

A Catholic Viewpoint on the Four Temperaments

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Introduction

We begin with a short consideration from Father Scaramelli, who died in 1752. He wrote a four volume work, Directorium Asceticum, which is an excellent treatise on the spiritual life. He touches on the four temperaments briefly.

We will expand with the thoughts of Father John Henry Schagemann CSSR from his work, Manual of Self-Knowledge and Christian Perfection. This work is in two parts the first on the Four Temperaments and the balance is a excellent summary of the spiritual life. The first part of this 1913 work is reproduced here.

The balance of this work is inspired by Konrad Hock, who wrote The Four Temperaments.

There is a great deal of interest in self-examination in these days and the four temperaments are a great guide to understanding ourselves, our strengths and our weaknesses. Some misuse this information in order to find an excuse for sin, but there is no excuse for sin. Knowing our temperament, we can know where our strengths and weaknesses lie and with the help of God over come our weaknesses and build upon our strengths

The four temperaments are based upon the four humors ancient philosophers believed exist in the human body:

Melancholy, (Melancholic)

Phlem, (Plegmatic)

Blood (Sanguine)

Choler (Choleric or Billious)

We begin with a test to determine our temperament, so we can know where we stand entering into our study.

What Is My Temperament?

To help you discover your temperament. Be completely honest in answering the questions. They refer to your natural inclinations rather than your present practice, acquired by effort and self control. The numbers added at the end will give the key to the respective temperament.

Please circle yes or no. At the end there is a list of which traits belong to each temperament, so you can see what your predominant temperament is.

1. Are you quickly excited at offenses and feel inclined to retaliate and oppose insult immediately? Yes No
Temperament:
2. Do you look at life always from a serious side? Yes No
Temperament:
3. Do you easily lose confidence in your fellow men? Yes No
Temperament:
4. Are you greatly inclined to flatter those whom you love? Yes No Temperament:
5. Are you won by quiet explanation of reasons and motives, but embittered and driven to strong resistance by harsh commands? Yes No Temperament:
6. Do you love company and amusements? Yes No
Temperament:
7. Does your thinking easily turn into reflection which may stir you up profoundly, yet not let your excitement be noted outwardly? Yes No Temperament:
8. Are vehemently provoked by disorder or injustice? Yes No Temperament:
9. Do you have, and show, very little interest in what goes on about you? Yes No Temperament:
10. Do you find it hard to trust people, and are you always afraid that others have a grudge against you? Yes No
Temperament:
11. Do you dislike repletion, and are you easily distracted? Yes No Temperament:
12. Do you usually not feel an offense, at the moment, but feel it so much more keenly a few hours later, or even the next day? Yes No Temperament:
13. Is it very hard for you to deny yourself some favorites food? Yes No Temperament:

14. Do you easily get angered by an offense, but you are soon pleasant again? Yes No Temperament:
15. Are you a person of enthusiasm, i.e., are you not satisfied with the ordinary, but aspire after great and lofty things, temporal or spiritual? Yes No Temperament:
16. Are you unwilling to admit a weakness or a defeat, and consequently try to deceive others, even by outright lies? Yes No Temperament:
17. Do you love silence and solitude and seclusion from crowds? Yes No Temperament:
18. Do you easily become jealous, envious or uncharitable? Yes No Temperament:
19. Do you feel happy when in a position to command? Yes No Temperament:
20. Do you spend much time in deliberating, yet reach decisions only with difficulty? Yes No Temperament:
21. Do you like to be flattered? Yes No Temperament:
22. Do you easily complain of insignificant, ailments and constantly fear grave sickness? Yes No Temperament:
23. Are you very much inclines to ease, to eating and drinking? Yes No Temperament:
24. Do you feel discouraged by difficulties in your undertakings? Yes No Temperament:
25. Do you find it difficult to form new acquaintances, to speak among strangers, to find the right words to express your sentiments? Yes No Temperament:
26. Do you pay keen attention to your appearance and that of others; to a beautiful face, to fine and modern clothes? Yes No Temperament:
27. Do you persevere under great difficulties, until you reach your goal? Yes No Temperament:
28. Do you become suspicious and reticent by a rude word or an unfriendly mien? Yes No Temperament:
29. Is it very hard to guard your eyes, ears, tongue and keep silent? Yes No Temperament:
30. Are you loathe to appear in public and to be praised? Yes No Temperament:
31. Do you allow others to be preferred to you, but at the same time feel slighted because you are being ignored? Yes No Temperament:

32. Do you dislike, even hate, caresses and sentimentality?
Yes No Temperament:
33. Can you be heartless, even cruel, in regard to the sufferings of others, even trample cold-bloodedly upon the welfare of others, if you cannot otherwise reach your goal? Yes No Temperament:
34. Do you have little inclination to work, preferring repose and leisure? Yes No Temperament:
35. Do you lack perseverance; does interest in things fade quickly? Yes No Temperament:
36. Are you inclined to inordinate intimacy and flirtation?
Yes No Temperament:
37. Do you lack courage in correcting people; it may show itself in these two forms: a) you go about it so carefully and tenderly that it can hardly be called a correction, or b) you shout your correction excited and angrily? Yes No Temperament:
38. Do you see everything, hear, and talk about everything?
Yes No Temperament:
39. Do you love light work which attracts attention, where there is no need of deep thinking or great effort? Yes No Temperament:
40. Do you consider yourself as Somebody; as extraordinary, as always right, and not needing the help of others? Yes No Temperament:
41. Do you belittle, or by remarks and unfair means even persecute those who dare oppose you? Yes No Temperament:
42. Can you quickly pass from tears to laughter and vice versa? Yes No Temperament:
43. Are you easily captivated by every new idea or mood?
Yes No Temperament:
44. Do you love variety in everything? Yes No Temperament:
45. Do you remain composed, thoughtful, deliberate, with a sober and practical judgment, in the face of suffering failure, offenses? Yes No Temperament:
46. Do you like to poke fun at others, tease them, play trick on them? Yes No Temperament:
47. Does a strong aversion easily take root in your heart against persons from whom you have suffered or in

whom you find fault, sometime so strong that you do not want to speak to them or cannot stand the sight of them without new excitement? Yes No Temperament:

48. Do you get vehemently excited by contradiction, resistance, and personal offenses, and do you show this excitement in harsh words which may be, and sound like being polite, yet hurt to the core? Yes No Temperament:
49. Which of these dispositions are yours (check one or two):
- obstinacy, anger, pride _____
 - sloth, lack of energy? _____
 - lack of courage, dread of suffering? _____
 - talkativeness, inconsistency? _____
50. Which of these good traits come natural to you (check one or two):
- good nature, repose of mind? _____
 - sympathy for others, love for solitude and prayer? _____
 - strong will, energy, fearlessness, ambition? _____
 - Cheerfulness, facility to get along well with difficult people? _____

Some of the preceding questions refer to two or more temperaments: they are overlapping.

The choleric temperament is indicated by the following numbers: 1, 5, 8, 15, 16, 19, 27, 32, 33, 40, 41, 47, 48, 49a, 50c

The sanguine temperament: 4, 6, 11, 13, 14, 20, 21, 24, 26, 29, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 42, 44, 46, 49d, 50d

The melancholic temperament: 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 28, 30, 31, 37, 47, 49c, 50b

The phlegmatic temperament: 9, 23, 34, 35, 45, 49b, 50a

Introductions

Directorium Asceticum

The Director must observe, that in order to treat his penitents wisely, it is necessary to be acquainted with the nature of their temperament, and to know how to adapt himself to their disposition. A carver must know the qualities of the various woods in which he wishes to work: that some are soft, some hard, some knotty, some easily split, and some apt to splinter; otherwise, being mistaken in the material, he will not be able to carry on his work. So, too, a Spiritual Director will not succeed in leading his penitents to Christian perfection, if he do not understand their different temperaments, and if he fail to adapt with great prudence his direction to the individual character of each one.

There are four temperaments, the Melancholic, the Phlegmatic, the Sanguine, and the Choleric. They correspond to the four elements, earth, water, air, fire, and thus they have the properties of these elements. Hence, from the qualities of the elements, we may easily arrive at a knowledge of the defects to which these temperaments are subject.

Manual of Self-Knowledge and Christian Perfection

On Temperaments in General

Alexander E. Sanford, M. D., in "Pastoral Medicine," says on page 266: "Within the last few decades the nervous diseases in their thousandfold shapes have increased to an alarming extent." And again on page 316: "Many a time it will become evident that the manifest inappetency for work, the reduced capability, the mental palsy, plain to all, the striking absence of mind, the inattention and apathy at school, bashful and reserved ways, that slight inclination to gloominess, that wavering of the whole demeanor, that all these are not character traits, but a consequence of the conflict, the defensive struggle, which the poor tortured has to wage with the torturing process within." Rev. Joseph Antonelli, Doctor and Professor, remarks that nervousness at the present day is so prevalent that scarcely one among a thousand is normal.

Nevertheless, not all is disease. There are temperaments, as the majority of authors admit. It is necessary to distinguish in each individual case between character traits and neurasthenia.¹ The different dispositions and propensities in the human body naturally influence the affections of the soul. This influence impresses a constant type or stamp on his actions. This is called temperament. All around us we see nature furnishing materials. Many are imperfect, possibly almost useless. Art must intervene. Labor must render perfect. The same is true of temperament. Every one should endeavor to perfect the temperament given by God. Man must hew away what is rough. Man must reform what is amiss. Man must perfect what is good. Then all will redound to the great profit of the soul and will be of real service to others.

