him all that is due to Him, and implicitly robs Him of a part of His glory, is without doubt a *venial* fault. Such is the fault of those who glory in their good qualities or their virtues, as if they were convinced that all is theirs in their own right. It is also the fault of the presumptuous, of the vain, of the ambitious, who, however, do nothing against a divine or a human law in serious matter. At all events, such sins can become mortal if they lead to acts that are grievously reprehensible. Thus, vanity, which in itself is but a venial fault, becomes a grievous one when it causes us to contract debts which we are unable to pay, or when it seeks to stir in others an inordinate love. Pride, then, must be examined also in its results.

834. 2° In its effects: A) Unrestrained pride produces at times *disastrous effects*. How many wars have been started through the pride of rulers and sometimes through the pride of nations themselves!² Without going that far, how many family discussions, how many personal hatreds are not due to this vice? The Fathers rightly teach that it is the root of all other vices and that it vitiates many a virtuous act, since it causes men to perform them from selfish motives.³

835. B) Taking the point of view of perfection, the one with which we are concerned, we can say that pride is the archenemy of perfection because it creates in the soul

¹ *Sum. theol.*, II^a II^{ae}, q. 162, c. 5-6.

² St. CHRYSOSTOM, in *Ep. II ad. Thess.*, C. I, homil. I, n. 2, P. G., 471.

³ St. GREGORY, *Moral.*, I, XXXIV, c. 33, n. 48, P. L., LXXVI, 744.

a *barren waste* and is the *source of numerous sins*. a) It deprives us of many graces and much merit:

1) It deprives us of many *graces*, because God Who is bountiful with His grace to the humble, withholds it from the proud: "*God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.*"¹ Let us weigh well these words: God resisteth the proud, "Because", says Father Olier,² "the proud man, challenging God to His face, is resisted by the Almighty in his insolent and horrible pretensions; and, since God wills to remain what He is, He lays low and destroys such as rise up against Him."

2) It deprives us of much *merit*. One of the essential conditions for meriting is purity of intention. But the proud man acts *for self* or in order to please men, instead of acting for God, and thus deserves the reproach addressed to the Pharisees, who paraded their good works before men and who for this reason could expect no recompense from God: "*Take heed that you do not your justice before men to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have reward of your Father who is in heaven.... Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.*"³

836. b) Pride is likewise a *source of many faults*:

1) Personal faults: through *presumption* one exposes oneself to danger and falls; through *pride* one fails to ask earnestly for the graces one needs and likewise falls; then come discouragement and the temptation to conceal sins in confession. 2) Faults against the neighbor: through pride one is unwilling to yield, even when in the wrong; one is caustic in speech; one indulges in harsh and heated discussions which bring dissension and discord; hence, acrimonious words, even unjust ones; against one's rivals in order to belittle them; hence, bitter criticism against Superiors and refusal to obey their orders.

837. c) Finally, pride is a *source of unhappiness* to those habitually given to it. Because we want to excel in all things and lord it over others, we have neither peace nor contentment, for we know no rest as long as we have not succeeded in vanquishing our antagonists and, since this is never fully accomplished, we are troubled, ill at ease and unhappy.

¹ James, IV, 6. — ² Introduction, c. VI. — ³ Matt., VI, 1-2.

IV. The Remedies against Pride

838. We have already said (n. 207) that the great remedy against pride is the acknowledgment of the fact that God is the Author of all good, and that therefore to Him alone belongs all honor and glory. *Of ourselves* we are but *nothingness* and *sin*, and hence merit nothing but *forgetfulness* and *contempt* (n. 208).

839. 1° **We are but nothingness.** Beginners must form this conviction through meditation by pondering leisurely the following thoughts: I am nothing, I can do nothing, I am worth nothing.

A) **I am nothing.** — True, it has pleased the divine goodness to choose me out of millions of possible beings, to give me my existence, to endow me with life, with a spiritual and immortal soul, and for this I am bound to thank Him daily. Yet, a) *I came from nothing*, and by the very force of my being *I tend towards nothingness*, whereto I should surely return were it not for the abiding action of my Maker which sustains me. My being, then, is not mine, but is wholly God's, and it is to Him that I must render homage.

b) This being God has given me is a living reality, a great boon for which I shall never be able to return Him due thanks. Yet, wondrous as this being of mine is, side by side with the God-head it is as mere nothingness: "*And my substance is as nothing before thee,*"¹ for it is so imperfect. 1) This being is a *contingent being*, which could well cease to exist without detracting anything from the world's perfection. 2) It is a *borrowed being*, given to me on the explicit condition of remaining under the sway of God's supreme dominion. 3) It is a *frail being*, unable to subsist of itself, a being that ever needs the unceasing sustaining power of its Maker. Such being is, therefore, essentially *dependent* upon God, and has no other reason for its existence than that of giving glory to its Creator. To forget this dependence, to act as if our good qualities were absolutely our own and to boast of them, is an error hard to conceive; it is madness and injustice.

840. What we say of man considered in the order of nature is even truer of him in *the order of grace*, whereby we share in the life of God, wherefrom issue all our worth

¹ Ps. XXXVIII, 6.

and all our grandeur, that grace which is essentially a free gift of God and of Jesus Christ, which we cannot for long keep without the help of God, and wherein we cannot grow without His supernatural concurrence (n. 126-128). For this especially we must say: "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." ¹ What ingratitude and injustice to attribute to self the least part of that gift essentially divine! "*What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*" ²

841. B) Of myself I can do nothing. True, I have received from God wondrous powers that enable me to know and love truth and goodness. These faculties have been perfected by the supernatural virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. These gifts of nature and of grace blending so harmoniously and complementing one another so perfectly surpass all wonder. Yet, *of myself*, of my own accord, *I can do nothing* to set them in motion to work out their perfection. I can do nothing in the *natural* order without the concurrence of God; I can do nothing in the supernatural order without actual grace, not even conceive a good thought unto salvation, nor a desire supernaturally good. Knowing this, could I take pride in those natural and supernatural powers as if they were entirely my own? Here again there would be ingratitude and madness and injustice.

842. C) I am worth nothing. In truth, if I consider what God has placed within me, what He works in me through His grace, I am worth a great deal, I am beyond price: "*For you are bought with a great price*" ³... *You are worth what God is worth.*" I am worth the price which was paid for me, and the price paid for me was the blood of God Himself! Does the glory of my redemption and of my sanctification belong to me or to the Almighty? There can be no uncertain answer to such question. But still, urges my vanquished self-love, I have something that is my own, something that invests me with greatness, my free co-operation with God's concurrence and His grace. Indeed, we have therein our share, yet *not the principal* share. That free consent is the mere exercise of faculties freely bestowed on us by God, and at the very moment we give it, God is working within us as its principal cause: "*For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to*

¹ II Cor., IX, 15. — ² I Cor., IV, 7. — ³ I Cor., VI, 20.

accomplish." ¹ Besides, for the one time that we agree to follow the impulse of grace, how many times are there when we resist grace or co-operate only half-heartedly? Truly, there is nothing wherein we should glory; rather there is cause for humiliation.

When a great artist creates a masterpiece, it is to him that we attribute it and not to the third or fourth rate artists who have been his collaborators. With far greater reason must we give to God the credit for our merits as their first and principal cause, since God, as the Church says with St. Augustine, but "*crowns His own gifts when He crowns our merits.*"

Therefore, from whatever point of view we see ourselves, whether we consider the great worth of the gifts wherewith we have been endowed, or the great value of our merits themselves, we find no cause for boasting, but cause for paying tribute to God and for thanking Him from our inmost heart. Moreover, we find that we have to beg His pardon for the bad use we have made of His gifts.