Rothenflue remarks that the temperaments are always intermingled, yet, so that one generally predominates. Thus, no temperament stands alone. The predominant temperament is intermixed with the character traits of one or more of the other temperaments. Besides the natural dispositions of a man, his temperament may also be greatly influenced by climate, surroundings, education and advancing years. In fact, it may change in the progress of time. Then, too, as Rothenflue further remarks, one temperament

¹ Neurasthenia is a psycho-pathological term first used by George Miller Beard in 1869 to denote a condition with symptoms of fatigue, anxiety, headache, neuralgia and depressed mood.

possesses more happy traits than another. He says the most happy temperament is that one in which none predominates, where one counterbalances the other. Such a one is, as it were, born for a virtuous life. Yet, he and all philosophers maintain, no matter how unhappy one's temperament, man can, with a determined will, correct and modify it. Ascetical writers tell us this can be done better still by means of a good will united to the grace of God. God certainly grants His grace to all of good will. St. Augustine tells us it is our duty to correspond to the grace that God offers. God will enable us to attain our end, namely, union with Him by charity. The misfortune is, so few are willing to make the proper effort. Thus, they become useless both to themselves and others. Let every one then endeavor to obtain true self-knowledge in order to attain to the union with God by charity.

No one need be discouraged. Every one should set to work with a determined will. A good will in union with the grace of God will accomplish everything. Next, every one should also be content with the temperament God has given him. No matter how unhappy the temperament, every one can attain, not only salvation, but also Christian perfection. As soon as man has obtained true self-knowledge, he has accomplished one-half of the task. Then, it remains for him to put into operation the means to obtain the love of God. It would, however, be a great error to imagine that this can be accomplished at once. On the contrary, this is a task, a labor that will occupy him the balance of his days. Some resemble a certain class of sick people. When an infirmity seizes them, they readily take a few doses of medicine. Then they find they are not cured. In their impatience they blame the physician with a want of knowledge and insist there is no virtue in the medicine prescribed. Let no one imagine he can attain perfection at once. How many years does not the student employ in hard study, oftentimes fraught with poverty and privation, before he can become a lawyer, physician or architect!

What wonder then that we discover numberless defects when we proceed to obtain self-knowledge. In the spiritual life, also, years of toil, exertion and disappointments are to be met. In connection herewith one instance from the lives of the Fathers of the Desert may be cited. St. Isidore, one of the disciples of St. Anthony, is the one selected. Some time after he had been elevated to the priestly dignity, he became Superior of the Religious of the Desert of Scete. This saint had a special talent from God to heal the maladies of the soul. Whenever other Superiors were in favor of dismissing any of their subjects on account of negligence, slothfulness, impatience, passion or

other defects, he desired that they be brought to him. By treating them with his usual charity, humility and patience, he generally brought them to a right sense of their duty and in time cured them effectually of all their vices and faults. This is a universal experience. No one can flatter himself that he is perfect in the beginning of his career. Some lose courage and because of cowardice give up the combat little by little, as did some disciples of St. Isidore. Again, it will require a long struggle, this fight against sins, faults, and imperfections. Only those conquer that persevere resolutely, for, even St. Isidore could not accomplish everything at once. In some instances he could accomplish nothing. The incident also goes to show that assistance of the spiritual director renders the one directed not only secure, but is at the same time most valuable, because encouraging. More than this, it is the only means to obtain certainty that we are on the road to perfection. Lastly, should it appear surprising that so much is said on temperaments, the following may serve as answer. Rev. P. Vercruyse, S.J., says: "To gain our souls the Good Shepherd accommodates Himself to our inclinations, frailties and humors. Examine your past! Possibly you will discover many instances of the Divine Goodness and Meekness accommodating Itself to your character, temperament, desires and inclinations." (Meditation for the Thursday after the third Sunday after Easter). If Our Lord takes into consideration our temperament, etc., it will not be amiss on our part to act similarly.

The Four Temperaments

Introduction

Socrates, one of the most renowned of the Greek sages, used and taught as an axiom to his hearers: "Know thyself."

One of the most reliable means of learning to know oneself is the study of the temperaments. For if a man knows and understands his temperament, he can learn easily to direct and control himself. If he is able to discern the temperament of others, he can better understand and help them.

I. The Four Temperaments in General

If we consider the reaction of various persons to the same experience, we will find that it is different in every one of them; it may be quick and lasting, or slow but lasting; or it may be quick but of short duration, or slow and of short duration. This manner of reaction, or the different degrees of excitability, is what we call "temperament." There are four temperaments: the choleric, the melancholic, the sanguine, and the phlegmatic.

The sanguine temperament is marked by quick but shallow, superficial excitability; the choleric by quick but strong and lasting; the melancholic temperament by slow but deep; the phlegmatic by slow but shallow excitability. The first two are also called extroverts, outgoing; the last two are introverts or reserved.

Temperament, then, is a Fundamental Disposition of the soul, which manifests itself whenever an impression is made upon the mind, be that impression caused by thought -by thinking about something or by representation through the imagination -or by external stimuli. Knowledge of the temperament of any person supplies the answer to the questions: How does this person deport himself? How does he feel moved to action whenever something impresses him strongly? For instance, how does he react, when he is praised or rebuked, when he is offended, when he feels sympathy for or aversion against somebody? Or, to use another example, how does he act if in a storm, or in a dark forest, or on a dark night the thought of imminent danger comes to him?

On such occasions one may ask the following questions:

1. Is the person under the influence of such impressions, thoughts, or facts, quickly and vehemently excited, or only slowly and superficially?

2. Does the person under such influences feel inclined to act at once, quickly, in order to oppose the impression; or does he feel more inclined to remain calm and to wait?

3. Does the excitement of the soul last for a long time or only for a moment? Does the impression continue, so that at the recollection of such impression the excitement is renewed? Or does he conquer such excitement speedily and easily, so that the remembrance of it does not produce a new excitement?

The replies to these questions direct us to the four temperaments and furnish the key for the understanding of the temperament of each individual.

The choleric person is quickly and vehemently excited by any impression made; he tends to react immediately, and the impression lasts a long time and easily induces new excitement.

The person of sanguine temperament, like the choleric, is quickly and strongly excited by the slightest impression, and tends to react immediately, but the impression does not last; it soon fades away.

The melancholic individual is at first only slightly excited by any impression received; a reaction does not set in at all or only after some time. But the impression remains deeply rooted, especially if new impressions of the same kind are repeated.

The phlegmatic person is only slightly excited by any impression made upon him; he has scarcely any inclination to react, and the impression vanishes quickly.

The choleric and sanguine temperaments are active, the melancholic and phlegmatic temperaments are passive. The choleric and sanguine show a strong tendency to action; the melancholic and phlegmatic, on the contrary, are inclined to slow movement.

The choleric and melancholic temperaments are of a passionate nature; they shake the very soul and act like an earthquake. The sanguine and phlegmatic are passionless temperaments; they do not lead to great and lasting mental excitement.

II. How To Determine One's Temperament

In order to determine one's temperament, it is not wise to study the bright or dark sides of each temperament and to apply them to oneself; one should first and foremost attempt to answer the three questions mentioned above.

1. Do I react immediately and vehemently or slowly and superficially to a strong impression made upon me?
2. Am I inclined to act at once or to remain calm and to wait?
3. Does the excitement last for a long time or only for a short while?

Another very practical way to determine one's temperament consists in considering one's reactions to offenses, by asking these questions:

Can I forgive when offended?

Do I bear grudges and resent insults?

If one must answer: usually I cannot forget insults, I brood over them; to think of them excites me anew; I can bear a grudge a long time, several days, nay, weeks if somebody has offended me; I try to avoid those who have offended me, refuse to speak to them, etc., then, one is either of choleric or melancholic temperament.

If on the contrary the answer is: I do not harbor ill will; I cannot be angry with anybody for a long time; I forget even actual insults very soon; sometimes I decide to show anger, but I cannot do so, at least not for a long time, at most an hour or two -if such is the answer, then one is either sanguine or phlegmatic.

After having recognized that one is of the choleric or melancholic temperament the following questions should be answered:

Am I quickly excited at offenses; do I manifest my resentment by words or action?

Do I feel inclined to oppose an insult immediately and retaliate?

Or: Do I at offenses received remain calm outwardly in spite of internal excitement?

Am I frightened by offenses, disturbed, despondent, so that I do not find the right words nor the courage for a reply, and therefore, remain silent?

Does it happen repeatedly that I hardly feel the offense at the moment when I receive it, but a few hours later, or even the following day, feel it so much more keenly?

In the first case, the person is choleric; in the second, melancholic.

Upon ascertaining that one's temperament is either sanguine or phlegmatic one must inquire further:

Am I suddenly inflamed with anger at offenses received; do I feel inclined to flare up and to act rashly?

Or: Do I remain quiet? Indifferent? Am I not easily swayed by my feelings?

In the first case we are sanguine, in the second, phlegmatic.

It is very important, and indeed necessary to determine, first of all, one's basic temperament by answering these questions, to be able to refer the various symptoms of the different temperaments to their proper source. Only then can self-knowledge be deepened to a full realization of how far the various light and dark sides of one's temperament are developed, and of the modifications and variations one's predominant temperament may have undergone by mixing with another temperament.

It is usually considered very difficult to recognize one's own temperament or that of another person. Experience, however, teaches that with proper guidance, even persons of moderate education can quite easily learn to know their own temperament and that of associates and subordinates.

Greater difficulties, however, arise in discovering the temperament in the following instances:

1. A person is habitually given over to sin. In such cases the sinful passion influences man more than the temperament; for instance, a sanguine person, who by nature is very much inclined to live in peace and harmony with others can become very annoying and cause great trouble by giving way to envy and anger.

2. A person has progressed very far on the path of perfection. In such cases the Dark Sides of the temperament, as they manifest themselves, usually, in ordinary persons, can hardly be noticed at all. Thus, St. Ignatius Loyola, who by nature was passionately choleric, had conquered his passion to such an extent, that externally he appeared to be a man without passions and was often looked upon as a pure phlegmatic. In the sanguine but saintly Francis de Sales, the heat of momentary, irate excitement, proper to his sanguine temperament.

was completely subdued, but only at the cost of continual combat for years against his natural disposition.

Saintly people of melancholic temperament never allow their naturally sad, morose, discouraging temperament to show itself, but by a look upon their crucified Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, conquer quickly these unpleasant moods.

3. A person possesses only slight knowledge of himself. He neither recognizes his good or evil disposition, nor does he understand the intensity of his own evil inclinations and the degree of his excitability; consequently he will not have a clear idea of his temperament. If anyone tries to assist him to know himself by questioning him, he gives false answers, not intentionally, but simply because he does not know himself. If such persons begin to devote themselves to a more spiritual life, they can usually acquire a fairly reliable diagnosis of their temperament only after they have practiced meditation and examination of conscience for some length of time.

4. A person is very nervous. With such persons the signs of nervousness, as restlessness, irritability, inconstancy of humor and resolution, the inclination to melancholy and discouragement, manifest themselves so forcibly that the symptoms of temperament are more or less obscured. It is especially difficult to discern the temperament of hysterical persons, if the so-called hysterical character is already fully developed.

5. A person has a so called mixed temperament. Mixed temperaments are those in which one temperament predominates while another temperament also manifests itself. It will be a great help in such cases to know the temperaments of the parents of such person. If father and mother are of the same temperament, the children will probably inherit the temperament of the parents. If father and mother are of a choleric temperament, the children will also be choleric. If, however, the father and mother are of different temperaments, the children will inherit the different temperaments. If, for instance, the father is of a choleric temperament and the mother melancholic, the children will be either choleric with a melancholic mixture, or melancholic with a choleric tendency, according to the degree of influence of either of the two parents. In order to learn the predominant temperament, it is absolutely necessary to follow closely the above-mentioned questions concerning the temperaments. But it also happens, although not so often as many believe, that in one person two temperaments are so mixed that both are equally strong.

In this case it is naturally very hard to judge with which temperament the respective person is to be classified. It is probable, however, that in the course of time, e.g. on occasion of ordeals or difficulties one of the temperaments will manifest itself predominantly.

A very valuable help for the discernment of the mixed, and especially of the pure, temperaments is the expression of the eye and more or less the manner in which a person walks. The eye of the choleric is resolute, firm, energetic, fiery; the eye of the sanguine is cheerful, friendly, and careless; the eye of the melancholic looks more or less sad and troubled; the eye of the phlegmatic is faint, devoid of expression.

The choleric steps up firmly, resolutely, is more or less always in a hurry; the sanguine is light-footed and quick, his walking is often like dancing; the gait of the melancholic is slow and heavy; that of the phlegmatic is lazy and sluggish.

The expression of the eye rather quickly reveals the choleric temperament (the well-known type of Napoleon, Bismarck) and the temperament of the melancholic (perhaps the Cure of Ars). If, from the expression of the eye neither the resoluteness and energy of the choleric nor the gloom of the melancholic can be discerned, it is safe to conclude that a person is either sanguine or phlegmatic. After a little experience, one quite easily determines a person's temperament, even at the first meeting, or even after a casual observation on the street. Physical symptoms of different temperaments, however, such as the shape of the head, complexion, color of the hair, size of the neck, etc., are worthless despite the insistence on such like characteristics frequently found in popular writings.

III. The Knowledge of Temperaments Very Important

It may be difficult in many cases to decide upon the temperament of any particular person; still we should not permit ourselves to be discouraged in the attempt to understand our own temperament and that of those persons with whom we live or with whom we come often into contact, for the advantages of such insight are very great. To know the temperaments of our fellow men helps us to understand them better, treat them more correctly, bear with them more patiently. These are evidently advantages for social life which can hardly be appreciated enough.

A choleric person is won by quiet explanation of reasons and motives; whereas by harsh commands he is embittered, hardened, driven to strong-headed resistance. A melancholic person is made suspicious and reticent by a rude word or an unfriendly mien; by continuous kind treatment, on the contrary, he is made pliable, trusting, affectionate. The choleric person can be relied upon, but with a sanguine person we can hardly count even upon his apparently serious promises. Without a knowledge of the temperaments of our fellow men we will treat them often wrongly, to their and to our own disadvantage.

With a knowledge of the temperaments, one bears with fellow men more patiently. If one knows that their defects are the consequence of their temperament, he excuses them more readily and will not so easily be excited or angered by them. He remains quiet, for instance, even if a choleric is severe, sharp-edged, impetuous, or obstinate. And if a melancholic person is slow, hesitating, undecided; if he does not speak much and even if he says awkwardly the little he has to say; or if a sanguine person is very talkative, light-minded, and frivolous; if a phlegmatic cannot be aroused from his usual indifference, he does not become irritated.

It is of the greatest benefit furthermore to recognize fully one's own temperament. Only if one knows it, can he judge correctly himself, his moods, his peculiarities, his past life. An elderly gentleman, of wide experience in the spiritual life, who happened to read the following treatise on temperaments said: "I have never learned to know myself so well, as I find myself depicted in these lines, because nobody dared to tell me the truth so plainly as these lines have done."

If one knows one's own temperament, he can work out his own perfection with greater assurance, because finally the whole effort toward self-perfection consists in the perfection of the good and in the combating of the evil dispositions. Thus the choleric will have to conquer, in the first place, his obstinacy, his anger, his pride; the melancholic, his lack of courage and his dooa of suffering; the sanguine, his talkativeness, his inconsistency; the phlegmatic, his sloth, his lack of energy. The person who knows himself will become more humble, realizing that many good traits which he considered to be virtues are merely good dispositions and the natural result of his temperament, rather than acquired virtues. Consequently the choleric will judge more humbly of his strong will, his energy, and his fearlessness; the sanguine of his cheerfulness, of his facility to get

along well with difficult persons; the melancholic will judge more humbly about his sympathy for others, about his love for solitude and prayer; the phlegmatic about his good nature and his repose of mind.

The temperament is innate in each person, therefore it cannot be exchanged for another temperament. But man can and must cultivate and perfect the good elements of his temperament and combat and eradicate the evil ones. Every temperament is in itself good and with each one man can do good and work out his salvation. It is, therefore, imprudent and ungrateful to wish to have another temperament. "All the spirits shall praise the Lord" (Ps. 150,6).

All of man's inclinations and peculiarities should be used for the service of the Lord and contribute to His honor and to man's welfare. Persons of various temperaments who live together should learn not to oppose but to support and supplement one another.

Melancholic

Directorium Asceticum

Those of a Melancholic temperament are like earth, heavy, sluggish, slothful, obstinate, tenacious of their own opinion; self-conscious, full of phantasies, prone to suspect and judge the actions of others; gloomy, silent, lovers of solitude, reserved and backward in making known the sentiments of their hearts; little grateful for the kindness of others, sparing of praise, unwilling to show respect or to do services, and, when they do such, spoiling the effect by the bad grace with which they do them. In dealing with people of this temperament, the Director ought to be gentle, affable, cordial and kind in his manner, so as not to give occasion to their suspicions, but rather so to act that they may feel free to open out their hearts, to do which they are very averse. And since the perturbations to which these people are subject, and the various defects into which they fall, arise from their minds being fixed upon each successive thought, he must see that they take the line of despising, and, in a way, thinking nothing of, all their internal troubles; because this is the best way to dissipate the phantasms of these gloomy souls. He must also procure their withdrawal from the too great solitude to which they are prone, occupying them in exterior employments and in works of mercy for the good of their neighbour, in order that their mind may not, to their detriment, be too much fixed, now upon one thing, now upon another.