843. 2° I am a sinner, and as such I merit *contempt*, all the contempt which it may please God to heap upon me. To convince ourselves of this, it suffices to recall what we have said about *mortal* and *venial* sin.

A) If I have committed but a single mortal sin, I have merited eternal humiliation, since I have merited hell. True, I entertain the hope that God has pardoned me, yet it remains none the less true that I have criminally assailed the majesty of God, that I have attempted a species of deicide, perpetrated a sort of spiritual suicide (n. 719), and that in order to atone to the Divine Majesty for that offence, I must be ready to accept, nay, even to wish for every possible humiliation, every slander, every calumny, every injury, every insult. All this is far below the just deserts of him who has offended a single time the infinite majesty of God. And if I have offended against it a great many times, what must be my resignation, nay, my joy, when the occasion offers to expiate my sins by enduring a shame that lasts but for a short time!

844. B) We have all committed *venial sins* and, no doubt, *deliberate* ones, thus making a willing choice in favor of our own wills and our own pleasure as against the will and the glory of the Almighty. This, we have said, (n. 715) constitutes an affront to the Divine Majesty, an offence meriting such abject humiliations, that, should we spend

¹ Phil., II, 13.

the whole of our lives in the exercise of humility, we should never be able of ourselves to give back to God the glory that we have unjustly taken from Him. If this way of speaking seems to us an exaggeration, let us recall the tears and the austerities which the Saints, who had been guilty of but venial faults, thought always insufficient for the cleansing of their souls and inadequate to repair the outrages offered to the majesty of God. These Saints saw this in a clearer light than we do, and if we think otherwise it is because we are blinded by our pride.

As *sinner*s, therefore, far from seeking the esteem of others, we must despise ourselves and accept all the humiliations that God may see fit to send us.

§ II. Envy †

845. Envy is at once a *passion* and one of the *capital sins*. As a passion it consists in a sort of deep sadness experienced in the sensitive part of our nature because of the good we see in others. This sensitive impression is accompanied by a contraction of the heart, slowing the activity of this organ and producing a feeling of anguish.

Here we are mainly concerned with envy inasmuch as it is a capital sin, and we shall explain: 1° its *nature*, 2° its *malice*, 3° its *remedies*.

846. 1° **The Nature of Envy.** A) Envy is a *tendency to be saddened by another's good as if that good constituted an affront to our own superiority*. Often it coincides with a desire of seeing the neighbor deprived of the particular good that offends us.

This vice proceeds from *pride*, which can bear neither superior nor rival. When we are persuaded of our own superiority, we are saddened to see others better gifted than we are or, with no greater gifts than ours, succeeding better than we do. The object of envy is chiefly some brilliant quality; yet, with men of a serious turn of mind envy bears also upon solid qualities and even upon virtue.

This fault manifests itself in the pain we experience upon hearing the praises of others, and in the subsequent attempt we make to depreciate this good opinion by criticizing those that are thus commended.

† ST. CYPRIAN, *De zelo et livore*, P. L., IV, 637-652; ST. GREGORY, *Moral.*, I, V, c. 46, P. L., LXXV, 727-730; ST. THOMAS, II-II, q. 36; *De Malo*, q. 10; ALBERT, *op. cit.*, t. I, p. 331-340; DESCURET, t. II, p. 241-274; LAUMONIER, *op. cit.*, C. V.

847. B) *Envy* is often confounded with jealousy. They differ, however, in that the latter consists in an excessive love of our own good accompanied by the fear lest we be deprived of it by others. A student holding the first place in class, upon noting the progress made by a classmate, becomes jealous of him because he fears the latter may take away his rank. If we enjoy the affection of a friend and we fear this affection may be alienated by a rival friend, we become jealous of him. A man who has a large clientele, fearing lest it be reduced by a competitor, may likewise become jealous. Hence arises the jealousy at times abounding among professionals, among writers, and sometimes even among priests. The difference between envy and jealousy, to put it briefly, is this: *we are envious of another's good, and jealous of our own*.

C) There is also a difference between *envy* and *emulation*. The latter is a praiseworthy sentiment, urging us to imitate, to equal, and, if possible, to surpass the good qualities of others, but always by means that are fair.

848. 2° **Malice of Envy.** We can make a study of this malice *in itself* and in its *effects*.

A) *In itself*, envy is by nature a *mortal sin*, because it is directly opposed to the virtue of charity which requires us to rejoice in the good fortune of others. The more important the good we envy, the graver is our sin. Thus, says St. Thomas, † to make envy bear upon the spiritual goods of the neighbor, to be saddened at his spiritual progress or his apostolic success is a very grave sin. This is true only when these envious impulses are *fully consented to*; however, often they are mere emotional impressions, or at most, feelings in which there is but little reflection and will. These latter constitute only a venial fault.

849. B) In its *effects* envy is at times very culpable:

a) It stirs within us sentiments of *hatred*: we run the risk of conceiving a hatred for those whom we envy or of whom we feel jealous and, as a result, of speaking ill of them, of blackening their character, of calumniating them, of wishing them evil.

b) It tends to sow discord, not only between strangers, but between related families, and even among members of the same family. We need only to recall the history of Joseph and his brothers. These dissensions may go very far towards creating enmities and scandals. At times envy divides the Catholics of a given region to the great detriment of the Church.

c) It urges men on to *the immoderate quest for riches and*

† *Sum. Theol.*, II^a II^a, q. 36, a. 4, ad 2.

for honors: in order to surpass those whom we envy, we indulge in overtaxing work, take steps of a more or less questionable nature, by which we sin against loyalty and even against justice.

d) It *disturbs our peace of soul*: we know no peace nor tranquillity as long as we do not succeed in eclipsing, in subjugating our rivals, and since this happens but seldom, we live in perpetual anguish.

850. 3° **The Remedies For Envy.** They are *negative* or *positive*.

A) The negative means consist: a) in scorning the very first intimations of envy and of jealousy that arise in the heart, in crushing such sentiments as something vile, as one would crush a viper; b) in *distracting the mind*, by occupying ourselves with any other thing, and when calm returns by constantly bearing in mind that the good qualities of our neighbor do not lessen ours, but are a stimulus to imitation.

851. B) Among the *positive* means, two are especially important.

a) The first is drawn from the fact of our incorporation into Christ: we are all brethren, members of a mystical body the head of which is Christ; the good qualities and the attainments of one member redound to all the others. Instead, then, of being saddened at the superiority of our brethren we must rejoice, according to the teaching of St. Paul, ¹ since their superiority contributes to the common good and to our own particular welfare. If it be the virtues of another that we envy, "instead of bearing them envy and jealousy on account of those virtues, as occurs often through the suggestion of the evil one and of self-love, you should unite to the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, honoring in Him the source of those virtues, and begging of Him the grace to share and partake therein. You will see how useful and how profitable such practice is to you." ²

852. b) The second means consists in cultivating that noble and Christian sentiment of *emulation*, which prompts us to imitate and even surpass the virtues of our neighbor, with the help of God's grace.

¹ Rom., XII, 15, 16.

² OLIER, *Cat. for Int. Life*, II, Lesson XIII.

In order that emulation be good and remain free from envy, it must be: 1) *right in its object*, that is to say, it must bear not on the successes, but the virtues of others, and this in order to imitate them. 2) It must be *worthy in its motives*, seeking not to vanquish others, humiliate them, bring them under subjection, but to make us better, in order that God may receive greater honor and the Church greater prestige. 3) It must be *fair in the means* it employs to attain its ends; not intrigue, not subterfuge nor any other unlawful proceeding; but effort, labor, the right use of the divine gifts.

Thus understood, emulation is an effective remedy against envy, since it works harm to no one and is at the same time an excellent stimulus. For to consider as models the best among our brethren in order to follow in their steps or to go even further than they do, is in reality to acknowledge our own imperfections and to seek to remedy them by profiting by the example of those around us. It is to imitate St. Paul, who invited his disciples to be imitators of himself as he was of Christ; ¹ it is to follow the same Apostle's advice to the Christians: "Let us consider one another to provoke unto charity and to good works;" ² it is to enter into the spirit of the Church, which, in proposing to us the Saints for our imitation, provokes us to a high and hallowed emulation. Thus, what would have been envy, proves to be an occasion for the cultivation of virtue.

§ III. Anger ³

The vice of anger is a perversion of that instinctive feeling that prompts us, upon attack, to resist force with force. We shall speak of: 1° its *nature*, 2° its *malice*, 3° its *remedies*.

I. The nature of Anger

853. There is a *passion of anger* and a *sentiment of anger*.

1° Anger considered as a *passion* is a violent need of reaction caused by physical or moral suffering or annoyance. This vexation excites a violent emotion which arouses our energies to overcome the difficulty. We are then prone to vent our anger upon persons, animals and things.

There are two principal forms of anger: the *red rage* of the strong, and the *white rage* of the weak. In the first kind of anger the heart throbs violently and pushes the blood to the surface; breathing becomes rapid, the face reddens, the neck swells, the veins expand

¹ I Cor., XI, 1. — ² Heb., X, 24.

³ ST. GREGORY, *Moral.*, I, V, c. 45, P. L., LXXV, 727-730; ST. THOM., II^a II^a, q. 158; *De Malo*, q. 12; DESCURET, *op. cit.*, t. II, 1-57; THOMAS, *op. cit.*, ch. IX, p. 94-103; LAUMONIER, *op. cit.*, ch. VI.

under the skin, the hair stands on end, the eyes sparkle and bulge out of their sockets, the nostrils widen and speech becomes raucous and halting, the muscles gather strength, the whole bodily frame is set for the onslaught and an irresistible motion strikes, breaks, or violently brushes aside the obstacle. White rage causes the heart to contract; breathing becomes difficult, the face assumes a death-like pallor, a cold sweat oozes from the brow, the jaws clench, and the person keeps an ominous silence. However, such pent up agitation ends by bursting forth into a rage and finds an outlet in the discharge of violent blows.

854. 2° Anger as a *sentiment* consists in a vehement desire to repel and punish an aggressor.

A) There is a lawful sentiment of anger, a righteous indignation, which is the ardent, but rational desire to visit upon the guilty a just retribution. Thus it was that Our Lord was roused to anger against the money-changers whose traffic defiled His Father's house,¹ whilst on the other hand Heli, the high-priest, was severely reproofed for not having curbed the shameful conduct of his sons.

That anger be legitimate, it must be: a) *just* as to its *object*, seeking to punish only those that deserve punishment, and only in the measure in which they have merited it; b) *tempered* by moderation in its *execution*, going no further than the offence demands and adhering to the requirements of justice; c) *animated* by *motives* of charity, not degenerating into sentiments of hatred, but aiming solely at the restoration of order and the amendment of the guilty. If any of these conditions are lacking, there is moral guilt. Lawful anger belongs chiefly to those in authority, like parents and superiors, yet it is at times the right and the duty of those in the ranks to resort to it in order to defend their common interests and prevent the ascendancy of the wicked, for there are men whom kindness fails to move and whom the fear of punishment alone can touch.

855. B) Anger as a capital vice is a violent and inordinate desire of punishing others, regardless of the three conditions we have noted. Often anger is accompanied by *hatred*, which seeks not merely to repel aggression but to take revenge. Such a sentiment is more deliberate, more lasting, and has, therefore, more serious consequences.

856. 3° There are *degrees* of intensity in anger: a) at first, it consists in a mere impulse of *impatience*; the least annoyance, the least failure elicits a show of *temper*. b) This is followed by *agitation* which produces undue irritation and which manifests dissatisfaction by uncontrolled gestures. c) At times anger reaches the stage of *violence*, culminating not only in words but even in *blows*. d) It can develop into *fury*, which is temporary insanity: in this stage one is no longer master of self; one breaks forth into incoherent speech and into such wild gesticulation that it would seem real insanity. e) Lastly, anger at times degenerates into implacable *hatred*, breathing vengeance, and

¹ John, II, 13-17.

going so far as to desire death to the adversary. It is important to discern these degrees of anger in order to estimate its malice.

II. The Malice of Anger

It may be considered in *itself* and in its *effects*.

857. 1° In order to determine the exact malice of anger considered *in itself* we must make important distinctions: —

A) When anger simply consists in a *transient impulse of passion*, it is of itself a *venial sin*, because it exceeds proper measure, but it is only a venial sin because, as we presuppose, there is no violation of the great virtues of justice or charity. However, there are instances when anger is so intense that self-control is lost and grave insult is offered to the neighbor. If these impulses, even though born of passion, are deliberate and wilful they constitute a grievous fault; but often this is not the case.

858. B) Anger that goes as far as *hatred* and rancor, when deliberate and wilful, is of itself a *mortal sin*, for it grievously violates charity and often justice. It is in this sense that Our Lord says: "But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."¹ Still, if this impulse of hatred is not fully deliberate, the fault will only be venial.

859. 2° The *effects* of anger when not repressed are at times terrible.

A) Seneca has described them in expressive words. He attributes to anger treasons, murders, poisonings, divisions in families, dissensions and civil wars with all their horrible aftermath.² Even when anger does not reach such extremes, it is the source of a great number of faults, because it disturbs the peace of families and gives rise to fearful enmities.

860. B) From the point of view of *perfection*, it is, St. Gregory³ tells us, a great obstacle to spiritual progress, for if it is not curbed it makes us lose: 1) *good judgment*, mental poise; 2) *gentleness* which is the charm of social relations; 3) the sense of *justice*, for passion blinds us to the rights of others; 4) the *spirit of recollection*, so indispensable to an intimate union with God, to peace of soul, to a ready compliance with the inspirations of grace.

¹ Matth., V, 22. — ² De ira, l. I, n. 2. — ³ Moral., l. c., P. L., LXXV, 724.

III. Remedies against Anger

These must attack the *passion* of anger and the sentiment of *hatred* which it at times engenders.

861. 1° We must make use of every means at our disposal in order to overcome the *passion* of anger.