Manual of Self-Knowledge and Christian Perfection

If there is a temperament with very unfortunate characteristics, it is certainly the melancholic. Externally this temperament manifests but slight receptibility. Apparently the melancholic seems to remain unmoved. He manifests no emotion. He appears to be very indifferent to the external world, to everything that goes on around him. But, in his imagination he construes an interior world, the ideals of which cannot be realized. He is both slow and obstinate. This obstinancy causes him to be very tenacious of his own opinions. He is never contented. Being a severe censor of morals, he fails to discover anything good in others. Naturally, he is uncongenial. In consequence of this, he exhibits great and constant irritability. It is, therefore, not surprising that he is inclined to be suspicious of others. He is apt to offend others by imagining they have something against him, or are dissatisfied with him, or, perhaps, are opposed to him. He is convinced that he is misjudged. This causes him to be distant and possibly offensive in his intercourse. His fondness for solitude inclines him to singularity. In consequence, he is reserved and wholly engrossed in himself. When offended or in case he imagines an affront has been offered him, he becomes vindictive. He nourishes hatred and aversion. He desires to revenge himself. At the same time he is capable of bestowing the most ardent friendship on some, individually, to the complete exclusion of all others. He may become a prey to vehement passions. But these he will conceal in his interior. He may secretly indulge in vice. He possesses an unreasonable self-conceit. He fosters within himself an over-estimation of superiority. This readily leads him to despise others. In a word, he may be a votary to extravagant, nay absurd, fanatical, heretical and suicidal ideas, as Rev. Joseph Antonelli, Doctor and Professor, remarks.

The following deserves special mention: The learned Benedictine, Father Schram, distinguishes two varieties of the melancholic temperament. One, he says, is allied to the choleric temperament. It drives men to fury and insanity. It renders them bold and vindictive. It makes them traitors. Such persons become cruel and prone to every wickedness. If such characters give themselves to contemplation, they yield to obstinate and enduring illusions. They must be quickly recalled from contemplation, lest by their imaginary revelations they infect others with similar insane ideas. The other kind possesses more the traits of the sanguinic temperament. This inclines man to be docile, mild and gentle. The characteristic trait of this

temperament is a moderate sadness. It is tranquil in action. It is profound in all undertakings. It possesses weight and maturity in judgment. Father Schram and authors in general admit that every truly great, wise, and prudent man has evinced traits of this temperament. Nay, in advancing years those may attain these characteristics who, in youth were endowed with a choleric temperament. Such persons are well suited to become good advisers, prudent leaders and men of learning. If such become devoted to the spiritual life they are apt to excel and become masters, owing to their prudence and discretion.

This temperament has many good qualities. The first is firmness of purpose. When the melancholic has taken a resolution, difficulties will not swerve him from his purpose. Nay, the greater the obstacles, the more his courage will increase. The greater the difficulties that present themselves, the more arduous become his efforts. At the same time he is prudent and reserved. These qualities prevent him from acting precipitately and imprudently. He acts only after mature deliberation. When he has arrived at a decision, his ardor also is aroused. For this temperament displays energy in a marked degree. If the melancholic gives himself to the pursuit of science he will not rest until he has fathomed the depths of learning. The same holds good in regard to asceticism as Dr. Albert Stockl (*Lehrbuch der Philosophie*) and other authors remark: The melancholic loves the sublime and terrific. He delights in the supernatural. He loves contemplation. Thus the pursuit and practise of virtue is for him an agreeable task. He will earnestly strive after solid virtue. His ardent mind is easily convinced that God is the only and true Good. He therefore yields himself to the service of God with all the ardor of which this temperament is capable.

The direction of this temperament must, above all, be considerate and circumspect. The director should combine prudence and consideration in regard to this temperament. He will greatly err if he is abrupt and exacting. In this he must imitate the example of the physician who first endeavors to gain the confidence of his patient before attempting directly to effect a cure. He must exert himself to convince the subject that he has his best interests at heart. Fortunate is the director if he succeeds in this respect. Let him strive to gain the good will of the subject. Then all the difficulties of the melancholic will vanish, both in the pursuit of science and in the practise of virtue. The melancholic will accomplish great things in both respects. He will readily give himself wholly to God with all the ardor proper to this temperament.

On one occasion the Venerable Father Joseph Passerat, C.SS.R., was addressing a number of ecclesiastical students. He made the remark that the devil assails religious persons in particular with the temptation to melancholy. Satan does this to discourage them. He instils a desire to seek pleasure in idle conversations; to see, read and hear all that is going on; to be popular, to enjoy unrestrained freedom. According to St. Paul, "the sorrow of the world worketh death" (II Cor. 7:10). In the same verse St. Paul says: "The sorrow that is according to God worketh penance steadfast to salvation." (Ibid.) Holy sadness will cause the soul to seek solitude in order to converse with God. It keeps the soul in humility by recalling the faults committed and the fund of corruption existing in human nature. (Rev. Louis Brochain, C.SS.R.) This holy sadness will enable all, and in particular the melancholic, to make progress in self-knowledge. The next step is to cling more and more closely to God by true love.

Melancholic

I. Characteristics of the Melancholic Temperament

The melancholic person is but feebly excited by whatever acts upon him. The reaction is weak, but this feeble impression remains for a long time and by subsequent similar impressions grows stronger and at last excites the mind so vehemently that it is difficult to eradicate it.

Such impression may be compared to a post, which by repeated strokes is driven deeper and deeper into the ground, so that at last it is hardly possible to pull it out again. This propensity of the melancholic needs special attention. It serves as a key to solve the many riddles in his behavior.

II. Fundamental Disposition of the Melancholic

1. Inclination to reflection. The thinking of the melancholic easily turns into reflection. The thoughts of the melancholic are far-reaching. He dwells with pleasure upon the past and is preoccupied by occurrences of the long ago; he is penetrating; is not satisfied with the superficial, searches for the cause and correlation of things; seeks the laws which affect human life, the principles according to which man should act. His thoughts are of a wide range; he looks ahead into the future; ascends to the eternal. The melancholic is of an extremely soft-hearted disposition. His very thoughts arouse his own sympathy and are accompanied by a mysterious longing. Often they stir him up profoundly, particularly religious reflections or plans which he cherishes; yet he hardly permits his fierce excitement to be noticed outwardly. The untrained melancholic is easily given to brooding and to day-dreaming.

2. Love of retirement. The melancholic does not feel at home among a crowd for any length of time; he loves silence and solitude. Being inclined to introspection he secludes himself from the crowds, forgets his environment, and makes poor use of his senses -eyes, ears, etc. In company he is often distracted, because he is absorbed by his own thoughts. By reason of his lack of observation and his dreaming the melancholic person has many a mishap in his daily life and at his work.

3. Serious conception of life. The melancholic looks at life always from the serious side. At the core of his heart there is always a certain sadness, "a weeping of the heart," not because the melancholic

is sick or morbid, as many claim, but because he is penneated with a strong longing for an ultimate good (God) and eternity and feels continually hampered by earthly and temporal affairs and impeded in his carvings. The melancholic is a stranger here below and feels homesick for God and eternity.

4. Inclination to passivity. The melancholic is a passive temperament. The person possessing such a temperament, therefore, has not the vivacious, quick, progressive, active propensity of the choleric or sanguine, but is slow, pensive, reflective. It is difficult to move him to quick action, since he has a marked inclination to passivity and inactivity. This pensive propensity of the melancholic accounts for his fear of suffering and difficulties as well as for his dread of interior exertion and self-denial.

III. Peculiarities of the Melancholic

1. He is reserved. He finds it difficult to form new acquaintances and speaks little among strangers. He reveals his inmost thoughts reluctantly and only to those whom he trusts. He does not easily find the right word to express and describe his sentiments. He yearns often to express himself, because it affords him real relief, to confide the sad, depressing thoughts which burden his heart to a person who sympathizes with him. On the other hand, it requires great exertion on his part to manifest himself, and, when he does so, he goes about it so awkwardly that he does not feel satisfied and finds no rest. Such experiences tend to make the melancholic more reserved. A teacher of melancholic pupils, therefore, must be aware of these peculiarities and must take them into consideration; otherwise he will do a great deal of harm to his charges.

Confession is a great burden to the melancholic, while it is comparatively easy to the sanguine. The melancholic wants to manifest himself, but cannot; the choleric can express himself easily, but does not want to.

2. The melancholic is irresolute. On account of too many considerations and too much fear of difficulties and of the possibility that his plans or works may fail, the melancholic can hardly reach a decision. He is inclined to defer his decision. What he could do today he postpones for tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, or even for the next week. Then he forgets about it and thus it happens that what he could have done in an hour takes weeks and months. He is never finished. For many a melancholic person it may take a long time to

decide about his vocation to the religious life. The melancholic is a man of missed opportunities. While he sees that others have crossed the creek long ago, he still deliberates whether he too should and can jump over it. Because the melancholic discovers many ways by his reflection and has difficulties in deciding which one to take, he easily gives way to others, and does not stubbornly insist on his own opinion.

3. The melancholic is despondent and without courage. He is pusillanimous and timid if he is called upon to begin a new work, to execute a disagreeable task, to venture on a new undertaking. He has a strong will coupled with talent and power, but no courage. It has become proverbial therefore: "Throw the melancholic into the water and he will learn to swim." If difficulties in his undertakings are encountered by the melancholic, even if they are only very insignificant, he feels discouraged and is tempted to give up the ship, instead of conquering the obstacle and repairing the ill success by increased effort.

4. The melancholic is slow and awkward. a) He is slow in his thinking. He feels it necessary, first of all, to consider and reconsider everything until he can form a calm and safe judgment. b) He is slow in his speech. If he is called upon to answer quickly or to speak without preparation, or if he fears that too much depends on his answer, he becomes restless and does not find the right word and consequently often makes a false and unsatisfactory reply. This slow thinking may be the reason why the melancholic often stutters, leaves his sentences incomplete, uses wrong phrases, or searches for the right expression. He is also slow, "not lazy, at his work. He works carefully and reliably, but only if he has ample time and is not pressed. He himself naturally does not believe that he is a slow worker.