A) Physical *hygiene* offers some means that combine to prevent or to soothe anger, such as correct diet, lukewarm baths, abstinence from stimulants and particularly from intoxicants. Such hygienic measures have importance in this matter because of the close union that exists between body and soul. However, account must be taken of temperament and health, and therefore prudence demands the advice of a physician.¹

862. B) Withal, *moral hygiene* is even better. a) A good preventive of anger is to acquire the habit of reflecting before acting so as not to allow ourselves to be swept away by the first assaults of passion. This is uphill work, but most effective. b) When despite all, this passion has taken our heart by surprise, "it is better to drive it away speedily than enter into a parley; for, if we give it ever so little leisure, it will become mistress of the place, like the serpent, who easily draws in his whole body where he can once get in his head.... You must at the first alarm, speedily muster your forces; not violently, not tumultuously, but mildly, and yet seriously."² Otherwise, whilst trying to repress anger with impetuosity we should but add to our perturbation. c) The better to check anger, it is useful to divert the mind, that is to say, to turn our thoughts to anything except the one thing liable to excite it. Therefore, we must banish all thought of past injuries, all suspicion, etc. d) "We must invoke the assistance of God when we find ourselves excited to wrath, in imitation of the Apostles when they were tossed by the wind and the storm upon the waters; for He will command our passions to cease, and a great calm shall ensue."³

863. 2° When anger gives rise to sentiments of *hatred*, of *rancor*, or of *vengeance*, we can uproot these only by charity based on the love of God. At such times we must remind ourselves that we are all children of the same heavenly Father, all incorporated into the same Christ, all called to the same eternal happiness, and that these great

¹ Cf. DESCURET, *La Médecine des Passions*; J. LAUMONIER, *La thérapeutique...* p. 167-174.

² ST. FR. DE SALES, *Introd. to a Devout Life*, P. III, C. VIII.

³ ST. FR. DE SALES, *loc. cit.*

truths exclude every sentiment of hatred. Therefore: a) we should recall the words of the *Lord's Prayer*: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," and since we crave divine pardon, we should more willingly pardon our enemies. b) We should not lose sight of the example of Our Lord, still calling Judas His friend in the very moment of his treason, praying on the Cross for His executioners, and we should ask Him to give us the strength we need to forgive and forget. c) We should avoid all thoughts of injuries received and of what relates to them. Perfect souls pray for the conversion of those who have hurt them, and in this prayer they find a wonderful balm for the wounds of their souls.

Such are the chief means given us to triumph over the first three capital sins, pride, envy and anger. We now turn to consider the faults that have their source in sensuality: *gluttony, lust, and sloth.*

ART. II. SINS THAT PROCEED FROM SENSUALITY

§ I. Gluttony¹

Gluttony is the abuse of that legitimate pleasure God has attached to eating and drinking, which are necessary means of self-preservation. We shall explain: 1° its *nature*, 2° its *malice*, and 3° the *remedies* against it.

864. 1° The *Nature* of Gluttony. Gluttony is an inordinate love of the pleasures of the table. The disorder lies in pursuing this satisfaction *for its own sake*, in considering it, either explicitly or implicitly, as an end in itself, as do those "whose God is their belly;"² or in pursuing the said delight *to excess*, at times even to the detriment of health, by disregarding the rules of sobriety.

865. Theologians point out four different ways in which we may violate these rules.

- 1) Eating when there is no need, eating between meals, and for no other reason than that of indulging our greed.
- 2) Seeking delicacies or daintily prepared meats, the more to enjoy their relish.
- 3) Going beyond either appetite or need, gorging oneself with food or drink with danger to health.
- 4) Eating with avidity, with greed, after the manner of certain animals. This fashion of eating is considered ill-mannered by the world.

¹ ST. THOMAS, II^a II^{ae}, q. 148; *de Malo*, q. 14; JAUGEY, *De quatuor virtut. cardin.*, 1876, p. 569-579; LAUMONIER, *op. cit.*, ch. II.

² *Philipp.*, III, 19.

866. 2° The *Malice* of gluttony comes from the fact that it makes the soul a slave to the body, it brutalizes man, weakens his intellectual and moral life, and insensibly paves the way to voluptuous pleasure, which at bottom is one in kind with it. To determine the malice of gluttony we must make a distinction.

A) Gluttony is a *grievous* fault: a) when it goes to such lengths that for a notable space of time it incapacitates us for the fulfilment of our duties of state or for the compliance with divine or ecclesiastical laws, for example, when it injures our health, when it is the cause of useless expenditures which endanger the interests of our home, when it makes us violate the laws of fast or abstinence. b) It is also a grave fault when it is the *cause* of other grievous faults.

By way of example: "Excess in eating and drinking" says Father Janvier¹, "paves the way to *unchastity*, the offspring of gluttony, the lust of the eyes and ears demanding to be fed with unwholesome shows and licentious songs; the lust of the imagination and the memory, which search in the past for impressions apt to enkindle the fire of concupiscence; the lust of the mind, which, going astray, fastens itself upon unlawful objects; the lust of the heart, which longs after carnal affections; the lust of the will, which surrenders to be a slave to sense... *Intemperance at the table* leads to *intemperance in speech*. How many are the faults committed by the tongue in the course of those sumptuous and protracted feasts! How many *improprieties*...! How many *indiscretions*! We betray secrets we had pledged ourselves to keep, professional secrets, sacred trusts, and we deliver to evil tongues the good name of husband, wife and mother, the honor of a family, and perhaps the future welfare of a nation. How many faults against *justice* and against *charity* are not thus committed! Back-biting, calumny, and slander reveal themselves with dismal frankness in their most indefensible forms... How many *imprudences* are committed! We become entangled in situations in which we cannot remain without outrage to all the laws of morality."

867. B) Gluttony is a *venial* fault when one yields to the pleasure of eating and drinking in an immoderate manner, yet without falling into grave excess, and without exposing oneself to violate a grave precept. Thus it would be venially sinful to eat or drink more than is proper in order to show one's appreciation of a fine repast, or in order to please a friend.

868. C) From the point of view of *perfection*, gluttony constitutes a serious obstacle: 1) It fosters a spirit of immortification, which weakens the will, whilst it develops a love for sensual pleasure predisposing the soul to dange-

¹ Carême, 1921, Retraite pascale, Excès de table.

rous surrenders. 2) It becomes the source of many faults, by exciting excessive mirth which leads to dissipation, garrulousness, jokes of a doubtful character, to lack of restraint and of propriety, and thus lays the soul bare to the attacks of the evil one. Hence, it is important that we should combat this vice.

869. 3° *Remedies*. Our guiding principle in the struggle against gluttony is that pleasure is *not an end* but a *means*, and that therefore it must be subjected to right reason enlightened by faith, (n. 193). Faith, however, tells us that the pleasure of eating and drinking must be sanctified by *purity of intention, moderation and mortification*.

1) First of all, we must take our repasts with a *right and supernatural intention*, not like the animal that merely seeks its pleasure, not like the philosopher who goes not beyond a naturally good intention, but as Christians the better to work for God's glory; in a spirit of *gratitude* towards God, Who in His goodness deigns to give us our daily bread; in a spirit of *humility*, saying, like St. Vincent de Paul, that we do not deserve the bread we eat; in a spirit of *love*, placing our renewed strength at the service of God and of souls. Thereby we comply with the advice of St. Paul to the first Christians, an advice recalled in many communities at the beginning of meals: "*Whether you eat or drink... do all to the glory of God.*"¹

870. 2) This purity of intention will make us observe the rules of *sobriety*, for wanting to take our food in order to acquire the strength needed for the fulfilment of our duties of state, we shall avoid all excess that might compromise our health. Health-experts tell us that "*sobriety (or frugality)* is the essential condition of physical and moral vigor. Since we eat to live, we must eat sanely in order to live sanely. Hence, we must not exceed in food or in drink... We must leave the table with a wholesome sensation of sprightliness and vigor, and with our appetite not completely satiated, thus avoiding the heaviness that comes from an excess of rich fare."²

We must, however, note that the measure is not the same for all. Some need, in order to escape tuberculosis, a more abundant diet; others, on the contrary, to escape arterio sclerosis, must check their appetite. With regard, then, to the quantity of food one must abide by the advice of a competent physician.

¹ 1 Cor., X, 31.

² E. CAUSTIER, *La Vie et la Santé*, p. 115.

871. The Christian must add to sobriety *certain practices of mortification*. A) Since it is easy to overstep the mark and to yield too much to sensuality, we must at times forego certain foods we relish, and which, though useful, are not necessary. We thereby acquire a certain ascendancy over sensuality, we free the spirit from slavery to the senses, and give it more leisure for prayer and study, and we avoid many dangerous temptations.

B) An excellent practice is that of accustoming oneself to take no meal without some element of mortification. Such privations have the advantage of strengthening the will without injury to health, and are for this reason generally preferable to greater mortifications which we perform but rarely. Generous souls add a motive of charity, setting aside a part of their food for the poor and therefore for Christ living in them. St. Vincent Ferrer¹ points out that what we thus set aside must not be waste-matter, but some choice morsel, no matter how small. Another good practice is the habit of eating a little of something we dislike.

872. C) Among the most beneficial practices of mortification, we place those that relate to *intoxicating beverages*.

Let us recall the principles that bear on this matter:

a) *In itself* the moderate use of alcoholic drinks is not sinful.

b) To abstain from them in a spirit of mortification, or for the sake of good example, is assuredly most praiseworthy. There are priests and laymen belonging to social organizations who forego entirely the use of liquor, the more easily to deter others from its abuse.

c) There are cases when such abstinence is morally necessary to avoid excess. 1) When through heredity one has a certain inclination towards intoxicants; for in this case the mere use can develop an almost irresistible propensity, just as but a spark is needed to set inflammable matter afire. 2) When one has had the misfortune of contracting the inveterate habit of drinking to excess; then the only effective remedy will consist in total abstinence.

§ II. Lust²

873. 1^o *The Nature of Lust.* Just as God has willed to attach sense-pleasure to the nutritive functions in order

¹ *La Vie Spirituelle*, II^e Part., ch. III.

² St. THOM., IIa II^e, q. 153-154; S. ALPHONSUS, I. III, n. 412-485; CAPELMAN, *Medicina pastoralis*; ANTONELLI, *Medicina pastoralis*, Romæ, 1905; SURBLED, *Vie*

to help man's self-preservation, so He has attached a *special* pleasure to the acts whereby the propagation of the human species is secured.

This pleasure is permissible to married people, provided they use it for the purpose for which marriage was instituted; outside of this it is strictly forbidden. In spite of this prohibition, there is in us an unfortunate tendency, more or less violent, especially from the age of puberty or adolescence, to indulge in this pleasure even out of lawful wedlock. This is the tendency that is called *lust* and which is condemned by the sixth and ninth commandments:

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."
"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife."

It is not merely *exterior* actions that are prohibited, but also *interior acts*, fancies, thoughts, desires. And this rightly so, for if one deliberately dwells upon impure imaginations or thoughts, upon evil desires, the senses become excited, whilst an organic disturbance is produced, which is too often but the prelude to actions against purity. Therefore, if we wish to avoid such acts, we must fight against dangerous thoughts and fancies.

874. 2^o *Gravity of faults against purity.* A) When one seeks and *directly* wills the evil pleasure, there is always *mortal* sin, for to endanger the preservation and propagation of the human race is a grave disorder. Now, were the principle to be admitted that one may seek voluptuous pleasure in thoughts, in words, or in actions otherwise than in the right use of marriage, it would be impossible to restrain this passion, the demands of which increase with the satisfactions accorded, and soon the purpose of the Creator would be frustrated. This is what experience shows: there are but too many young people who render themselves incapable of transmitting life, because they have abused their bodies. Hence, as regards evil pleasure directly willed, there is no lightness of matter.

B) There are cases in which this pleasure is not directly sought; it may follow from certain actions otherwise good or at least indifferent. If one does not consent to this pleasure, and has, besides, a reason sufficient to justify the performance of the action, there is no guilt and no cause

de jeune homme, Paris, 1900; *Vie de jeune fille*, Paris, 1903; FONSSAGRIVES, *Conseils aux parents et aux maîtres sur l'éducation de la pureté*; MARTINDALE, S. J., *The Difficult Commandment*; GUIBERT, *Purity*; FOERSTER, *Marriage and the Sex Problem*; CATTERER-KRUS-VAN DER DONCKT, *Educating to Purity*; Mgr. DUBOURG, *Sixième et neuvième commandements; Après la vingtième année*.

for alarm. If, on the other hand the actions that give rise to such sensations are neither necessary, nor really useful, like dangerous readings, shows, conversations, lewd dancing, then it is evident that to perform such actions is a sin of imprudence, more or less grave, in proportion to the gravity of the disorder thus produced and of the danger of consent to the evil pleasure.

875. C) From the point of view of *perfection*, there is, next to pride, no greater obstacle to spiritual growth than the vice of impurity. a) When it is question of solitary acts or of faults committed with others, it is not long before *tyrannical habits* are formed which thwart every impulse towards perfection, and incline the will towards debasing pleasures. Relish for prayer disappears, as does love for austere virtue, while noble and unselfish aspirations vanish. b) The soul becomes a prey to *selfishness*. The love once borne to parents and friends gradually dies out; there is but the desire which becomes a real obsession to indulge at any cost in evil pleasures. c) The balance of the faculties is destroyed: it is the body, it is lust that takes command; the will becomes the slave of this shameful passion and soon rebels against God, Who forbids and punishes these unholy pleasures.

d) The sad effects of this surrender of the will are soon apparent: the mind becomes dull and weak because the vital forces are used up by the senses: taste for serious studies is lost; the imagination gravitates towards lower things; the heart gradually withers, hardens, and is attracted only by degrading pleasures. e) In some cases the physical frame itself is deeply affected: the nervous system, over-excited by such abuses, becomes irritated, weakened, and "incapable of fulfilling its mission of regulation and defence;"¹ the various bodily organs function but imperfectly; nutrition is improperly accomplished, strength is undermined and the danger of consumption threatens.

Evidently, a soul that has thus lost its balance, no longer thinks of perfection. It recedes from it daily, considering itself fortunate if it can gain control over itself at least in time to insure its salvation!

876. 3° **The Remedies.** To withstand so dangerous a passion, we need *deep convictions, protection against dangerous occasions, mortification and prayer.*

A) *Deep convictions* bearing at once upon the *necessity* of combatting this vice and upon the *possibility* of succeeding in the struggle.

¹ LAUMONIER, *op. cit.*, p. III.

a) What we have said about the gravity of the sin of lust shows how necessary it is to avoid it in order not to run the risk of everlasting punishment. To this we may add two motives furnished by St. Paul:¹ 1) We are the living temples of the Holy Trinity, temples hallowed by the presence of an all-holy God, and by a participation in the divine life (97, 106). Nothing so defiles this temple as the vice of impurity which desecrates both the body and the soul of the Christian. 2) We are the members of Jesus Christ, into Whom we have been incorporated by Baptism. We must, therefore, honor our body even as Christ's own body. And we would profane it by acts contrary to purity! Would not this be a sort of sacrilege? And to think that we would perpetrate it just to relish a vulgar pleasure which lowers us to the level of the brute!