5. The pride of the melancholic has its very peculiar side. He does not seek honor or recognition; on the contrary, he is loathe to appear in public and to be praised. But he is very much afraid of disgrace and humiliation. He often displays great reserve and thereby gives the impression of modesty and humility; in reality he retires only because he is afraid of being put to shame. He allows others to be preferred to him, even if they are less qualified and capable than himself for the particular work, position, or office, but at the same time he feels slighted because he is being ignored and his talents are not appreciated.

The melancholic person, if he really wishes to become perfect, must pay very close attention to these feelings of resentment and excessive sensitiveness in the face of even small humiliations.

From what has been said so far, it is evident that it is difficult to deal with melancholic persons. Because of their peculiarities they are frequently misjudged and treated wrongly. The melancholic feels keenly and therefore re-tires and excludes himself. Also, the melancholic has few friends, because few understand him and because he takes few into his confidence.

IV. Bright Side of the Melancholic Temperament

1. The melancholic practices with ease and joy interior prayer. His serious view of life, his love of solitude, and his inclination to reflection are a great help to him in acquiring the interior life of prayer. He has, as it were, a natural inclination to piety. Meditating on the perishable things of this world he thinks of the eternal; sojourning on earth he is attracted to heaven. Many saints were of a melancholic temperament. This temperament causes difficulties at prayer, since the melancholic person easily loses courage in trials and sufferings and consequently lacks confidence in God, in his prayers, and can be very much distracted by pusillanimous and sad thoughts.

2. In communication with God the melancholic finds a deep and indescribable peace.

He, better than anyone else, understands the words of St. Augustine: "You, O Lord, have created us for yourself, and our heart finds no rest, until it rests in You." His heart, so capable of strong affections and lofty sentiments, finds perfect peace in communion with God. This peace of heart he also feels in his sufferings, if he only preserves his confidence in God and his love for the Crucified.

3. The melancholic is often a great benefactor to his fellow men. He guides others to God, is a good counselor in difficulties, and a prudent, trustworthy, and well meaning superior. He has great sympathy with his fellow men and a keen desire to help them. If the confidence in God supports the melancholic and encourages him to action, he is willing to make great sacrifices for his neighbor and is strong and unshakable in the battle for ideals. Schubert, in his Psychology, says of the melancholic nature: "It has been the prevailing mental disposition of the most sublime poets, artists, of the most profound thinkers, the greatest inventors, legislators, and especially of those spiritual giants who at their time made known to their nations the entrance to a higher and blissful world of the Divine! to which they themselves were carried by an insatiable longing."

V. Dark Side of the Melancholic Temperament

1. The melancholic by committing sin falls into the most terrible distress of mind, because in the depth of his heart he is, more than those of other temperaments, filled with a longing desire for God, with a keen perception of the malice and consequences of sin. The consciousness of being separated from God by mortal sin has a crushing effect upon him. If he falls into grievous sin, it is hard for him to rise again, because confession, in which he is bound to humiliate himself deeply, is so hard for him. He is also in great danger of falling back into sin; because by his continual brooding over the sins committed he causes new temptations to arise. When tempted he indulges in sentimental moods, thus increasing the danger and the strength of temptations. To remain in a state of sin or even occasionally to relapse into sin may cause him a profound and lasting sadness, and rob him gradually of confidence in God and in himself. He says to himself: "I have not the strength to rise again and God does not help me either by His grace, for He does not love me but wants to damn me." This fatal condition can easily assume the proportion of despair.

2. A melancholic person who has no confidence in God and love for the cross falls into great despondency, inactivity, and even into despair.

If he has confidence in God and love for the Crucified, he is led to God and sanctified more quickly by suffering mishaps, calumnia, unfair treatment, etc. But if these two virtues are lacking, his condition is very dangerous and pitiable. If sufferings, although little in themselves, befall him, the melancholic person, who has no confidence in God and love for Christ, becomes downcast and depressed, ill-humored and sensitive. He does not speak, or he speaks very little, is peevish and disconsolate and keeps apart from his fellow men. Soon he loses courage to continue his work, and interest even in his professional occupation.

He feels that he has nothing but sorrow and grief. Finally this disposition may culminate in actual despondency and despair.

3. The melancholic who gives way to sad moods, falls into many faults against charity and becomes a real burden to his fellow men.

a) He easily loses confidence in his fellow men, (especially Superiors, Confessors), because of slight defects which he discovers in them, or on account of corrections in small matters.

b) He is vehemently exasperated and provoked by disorder or injustice. The cause of his exasperation is often justifiable, but rarely to the degree felt.

c) He can hardly forgive offenses. The first offense he ignores quite easily. But renewed offenses penetrate deeply into the soul and can hardly be forgotten. Strong aversion easily takes root in his heart against persons from whom he has suffered, or in whom he finds this or that fault. This aversion becomes so strong that he can hardly see these persons without new excitement, that he does not want to speak to them and is exasperated by the very thought of them. Usually this aversion is abandoned only after the melancholic is separated from persons who incurred his displeasure and at times only after months or even years.

d) He is very suspicious. He rarely trusts people and is always afraid that others have a grudge against him. Thus he often and without cause entertains uncharitable and unjust suspicion about his neighbor, conjectures evil intentions, and fears dangers which do not exist at all.

e) He sees everything from the dark side. He is peevish, always draws attention to the serious side of affairs, complains regularly about the perversion of people, bad times, downfall of morals, etc. His motto is: Things grow worse all along. Offenses, mishaps, obstacles he always considers much worse than they really are. The consequence is often excessive sadness, unfounded vexation about others, brooding for weeks and weeks on account of real or imaginary insults. Melancholic persons who give way to this disposition to look at everything through a dark glass, gradually become pessimists, that is, persons who always expect a bad result; hypochondriacs, that is, persons who complain continually of insignificant ailments and constantly fear grave sickness; misanthropes, that is, persons who suffer from fear and hatred of men.

f) He finds peculiar difficulties in correcting people. As said above he is vehemently excited at the slightest disorder or injustice and feels obliged to correct such disorders, but at the same time he has very little skill or courage in making corrections. He deliberates long on how to express the correction; but when he is about to make it, the words fail him, or he goes about it so carefully, so tenderly and reluctantly that it can hardly be called a correction.

If the melancholic tries to master his timidity, he easily falls into the opposite fault of shouting his correction excitedly, angrily, in unsuited or scolding words, so that again his reproach loses its effect.

This difficulty is the besetting cross of melancholic superiors. They are unable to discuss things with others, therefore, they swallow their grief and permit many disorders to creep in, although their conscience recognizes the duty to interfere. Melancholic educators, too, often commit the fault of keeping silent too long about a fault of their charges and when at last they are forced to speak, they do it in such an untoward and harsh manner, that the pupils become discouraged and frightened by such admonitions, instead of being encouraged and directed.

VI. Method of Self-Training for the Melancholic Person

1. The melancholic must cultivate great confidence in God and love for suffering, for his spiritual and temporal welfare depend on these two virtues. Confidence in God and love of the Crucified are the two pillars on which he will rest so firmly, that he will not succumb to the most severe trials arising from his temperament. The misfortune of the melancholic consists in refusing to carry his cross; his salvation will be found in the voluntary and joyful bearing of that cross. Therefore, he should meditate often on the Providence of God, and the goodness of the Heavenly Father, who sends sufferings only for our spiritual welfare, and he must practice a fervent devotion to the Passion of Christ and His Sorrowful Mother Mary.

2. He should always, especially during attacks of melancholy, say to himself: "It is not so bad as I imagine. I see things too darkly," or "I am a pessimist."

3. He must from the very beginning resist every feeling of aversion, diffidence, discouragement, or despondency, so that these evil impressions can take no root in the soul.

4. He must keep himself continually occupied, so that he finds no time for brooding. Persevering work will master all.

5. He is bound to cultivate the good side of his temperament and especially his inclination to interior life and his sympathy for suffering fellow men. He must struggle continually against his weaknesses.

6. St. Theresa devotes an entire chapter to the treatment of malicious melancholies. She writes: "Upon close observation you will notice that melancholic persons are especially inclined to have their own way, to say everything that comes into their mind, to watch for the faults of others in order to hide their own and to find peace in that which is according to their own liking." St. Theresa, in this chapter

touches upon two points to which the melancholic person must pay special attention. He frequently is much excited, full of disgust and bitterness, because he occupies himself too much with the faults of others, and again because he would like to have everything according to his own will and notion.

He can get into bad humor and discouragement on account of the most insignificant things. If he feels very downcast he should ask himself whether he concerned himself too much about the faults of others. Let other people have their own way! Or whether perhaps things do not go according to his own will. Let him learn the truth of the words of the Imitation (1,22), "Who is there that has all things according to his will? Neither I nor you, nor any man on earth. There is no man in the world without some trouble or affliction be he king or pope. Who then is the best off? Truly he that is able to suffer something for the love of God."

VII. Important Points in The Training of the Melancholic

In the treatment of the melancholic special attention must be given to the following points:

1. It is necessary to have a sympathetic understanding of the melancholic. In his entire deportment he presents many riddles to those who do not understand the peculiarities of the melancholic temperament. It is necessary, therefore, to study it and at the same time to find out how this temperament manifests itself in each individual. Without this knowledge great mistakes cannot be avoided.