877. b) Many say that continence is impossible. So thought St. Augustine before his conversion, but once converted to God and sustained by the example of the Saints and the grace of the Sacraments, he realized that all things are possible once we know how to pray and how to fight. The truth is that of ourselves we are so weak and the evil at times so alluring, that we would finally yield; but as long as we lean upon divine grace and make earnest efforts, we emerge victorious from the severest temptations. Let no one assert that continence in youth is detrimental to health. Honorable and notable physicians have refuted this in the resolutions of the Brussels International Congress:² "Young men must, above all, be taught that chastity and continence are not only not harmful, but even commendable from a purely medical and hygienic point of view." As a matter of fact, there is no known disease resulting from the practice of continence, whilst many are found to originate in the opposite vice.

878. B) **Avoidance of the occasions.** That chastity is preserved chiefly by fleeing dangerous occasions is an axiom with spiritual writers. When we realize our frailty, we do not run useless risks. As long as such occasions are not *necessary* they must be carefully avoided: "*He that loveth the danger shall perish in it.*"³ When it is question of readings, visits, meetings, dangerous entertainments from which we can exempt ourselves without any considerable inconvenience, there is no reason for hesitation; instead of looking for these we must flee from them as we would from a dangerous reptile. When these occasions *cannot be avoided*, then we must strengthen the will by interior dispositions that make the danger more remote. Thus St. Francis

¹ 1 Cor., III, 16; VI, 15-20.

² II^e Congrès de la Conf. internationale, 1902. Examine many other testimonials in *Le problème de la chasteté au point de vue scientifique* by F. ESCLANDE, 1919, p. 122-136.

³ Eccl., III, 27.

de Sales declares that if dances cannot be avoided they should at least be indulged in with modesty, self-respect, and good intentions.¹ How much more necessary is this today, when so many indecent dances are in vogue!

879. C) There are, however, occasions that cannot be avoided. They are those we daily encounter, whether in ourselves or in our surroundings, and which we can overcome only by mortification. We have already said in what this virtue consists, and how it is to be practiced, n. 754-815. We can but recall a few points connected more directly with the virtue of chastity.

a) The *eyes* should be especially guarded, for imprudent glances enkindle desires and these in turn entice the will. This is why Our Lord declares that "*whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart;*"² and He adds that if our right eye is to us an occasion of scandal it must be plucked out,³ that is to say, forcefully withdrawn from the object that scandalizes us. This modesty of the eyes becomes more imperative than ever today, since one is more liable to meet almost everywhere with persons and things apt to be a source of temptation.

b) The sense of *touch* is fraught with even more danger, for it provokes sensual impressions which easily tend towards illicit pleasure. Hence, one must abstain from such bodily contact or caresses as cannot but excite the passions.

c) As regards the *imagination* and the memory, let one follow the rules laid down in n. 781. As to the will, the task is to strengthen this faculty by a virile education according to the principles explained in n. 811-816.

880. d) The *heart* also must be mortified by struggling against whatever may be sentimental or dangerous in the domain of friendship (n. 600-604). Of course, a time comes when those looking forward to married life first fall in love. This love is lawful, but it must ever remain chaste and supernatural. Even engaged persons, then, should avoid all signs of affection that are not according to the rules of propriety and should bear in mind that their love, to be blessed by God, must be pure.

With regard to those who are as yet too young to think of marriage, they must be on their guard against that sentimental and sensual affection, which, whilst enervating the heart, prepares for dangerous surrenders. One cannot play with fire and not be scorched. Besides, if one expects that the heart pledged in marriage be pure, must one not offer a heart equally pure?

¹ *Introd. to A Devout Life*, III P., C. XXXIII.

² *Matth.*, V, 28. — ³ *Matth.*, V, 29.

881. e) Lastly, one of the most profitable forms of mortification is a constant and earnest application to the fulfilment of our *duties of state*. Idleness is an evil counsellor; work, on the contrary, by engaging the whole of our activity keeps our imagination, our mind, and our heart away from dangerous objects. We shall speak of this again in n. 887.

882. D) Prayer. a) The Council of Trent tells us that God does not command the impossible, but that He requires us to do what in our power lies and to pray in order to obtain the grace of accomplishing that which, of ourselves, we are incapable of performing.¹ This injunction holds particularly in matters of chastity, with regard to which most persons, even those in the holy state of marriage, encounter special difficulties. To overcome these, frequent prayer and the consideration of the great truths of religion are necessary. Such oft-repeated elevations of the soul towards God gradually wean us away from sensual pleasures and make us rise to joys that are pure and holy.

b) To prayer must be joined the *frequent reception of the Sacraments*. 1) When we *approach frequently the tribunal of penance*, making a frank avowal of faults and imprudences against purity, the grace of absolution, together with the counsels we receive, strengthen the will against temptation. 2) This grace is further increased through *frequent Communion*. The intimate union with Him Who is the God of all holiness cools the fires of concupiscence, awakens the soul to the reality of spiritual goods, and thus withdraws it from attachments to degrading pleasures. It was through frequent Confession and Communion that St. Philip Neri reclaimed youths addicted to the vice of impurity, and even to this day there is no more efficacious remedy either to preserve or to strengthen this virtue. If so many young men and young women escape contagion from vice, it is due to the fact that they find in religious practices an antidote to the temptations that surround them. No doubt, the use of these means of defence requires courage, earnestness and repeated effort, but with prayer, the Sacraments, and a determined will we can surmount all obstacles.

¹ Sess. VI, De Justificatione, C. XI.

§ III. Sloth¹

883. Sloth is connected with sensuality, for it proceeds from love of pleasure, inasmuch as it inclines us to avoid effort and hardship. There is in all of us a tendency to follow the line of least resistance, which paralyzes or lessens our activity. We shall explain: 1° the *nature* of sloth; 2° its *malice*; 3° its *remedies*.

884. 1° **Nature of sloth.** A) Sloth is an inclination to idleness or at least to aimlessness, to apathy in action. At times this is a *morbid disposition* due to poor condition of health. More frequently it is a *disease of the will*, which fears effort and recoils from it. The slothful want to escape all exertion, whatever might interfere with their comfort or involve fatigue. Like the real parasite, they live on others to whatever extent they can. Tractable and submissive as long as no one interferes with them, they become surly and peevish when one would rouse them from their inaction.

B) There are various degrees of sloth. a) The *indolent* man takes up his task reluctantly, and indifferently; what he does, he does badly. b) The sluggard does not absolutely refuse to work, but he delays and postpones indefinitely the accepted task. c) The truly lazy man wants to do nothing that proves irksome and shows a distinct aversion to all real work, whether physical or mental.

C) When sloth bears upon spiritual exercises it is called *spiritual sloth*. This consists in a species of dislike for things spiritual, which tends to make us negligent in the performance of our exercises of piety, causes us to shorten them or to omit them altogether for vain excuses. This is the foster-parent of lukewarmness, of which we shall speak when treating of the *illuminative way*.

885. 2° **Malice of sloth.** A) To understand the malice of sloth we have to remember that man was made to labor. When God created our first parents, he placed them in a garden of delights, "*to dress it and to keep it.*"² This is because man, unlike God, is not a perfect being, having many faculties which must act in order to be perfected. Hence, it is a *necessity* of man's *nature* that he should labor to cultivate his powers, to provide for his physical and spiritual wants and thus tend towards his goal. The law of work, therefore, is antecedent to original sin. But because man sinned, work has become for him not merely a law of nature, but also a *punishment*, in the sense that work has become

¹ St. THOM., II^a II^æ, q. 35; de *Malo*, q. II; NOEL ALEXANDRE, *op. cit.*, p. 1148-1170; MELCHIOR CANO, *Victoire sur soi-même*, ch. X; FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, XIV; LAUMONIER, *op. cit.*, ch. III; VUILLERMET, *Soyez des hommes*, Paris, 1908, XI, p. 185. — ² *Gen.*, II, 15.

burdensome and a means of repairing sin; it is in the sweat of our brow that we must eat our bread, the food of the mind as well as that of the body.¹

The slothful man fails in this twofold obligation imposed both by natural and positive law; he *sins* more or less grievously according to the gravity of the duties he neglects. a) When he goes so far as to neglect the *religious* duties necessary to his salvation or sanctification, there is *grievous* fault, and so also when he wilfully neglects, in matters of importance, any of his *duties of state*. b) As long as this torpor causes him to fail in civil or religious duties of lesser moment, the sin is but venial. However, the downward grade is slippery, and if we do not struggle against sloth it soon becomes more dangerous, more baneful and more reprehensible.

886. B) Because of its baneful *consequences*, spiritual sloth constitutes one of the most serious obstacles to *perfection*.

a) It makes life more or less *barren*. One can well apply to the soul what the Scripture says of the field of the slothful man:

"I passed by the field of the slothful man,
and by the vineyard of the foolish man:
And behold it was filled with nettles, and
thorns had covered the face thereof, and
the stone wall was broken down.....
Thou wilt sleep a little, said I,
Thou wilt slumber a little;
Thou wilt fold thy hands a little to rest:
And poverty shall come to thee as a runner:
And beggary as an armed man."²

Indeed, this is what one finds in the soul of the slothful man: instead of virtues, vices thrive there, and the walls which mortification had raised to protect virtue, crumble little by little, and open a breach for the enemy, sin, to enter in.

887. b) *Temptations* soon become more importunate and more besetting: "For idleness hath taught much evil."³ It was idleness and pride that brought Sodom low: "Behold this was the iniquity of Sodom thy sister, pride, fulness of bread and abundance and the idleness of her and of her daughters."⁴ Man's heart and man's mind cannot for long remain inactive; unless they be engaged by study

¹ *Gen.*, III, 19. — ² *Prov.*, XXIV, 30-34.
³ *Eccles.*, XXXIII, 29. — ⁴ *Ezech.*, XVI, 49.

or other work, they are soon filled with a host of fancies, thoughts, desires and emotions. In the state of fallen nature, what has full sway within us when we do not react against it, is the threefold concupiscence. Sensual, ambitious, proud, egotistical, selfish thoughts then gain the upper hand and expose us to sin.¹

888. C) Our eternal salvation therefore and not merely our perfection is here at stake; for besides the actual faults into which idleness causes us to fall, the mere fact of failing to fulfil important duties incumbent upon us, is sufficient cause for reprobation. We have been created to serve God and to fulfil our duties of state. We are laborers sent by God to work in His vineyard; but an employer does not ask his employees simply to abstain from doing harm; he wants them to work. Therefore, if without doing anything positive against the divine law, we fold our arms instead of working, will not the Master upbraid our slothfulness? "Why stand ye all the day idle?"² The barren tree, by the mere fact that it bears no fruit, deserves to be cut down and thrown into the flames: "*Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire.*"³

889. Remedies. A) To reclaim the slothful it is necessary first of all to form in them strong *convictions* concerning the necessity of work; to make them understand that both the rich and the poor come under this law, and that its infringement may involve eternal damnation. This is the lesson given us by Our Lord in the parable of the barren fig-tree: for three years the owner came seeking fruit from it, and finding none, he ordered it to be cut down: "*Cut it down therefore. Why cumbereth it the ground?*"⁴

Let no one say: I am rich, I need not work. If you are not obliged to work for yourself, you must do it for others. God, your Lord and Master commands you; if He has given you strength, brains, a good mind, resources, it is in order that you may employ them for His glory and the welfare of your brethren. And, indeed, the opportunities are not lacking: how many poor need aid, how many ignorant need instruction, how many broken hearts are there to be comforted, what openings are offered for the carrying out of projects that would give work and daily bread to those who have neither! And, does not the rearing of a large family entail labor and toil if the future of the children is to be safeguarded? Let us keep in mind the universal law of Christian fellowship whereby the toil of each is the service of all; whilst sloth is detrimental to the common weal and to our individual welfare.

¹ MELCHIOR CANO, *La Victoire sur soi-même*, ch. X.
² *Matth.*, XX, 6. — ³ *Matth.*, III, 10. — ⁴ *Luke*, XIII, 7.

890. B) Besides having convictions, it is necessary to make a *sustained and intelligent effort* in accordance with the rules laid down, n. 812, for the training of the will. Since the slothful instinctively shrink from effort, they must be shown that in point of fact there is no creature more wretched than the idle man; not knowing how to employ, or as he himself says, how to kill time, he is a burden to himself, all things bore him, and he becomes wearied of life itself. Is it not preferable to exert ourselves, to become useful, and secure some real contentment by striving to make those around us happy?

Among the slothful there are those that do expend a certain amount of activity at play, sport, and worldly gatherings. These must be reminded of the serious side of life and of the duty incumbent upon them of making themselves useful in order that they may turn their activities into worthier fields of action, and conceive a horror of being mere parasites. Christian marriage with its attendant obligations frequently proves an excellent remedy for sloth. Parents realize the necessity of working for their offspring and the inadvisability of entrusting to strangers the care of their interests.

What one must constantly bear in mind is the *end of life*: we are here below in order to attain, through work and virtue, a place in heaven. God is ever addressing to us these words: "*Why stand you here all the day idle?..... Go you also into my vineyard.*"¹

ART. III. AVARICE²

Avarice is related to the *concupiscence of the eyes*, of which we have spoken in n. 199. We shall explain: 1° its *nature*, 2° its *malice*, 3° its *remedies*.

891. 1° Nature of Avarice. Avarice is *the inordinate love of earthly goods*. To point out wherein the *disorder* lies, we must first recall the end for which God has given man temporal goods.

A) God's purpose is twofold: our own personal benefit and that of our brethren.

a) Earthly goods are given us to minister to our temporal needs of body and soul, to preserve our life and the life of those dependent upon us, and to procure the means of cultivating our mind and developing our other faculties.

¹ *Matth.*, XX, 6, 7.

² St. THOMAS, II^a II^a, q. 118; *de Malo*, q. 113; MELCHIOR CANO, *op. cit.*, ch. XII-XIII; MASSILLON, *Discours synodaux*, De l'avarice des prêtres; MONSABRÉ, *Retraites pascales*, 1892-1894: Les idoles, la richesse; LAUMONIER, *op. cit.*, ch. VIII.

Among these goods: 1) some are *necessary* for the present or the future: it is our duty to acquire them through honest work; 2) others are *useful* in order that we may gradually increase our resources, safeguard our welfare or that of others, contribute to the common good by promoting the arts or sciences. It is not at all forbidden to desire these for a good purpose, so long as we give a due share to the poor and to good works.

b) These goods are also given us that we may aid those of our brethren who are in need. We are, therefore, in a measure *God's stewards*, and should use our superfluous goods for the relief of the poor.

892. B) Now we can more easily show wherein lies the **disorder** in the love of earthly goods.

a) At times it lies in the *intention*: we desire wealth for its own sake, as an end in itself, or for other purposes which we ourselves set up as our ultimate end, for instance, to seek pleasures or honors. If we stop there and do not see in riches means to higher ends, then we are guilty of a sort of *idolatry*; we worship the golden calf; we live but for money.

b) The *disorder* further manifests itself in the *manner of seeking* riches: we pursue them with eagerness, by all kinds of means, regardless of the rights of others, to the detriment of our health or that of our employees, by hazardous speculation at the risk of losing all our savings.

c) The disorder likewise shows itself in the *way we use money*: 1) we spend it reluctantly and in a niggardly manner, because we wish to accumulate it in order to feel more secure, or to wield the influence that comes with riches. 2) We give little or nothing to the poor and to good works. To *increase our capital* becomes the supreme end of life. 3) Some reach the point where they love their money as an idol, they love to hoard it, to feel it: this is the classical type known as the miser.