2. It is necessary to gain the confidence of the melancholic person. This is not at all easy and can be done only by giving him a good example in everything and by manifesting an unselfish and sincere love for him. Like an unfolding bud opens to the sun, so the heart of the melancholic person opens to the sunshine of kindness and love.

3. One must always encourage him. Rude reproach, harsh treatment, hardness of heart cast him down and paralyze his efforts. Friendly advice and patience with his slow actions give him courage and vigor. He will show himself very grateful for such kindness.

4. It is well to keep him always busy, but do not overburden him with work.

5. Because melancholies take everything to heart and are very sensitive, they are in great danger of weakening their nerves. It is necessary, therefore, to watch nervous troubles of those entrusted to

one's care. Melancholies who suffer a nervous breakdown are in a very bad state and cannot recover very easily.

6. In The Training of a melancholic child, special care must be taken to be always kind and friendly, to encourage and keep him busy. The child, moreover, must be taught always to pronounce words properly, to use his five senses, and to cultivate piety. Special care must be observed in the punishment of the melancholic child, otherwise obstinacy and excessive reserve may result. Necessary punishment must be given with precaution and great kindness and the slightest appearance of injustice must be carefully avoided.

Phlegmatic Temperament

Directorium Asceticum

The Phlegmatic, like water, of the qualities of which they partake, are cold,-they with difficulty are warmed towards good,-they are slow in undertaking it, easily give it up,-they are changeable, inconstant, faint-hearted, soon filled with fears, discouragement, and diffidence,-they are free from strong passions, but they are also devoid of great virtues. The direction of persons of this temperament is not very easy; because, on the one hand, . they must not be left to lie listless in their torpor, and, on the other, much pressure cannot be put upon them, as they are incapable of bearing it. It is not well to reprehend them sharply, because they are soon cast down; and yet they should sometimes be reprehended, in order that they may humble themselves, and not attribute to virtue a certain peace felt by them, which is merely natural. In fine, the Director must, little by little, suggest to such persons the exercises of piety and mortification which they ought to practise. He must not, according to the proverb, heap too much wood upon the fire, otherwise he will only stifle that spark of good-will which glows within their hearts. He must stimulate their coldness, but must at the same time constantly accommodate himself to their sluggishness. In the regulation of their interior, maxims of love are best suited to these cold and timid characters, for such motives expand their hearts with hope, and inflame them with holy affections. As regards external things, it is not expedient to intrust matters of great importance to them, because, owing to their sluggishness, nothing but a most miserable result can be expected.

Manual of Self-Knowledge and Christian Perfection

We will begin with the disadvantageous traits of this temperament. The characteristics of this temperament are sloth and indifference. Both sloth and indifference are unfortunate traits. Sloth prevents the phlegmatic from making efforts. He is averse to exertion. His indifference renders this still more difficult. His disposition greatly inclines him to sweet idleness: *Dolce far niente*. But, is there nothing that is attractive to the phlegmatic? There is. He is fond of good cheer. He loves the pleasures of a good table as much as he detests labor. If these sensual pleasures are beyond his means, his thoughts will invariably revert to them. These fancies of the imagination have great attraction for him. There is some thing more that fascinates him. He has a strong leaning to mechanical pursuits. Mechanical occupations charm him. He finds them congenial. He loves to tinker. Here he manifests a great endurance. But they must not disturb his equanimity. They must not rob him of his evenness of mind. It is consequently very natural that he detests all labor of a higher order. The very inclination to mechanical labors is the reason that he is not suited to applying diligently to science and learning. He greatly dislikes all effort in this direction. His indifference is opposed to arduous application to earnest study.

The very same holds good in regard to the practises of the spiritual life. It is not in him to apply with energy and diligence to the practises of virtue. An efficacious pursuit of Christian perfection is very much against his grain. He is too slothful. He is too indifferent. You cannot inspire him with enthusiasm for religious practises. He feels little inclination for acts of virtue. The reason is that naturally he exhibits as little acuteness, as he possesses little imagination and energy. It appears impossible to arouse him to enthusiasm. He may, perchance, exhibit good judgment and more intellect. Yet these, too, are dull, spiritless and indifferent. In this connection the celebrated Benedictine, Father Schram, remarks that persons that were choleric in their youth may become phlegmatic in advancing years. They will especially be noted, for prudence. This results from their experience in the previous conduct of affairs. Finally it is necessary to point out a grave danger to which this temperament inclines. This is effeminacy. This inclination draws man violently to the gratification of sensual pleasures. Silent waters flow deep. Naturally quiet and taciturn, the phlegmatic may easily yield to this inclination. This is exceedingly

dangerous. Should the phlegmatic yield in this respect, it may develop into an incurable passion.

Now we turn to the favorable traits of this character. One great advantage of this temperament is that the phlegmatic is gentle by nature. This is a most estimable disposition. He is greatly inclined to be patient and peaceable. Certainly most amiable qualities. They prevent strife and quarrels. He is averse to clamor and noise. Another good trait is, he is easy to govern. On this account he will cause little trouble to those that are charged with directing his conduct. Furthermore, he is undisturbed by good as well as adverse events. He will not easily lose his equanimity. His calm temper prevents him from being elated with excessive joy in prosperous events. If, on the contrary, he meets with adverse fortune, he is not unduly depressed. Thus he is consequent and constant in all his undertakings. Another good characteristic of the phlegmatic is, he is tenacious of tradition. Novelties have no attraction for him. It is easy for him to follow the prescribed rules. Every one will quickly understand how beneficial this disposition is, both for himself and his associates. In consequence he invariably exhibits punctuality. This is natural. For he is disposed to be conscientious. He is trustworthy; certainly a most estimable quality. Another endearing quality of this temperament is simplicity. Every one detests duplicity. But freedom from a propensity to cunning is esteemed universally. Lastly some of the most estimable character traits of this temperament are honesty and sincerity.

Now what is to be observed in the pastoral order regarding this temperament? The dispositions of this temperament are such that very much depends on the proper direction. If the phlegmatic is left to himself he is helpless. He is timid and pusillanimous. He invariably finds its difficult or even impossible to come to a decision. His vacillating disposition renders him inconstant. Parents can be of great assistance to these characters by imitating the example of Blanche, the saintly mother of St. Louis of France. It is related of her that when little Louis was four or five years of age she would tenderly address him: "My son, you know how very much I love you, but I would rather behold you a corpse than know you had the misfortune of committing a mortal sin." Such instruction will greatly strengthen the will against the allurements of sensuality. Especially when these persons appear silent and taciturn they must be roused. Next, parents must curb their own ambition. They may perceive that a child possesses talent. Naturally, they would willingly give him a liberal education. But the phlegmatic possesses no ambition. He is not inclined to continue his

studies. He shows more aptitude to embrace some honest trade. Let him have his choice and keep him to it. In this case it is best to let him be satisfied with an elementary education only. If he is compelled to continue his studies, he will have no desire to profit by his accomplishments. He will simply give himself to idleness. Whilst, if he had adopted some trade, he would have become a useful member of society. Similar to this is the task of instructors who may have pupils of this temperament. They will find that their charges are easily discouraged at the difficulties in the elementary course. These characters need a firm hand to guide them. But above all mildness must predominate.

Severity is apt to completely discourage such characters. Instructors need an equal amount of patience. It is a most difficult task to be incessantly encouraging them in their studies. The preceptor must esteem his uninterrupted efforts amply rewarded, if such pupils can be induced to make ordinary efforts. The same holds good in the spiritual life in the practice of virtue. The phlegmatic exhibits no enthusiasm to strive after Christian perfection. He abhors mortification. He dislikes constant and generous efforts. This is owing to his inclination to effeminacy. It is absolutely necessary incessantly to arouse him to make efforts to acquire the true love of God. The spiritual director will find the greatest difficulty in deciding whether such subjects have a true vocation for a religious life.

The director must endeavor to instill a great confidence in the assistance of divine grace in such subjects. They can, and will, then make persevering efforts for their own good and that of many others. They will labor quietly and unostentatiously, but still earnestly, to acquire Christian perfection and true love of God.

Phlegmatic

I. Nature of the Phlegmatic Temperament

The soul or mind of the phlegmatic person is only weakly or not at all touched by impressions. The reaction is feeble or entirely missing. Eventual impressions fade away very soon.

II. Fundamental Disposition of the Phlegmatic Person

1. He has very little interest in whatever goes on about him.
2. He has little inclination to work, but prefers repose and leisure. With him everything proceeds and develops slowly.

III. Bright Side of the Phlegmatic Temperament

1. The phlegmatic works slowly, but perseveringly, if his work does not require much thinking.
2. He is not easily exasperated either by offenses, or by failures or sufferings. He remains composed, thoughtful, deliberate, and has a cold, sober, and practical judgment.
3. He has no intense passions and does not demand much of life.

IV. Dark Side of the Phlegmatic Temperament

1. He is very much inclined to ease, to eating and drinking; is lazy and neglects his duties.
2. He has no ambition, and does not aspire to lofty things, not even in his piety.

V. The Training of Phlegmatic Children

The training of phlegmatic children is very difficult, because external influence has little effect upon them and internal personal motives are lacking. It is necessary to explain everything most minutely to them, and repeat it again and again, so that at least some impression may be made to last, and to accustom them by patience and charity to follow strictly a well-planned rule of life. The application of corporal punishment is less dangerous in the education of phlegmatic

children; it is much more beneficial to them than to other children, especially to those of choleric or melancholic temperament.