893. C) Avarice is not generally a vice of youth, which as yet thoughtless and improvident, does not dream of hoarding money. There are, however, exceptions found among young people who are by character gloomy, worrisome, crafty. But it is rather in middle life or old age that this fault shows itself, for it is then that the fear of *want* develops, based sometimes upon the thought of sickness or accidents that might incapacitate for work. Bachelors and spinsters are particularly exposed to avarice, because they have no offspring to care for them in their old age.

894. D) Modern civilization has developed another form of this insatiable love of riches, plutocracy, the hankering thirst for becoming millionaires or multi-millionaires, not in order to safeguard one's future or that of one's family, but to attain the power and control which money gives. Vast sums at one's command secure a vast influence,

a power oftentimes more effective than that of governments. Iron-, steel-, oil-magnates, money-kings, rule sovereigns as well as peoples. This reign of gold often degenerates into intolerable tyranny.

895. 2^o The Malice of Avarice. A) Avarice is a sign of *mistrust in God*, Who has promised to watch over us with the care of a father, and not to allow us to lack the things we need, provided we trust in Him. He would have us consider "the birds of the air that sow not nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and the lilies of the field that labor not, neither do they spin."¹ This is not to encourage us to sloth, but to calm our anxieties and urge us to place our confidence in our Heavenly Father.² But the avaricious man instead of putting his trust in God, puts it in the abundance of his riches, and insults God by distrusting Him: "*Behold the man that made not God his helper: But trusted in the abundance of his riches and prevailed in his vanity.*"³ This lack of confidence in God is accompanied by too great a confidence in self and personal efforts; man wants to be his own *providence* and thus he falls into a species of idolatry making money his god. Now, no man can serve two masters, God and Wealth: "*You cannot serve God and mammon.*"⁴

This sin is of *itself* grave for the reasons just adduced. It is likewise grave when it causes one to infringe upon important rights of others through the employment of fraudulent means to obtain and retain wealth; to sin against *charity* by omitting necessary almsgiving, or to fail against *religion*, by allowing oneself to become so absorbed in business that one disregards religious duties. It constitutes but a venial sin when it does not cause one to fail in any of the great Christian virtues, duties to God included.

896. B) With regard to *perfection*, the inordinate love of riches is a very serious obstacle.

a) It is a passion that tends to *supplant God in the human heart*. That heart which is God's temple is crowded with all sorts of desires bent upon the things of earth, filled with all sorts of anxieties and distracting preoccupations. Yet, to effect our union with God, we must empty our heart of all creatures, of all worldly cares; for God wants "the whole soul, the whole heart, the whole time, the whole activity of his wretched creatures."⁵ We must, above all, empty the heart of all pride; but attachment to riches develops pride, since we place greater confidence in our riches than in our God.

¹ *Matth.*, VI, 26-28. — ² *Matth.*, VII, 24-34. — ³ *Ps.* LI, 9. — ⁴ *Matth.*, VI, 24.
⁵ OLIER, *Introd. aux vertus*, c. II.

To fasten our heart on riches is to hinder the love of God, for *where our heart is there is also our treasure.*¹ To detach the heart from riches is to lay it open to God. A soul despoiled of riches has God for its possessions; *its wealth is the wealth of God Himself.*

b) Avarice also leads to lack of mortification and to sensuality, for when we have money and love it, we either wish to enjoy the pleasures that money can procure, or if we forego these pleasures, our heart clings to the money itself. In either case money becomes an idol that makes us turn away from God.

897. 3^o Remedies of Avarice. A) The great remedy is the profound conviction, resting upon reason and faith, that wealth is not an end, but a *means* given us by Providence to provide for our needs and those of our brethren; that God ever remains the Sovereign Master of all; that we are in truth but administrators who must one day render an account to the Sovereign Judge. Riches moreover are goods that *pass away* with time, goods we cannot take along with us into the next world. If we are wise, we shall lay up treasures not for this world but for eternity. "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust and moth consume and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."²

B) The most effective way of detaching ourselves from riches is to *invest our wealth in the bank of heaven* by giving generously to the poor and to good works. A gift to the poor is a loan to God; it yields a hundredfold even in this world, in the joys which come to us from giving happiness to those around us. But above all, it yields a hundredfold for heaven, where Christ, considering as given to Himself what we have bestowed upon the least of His children, will take care to give us imperishable goods in exchange for those we sacrificed for Him. The truly *wise*, therefore, are those who exchange the treasures of this earth for those of glory. To seek God and holiness is the sum-total of Christian prudence: "*Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice: and all these things shall be added unto you.*"³

898. C) Perfect souls go further: they sell all to give to the poor, or they renounce all ownership by the religious vow of poverty, or they retain their capital but use the

¹ *Matth.*, VI, 21. — ² *Matth.*, VI, 19-20. — ³ *Matth.*, VI, 33.

income only according to the advice of a wise spiritual director, and thus while they remain in the state in which God's providence has placed them, they live in the practice of detachment of mind and heart.

CONCLUSION

899. Thus the struggle against the seven capital sins uproots the inordinate tendencies of the threefold concupiscence. No doubt, there will always remain in us some of those tendencies to try our patience and to remind us of our weakness, but they will prove less dangerous, and, aided by God's grace, we shall overcome them more easily. In spite of our efforts temptations will arise in the soul but it will be to give us occasions of gaining new victories.

CHAPTER V

The Struggle against Temptation

900. Notwithstanding the efforts we put forth to eradicate vice, we must expect temptations. We have spiritual foes, the world, the flesh, and the devil, n. 193-227, which cease not to lay snares for us. It is necessary, therefore, to treat here of *temptation in general* and of *the chief temptations of beginners*.

ART. I. TEMPTATION IN GENERAL¹

901. Temptation is a *solicitation to evil on the part of our spiritual foes*. We shall explain: 1^o The *providential purposes* of temptation. 2^o The *psychology* of temptation. 3^o The *attitude* we must take towards temptation.

I. The Providential Purposes of Temptation

902. God Himself does not tempt us directly: "Let no man, when he is tempted, say that he is tempted by God. For God is not a tempter of evils: and he tempteth no man."¹ But He allows us to be tempted by our spiritual enemies, at the same time giving us the graces necessary to

¹ RODRIGUEZ, *Prat. de la perfect.*, II^e Part., 3^e Tr.; ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Devout Life*, P. IV, C. III-X; SCARAMELLI, *Guide ascét.*, t. II, art. X; SCHRAM, *Instit. theol. myst.*, § CXXXVII-CXLIX; MEYER, S. J., *Science of the Saints*, IV; FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, XVI; DE LEHEN, *The Way of Interior Peace*, P. III, C. IV; P. DE SMEDT, *Notre vie surnat.*, III^e P., ch. III; RIBET, *L'Ascétique*, ch. X; MGR. GAY, *Vie et vertus chrét.*, t. I, tr. VIII; DOM LEHODEY, *Le saint Abandon*, p. 332-343; BRUNETEAU, *Les Tentations du jeune homme*, 1912.

² James, I, 13.