Mixed Temperaments

Most people have a mixed temperament. Some persons, however, have one predominant temperament, for instance, the choleric; but the fundamental characteristics, the light and dark sides of this principal temperament are extenuated or accentuated by the influence of the other temperaments. In general a person is happier if his temperament is not a pure one. The combination smoothes the rough edges of the main temperament. In order to facilitate the recognition of one's own temperament these mixtures of temperaments are herewith mentioned briefly.

1. In the choleric-sanguine temperament the excitement is quick, and the reaction also; but the impression is not so lasting as with the pure choleric temperament.

The pride of the choleric is mixed with vanity; the anger and obstinacy are not so strong, but more moderate than in the pure choleric. This is a very happy combination.

2. The sanguine-choleric temperament is similar to the choleric-sanguine temperament; only the sanguine characteristics prevail, the choleric ones recede to the background. Excitement and reaction are quick and vehement and the impression does not fade so quickly as with the pure sanguine, even though it does not penetrate so far as with the pure choleric. The sanguine fickleness, superficiality, extroversion, and garrulity are mitigated by the seriousness and stability of the choleric.

3. The choleric-melancholic and the melancholic-choleric temperaments. In this one, two serious, passionate temperaments are mixed; the pride, obstinacy, and anger of the choleric with the morose, unsocial, reserved temper of the melancholic. Persons who have such a mixture of temperaments must cultivate a great deal of self-control, in order to acquire interior peace and not to become a burden to those with whom they work and live.

4. The melancholic-sanguine temperament. In this the impressions are feeble, the reaction is weak, and it does not last as long as with the pure melancholic. The sanguine gives to the melancholic something flexible, friendly, cheerful. The melancholic persons with a sanguine alloy are those cordial, soft-hearted people who cannot bear to hurt anyone. are quickly touched, but unfortunately

also fail where energy and strength are needed. Sanguine persons with a melancholic mixture are similar. Only in this case the sanguine superficiality and inconstancy prevail.

5. The melancholic-phlegmatic temperament. People of this type succeed better in community life than the pure melancholic. They lack, more or less, the morose, gloomy, brooding propensity of the melancholic and are happily aided by the quiet apathy of the phlegmatic. Such people do not easily take offense; they can readily bear injuries and are contented and steady laborers.

Sanguine Temperament

Directorium Asceticum

The Sanguine resemble the air; they are light in their manner, given to pleasure, to amusements, to enjoyment, and to their own convenience. They easily become attached, and contract friendships, and as easily break them off. They are disposed to adapt themselves to the inclinations of every one, so as to win the affections of all. They follow after vanity, prattling, and gossip. In a word, they live gaily, and abhor all penance, austerity, and rigour, like death itself. The Director will find these persons suited for higher culture; he must not, however, show himself severe to them, but affable. He must not be stiff, gloomy, or hard, but affectionate; otherwise, by severity of manner, he will soon drive them away. For the same reason, let him show the path to Heaven to be smooth and easy, full of peace, calm, and tranquillity. He will thus be able to lure them on. Let him induce them gradually to diminish their friendships, their conversations, their affections, their vanity, and strive to form in them more solid and more serious habits. Let him put them, little by little, on the way of penance (of which they are in great need), by getting them to fast sometimes, and to use some instrument of bodily mortification.

Manual of Self-Knowledge and Christian Perfection

The sanguinic is the temperament of levity, as Rev. John Ev. Pruner, D.D., remarks (*Lehrbuch der Pastoral Theologie*): The sanguinic abhors labor and exertion. Yet, strange to say, he equally abominates quietude. His characteristic is thoughtlessness. He delights in various, humoring desires and pursuits. But these moods must be fraught with constant change and alteration. He manifests great enthusiasm for truth and goodness and beauty. But this disposition vanishes quickly. He is as readily moved to tears as to laughter. He is naturally frolicsome. Yet, his gaiety readily degenerates into wantonness. He possesses an unlimited fondness for dissipation, distractions and noisy gatherings. Another trait of this temperament is fickleness. When charged with any duty he is apt to neglect fulfilling it. Or, he may attempt it, but as frequently performs his task only partially. No matter how provoking this may be to others, he is totally unconcerned. Lastly, his resentment is quickly aroused. However, it is not enduring. He is prone to forgive and forget.

There are, nevertheless, several estimable qualities this temperament enjoys. The sanguinic is endowed with a quick perception. He rapidly discerns everything. He is, likewise, endowed with a vivid imagination. He can rapidly progress in his studies. Unhappily, he is totally averse to continued application. He desires to accomplish everything; but nothing wholly and thoroughly. As a rule, he reflects very little. Consequently, he judges precipitately. An other provoking trait is this: The sanguinic promises much and performs little. He is not a friend of solitude, but delights to mingle in society. He forms friendships quickly, these, however, are not enduring. On the other hand he is much inclined to particular friendships, so called. No one need be surprised that he has favorites and confidants. The great evil resulting therefrom is his proneness to form a clique. This is most disastrous should he happen to be a member of some community. The inevitable result will be innumerable jealousies, suspicions and parties. On the other hand the advantageous traits of this temperament are worthy of esteem. No temperament is so well suited as this to make a man a useful member of a community. By nature he is inclined to serve others. It is a pleasure to ask favors of him. He is always ready to give his services. He is forgiving. Though he has been wronged, he is not inclined to harbor an ill will towards the offender. He will quickly forget the wrong done to him. At the same time he is indulgent to the faults of others. He will not judge harshly nor treat his companions

with severity. One trait that especially endears him to his associates is his frankness. All that have intercourse with him are charmed by his cheerful disposition. Then, too, he is apt to captivate others, because he is a ready speaker. One of the greatest advantages of this temperament is, that, without much difficulty it can accommodate itself to a life of obedience and spirituality.

We will now consider the proper direction of this temperament. The sanguinic stands greatly in need of a kind, but withal firm direction. If directed in accordance with the good characteristics of this temperament the sanguinic is apt to make great and rapid progress in the practise of virtue. The director must strive to induce the sanguinic to conquer his inclination to effeminacy. He must teach him to strive for manliness. He must instruct him to combat his tendency to ease and enjoyment. He must insist that the sanguinic resolutely combat his proneness to sensibility and various emotions. The sanguinic must be told to embrace mortification energetically. With all his strength and energy he must act against his inborn allurements. He must conquer his aversion to prayer and the reception of the sacraments. For the sanguinic finds it difficult to perform his duties in this regard with fervor and devotion. Owing to his natural vacillation, the sanguinic finds it galling to follow a fixed rule of life. He must, therefore, be held to an orderly and conscientious fulfilment of his prescribed duties. The sanguinic will find it very perplexing to subject himself to unremitting efforts. One day he will be all fervor and resolution. Very quickly, however, he imagines all his strength and determination have vanished. On this account it is necessary to recommend to him an especial devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Mary is the Mother of Grace. From the very beginning of his spiritual life he should strive to confide in her motherly assistance. He should frequently place his sole reliance in this Help of Christians.

Closely similar must be the guidance of the sanguinic if he applies either to studies or other useful employment. In case he is talented he will be full of courage, as long as he succeeds. When he meets with difficulties or happens to fail, he becomes discouraged. He imagines he ought to take up some other pursuit. If, on the contrary, he is not gifted with talent, it is necessary to encourage him incessantly. He will repeatedly give up every effort and exertion.

Sanguine

I. Character of the Sanguine Temperament

The sanguine person is quickly aroused and vehemently excited by whatever influences him. The reaction follows immediately, but the impression lasts but a short time. Consequently the remembrance of the impression does not easily cause new excitement.

II. Fundamental Disposition

1. Superficiality. The sanguine person does not penetrate the depth, the essence of things; he does not embrace the whole, but is satisfied with the superficial and with a part of the whole. Before he has mastered one subject, his interest relaxes because new impressions have already captured his attention. He loves light work which attracts attention, where there is no need of deep thought, or great effort. To be sure, it is hard to convince a sanguine person that he is superficial; on the contrary, he imagines that he has grasped the subject wholly and perfectly.

2. Instability. Because the impressions made upon a sanguine person do not last, they are easily followed by others. The consequence is a great instability which must be taken into account by anyone who deals with such persons, if he does not wish to be disappointed.

St. Peter assured our Lord that he was ready to go with Him, even die for Him, only to deny a few hours later that he did even know "this man."

The crowds hailed our Lord with their Hosannas on Palm Sunday but cried: Crucify Him! a few days later.

The sanguine is always changing in his moods; he can quickly pass from tears to laughter and vice versa; he is fickle in his views; today he may defend what he vehemently opposed a week ago; he is unstable in his resolutions. If a new point of view presents itself he may readily upset the plans which he has made previously. This inconsistency often causes people to think that the sanguine person has no character; that he is not guided by principles. The sanguine naturally denies such charges, because he always finds a reason for his changes. He forgets that it is necessary to consider everything well and to look into and investigate everything carefully beforehand, in order not to be captivated by every new idea or mood. He is also inconsistent

at his work or entertainment; he loves variety in everything; he resembles a bee which flies from flower to flower; or the child who soon tires of the new toy.

3. Tendency to the external. The sanguine does not like to enter into himself, but directs his attention to the external. In this respect he is the very opposite of the melancholic person who is given to introspection, who prefers to be absorbed by deep thoughts and more or less ignores the external. This leaning to the external is shown in the keen interest which the sanguine pays to his own appearance, as well as to that of others; to a beautiful face, to fine and modern clothes, and to good manners. In the sanguine the five senses are especially active, while the choleric uses rather his reason and will and the melancholic his feelings. The sanguine sees everything, hears everything, talks about everything. He is noted for his facility and vivacity of speech, his inexhaustible variety of topics and flow of words which often make him disagreeable to others. The sanguine person in consequence of his vivacity has an eye for details, an advantageous disposition which is more or less lacking in choleric and melancholic persons.

4. Optimism. The sanguine looks at everything from the bright side. He is optimistic, overlooks difficulties, and is always sure of success. If he fails, he does not worry about it too long but consoles himself easily. His vivacity explains his inclination to poke fun at others, to tease them and to play tricks on them. He takes it for granted that others are willing to take such things in good humor and he is very much surprised if they are vexed on account of his mockery or improper jokes.

5. Absence of deep passions. The passions of the sanguine are quickly excited, but they do not make a deep and lasting impression; they may be compared to a straw fire which flares up suddenly, but just as quickly dies down, while the passions of a choleric are to be compared to a raging, all-devouring conflagration.

This lack of deep passions is of great advantage to the sanguine in spiritual life, insofar as he is usually spared great interior trials and can serve God as a rule with comparative joy and ease. He seems to remain free of the violent passions of the choleric and the pusillanimity and anxiety of the melancholic.

III. Dark Sides of the Sanguine Temperament

1. Vanity and self-complacency. The pride of the sanguine person does not manifest itself as inordinate ambition or obstinacy, as it does in the choleric, nor as fear of humiliation, as in the melancholic, but as a strong inclination to vanity and self-complacency. The sanguine person finds a well nigh childish joy and satisfaction in his outward appearance, in his clothes and work. He loves to behold himself in the mirror. He feels happy when praised and is therefore very susceptible to flattery. By praise and flattery a sanguine person can easily be seduced to perform the most imprudent acts and even shameful sins.

2. Inclination to flirtation, jealousy, and envy. The sanguine person is inclined to inordinate intimacy and flirtation, because he lacks deep spirituality and leans to the external and is willing to accept flatteries. However, his love is not deep and changes easily. An otherwise well-trained sanguine would be content with superficial familiarities as tokens of affection, but in consequence of his levity and readiness to yield, as well as on account of his optimistic belief that sin may have no evil consequences, he can be easily led to the most grievous aberrations. A bad woman with a sanguine temperament yields herself to sin without restraint and stifles the voice of conscience easily.

Vanity and tendency to love-affairs lead the sanguine person to jealousy, envy, and to all the petty, mean, and detestable faults against charity, which are usually the consequence of envy. Because he is easily influenced by exterior impressions or feelings of sympathy or antipathy, it is hard for the sanguine person to be impartial and just. Superiors of this temperament often have favorites whom they prefer to others. The sanguine is greatly inclined to flatter those whom he loves.

3. Cheerfulness and inordinate love of pleasure. The sanguine person does not like to be alone; he loves company and amusement; he wants to enjoy life. In his amusements such a person can be very frivolous.

4. Dread of virtues which require strenuous efforts. Everything which requires the denial of the gratification of the senses is very hard on the sanguine; for instance, to guard the eyes, the ears, the tongue, to keep silence. He does not like to mortify himself by denying himself some favorite food. He is afraid of corporal acts of penance; only the exceptionally virtuous sanguine succeeds in performing works of

penance for many years for sins committed in earlier youth. The ordinary sanguine person is inclined to think that with absolution in the sacrament of penance all sins are blotted out and that continued sorrow for them is unnecessary and even injurious.

5. Other disadvantages of the sanguine temperament:

a) The decisions of the sanguine person are likely to be wrong, because his inquiry into things is only superficial and partial; also because he does not see difficulties; and finally because, through feelings of sympathy or antipathy he is inclined to partiality.

b) The undertakings of the sanguine fail easily because he always takes success for granted, as a matter of course, and therefore does not give sufficient attention to possible obstacles, because he lacks perseverance, and his interest in things fades quickly.

c) The sanguine is unstable in the pursuit of the good. He permits others to lead him and is therefore easily led astray, if he falls into the hands of unscrupulous persons. His enthusiasm is quickly aroused for the good, but it also vanishes quickly. With Peter he readily jumps out of the boat in order to walk on the water, but immediately he is afraid that he may drown. He hastily draws the sword with Peter to defend Jesus, but takes to flight a few minutes later. With Peter he defies the enemies of Jesus, only to deny Him in a short time.

d) Self-knowledge of the sanguine person is deficient because he always caters to the external and is loath to enter into himself, and to give deeper thought to his own actions.

e) The life of prayer of the sanguine suffers from three obstacles: He finds great difficulty in the so-called interior prayer for which a quiet, prolonged reflection is necessary; likewise in meditation, spiritual reading, and examination of conscience. He is easily distracted on account of his ever active senses and his uncontrolled imagination and is thereby prevented from attaining a deep and lasting recollection in God. At prayer a sanguine lays too much stress upon emotion and sensible consolation, and in consequence becomes easily disgusted during spiritual aridity.

IV. Bright Sides of the Sanguine Temperament

1. The sanguine person has many qualities on account of which he fares well with his fellow men and endears himself to them.

a) The sanguine is an extrovert; he readily makes acquaintance with other people, is very communicative, loquacious, and associates easily with strangers.

b) He is friendly in speech and behavior and can pleasantly entertain his fellow men by his interesting narratives and witticisms.

c) He is very pleasant and willing to oblige. He dispenses his acts of kindness not so coldly as a choleric, not so wanly and touchingly as the melancholic, but at least in such a jovial and pleasant way that they are graciously received.

d) He is compassionate whenever a misbap befalls his neighbor and is always ready to cheer him by a friendly remark.

e) He has a remarkable faculty of drawing the attention of his fellow men to their faults without causing immediate and great displeasure. He does not find it hard to correct others. If it is necessary to inform someone of bad news, it is well to assign a person of sanguine temperament for this task.

f) A sanguine is quickly excited by an offense and may show his anger violently and at times imprudently, but as soon as he has given vent to his wrath, he is again pleasant and bears no grudge.

2. The sanguine person has many qualities by which he wins the affection of his superiors.

a) He is pliable and docile. The virtue of obedience, which is generally considered as difficult, is easy for him.

b) He is candid and can easily make known to his superiors his difficulties, the state of his spirituaillfe, and even disgraceful sins.

e) When punished he hardly ever shows resentment; he is not defiant and obstinate. It is easy for a superior to deal with sanguine subjects, but let him be on his guard! Sanguine subjects are prone to flatter the superior and show a servile attitude; thus quite unintentionally endangering the peace of a community. Choleric and especially melancholic persons do not reveal themselves so easily, because of their greater reserve, and should not be scolded or slighted or neglected by the superiors.

3. The sanguine is not obdurate in evil. He is not stable in doing good things, neither is he consistent in doing evil. Nobody is so easily seduced, but on the other hand, nobody is so easily converted as the sanguine.

4. The sanguine does not grieve long over unpleasant happenings. Many things which cause a melancholic person a great deal of anxiety and trouble do not affect the sanguine in the least, because he is an optimist and as such overlooks difficulties and prefers to look at affairs from the sunny side. Even if the sanguine is occasionally exasperated and sad, he soon finds his balance again. His sadness does not last long, but gives way quickly to happiness. This sunny quality of the well-trained sanguine :person helps him to find community life, for instance, in mstitutions, seminaries, convents much easier, and to overcome the difficulties of such life more readily than do choleric or melancholic persons. Sanguine persons can get along well even with persons generally difficult to work with.

V. Method of Self-Training for the Sanguine

1. A sanguine person must give himself to reflection on spiritual as well as temporal affairs. It is especially necessary for him to cultivate those exercises of prayer in which meditation prevails; for instance, morning meditation, spiritual reading, general and particular examination of conscience, meditation on the mysteries of the rosary, and the presence of God. Superficiality is the misfortune, reflection the salvation of the sanguine.

In regard to temporal affairs the sanguine person must continually bear in mind that he cannot do too much thinking about them: he must consider every point; anticipate all possible difficulties; he must not be overconfident, over-optimistic.

2. He must daily practice mortification of the senses, the eyes, ears, tongue, the sense of touch, and guard the palate against overindulging in exquisite foods and drinks.

3. He must absolutely see to it that he be influenced by the good and not by the bad; that he accept counsel and direction. A practical aid against distraction is a strictly regulated life, and in a community the faithful observance of the Rules.

4. Prolonged spiritual aridity is a very salutary trial for him, because his unhealthy sentimentality is thereby cured or purified.

5. He must cultivate his good traits, as charity, obedience, candor, cheerfulness, and sanctify these natural good qualities by supernatural motives. He must continually struggle against those faults to which he is so much inclined by his natural disposition, such as, vanity and selfcomplacency; love of particular friendships; sentimentality; sensuality; jealousy; levity; superficiality; instability.

VI. Points of Importance in Dealing with and Educating a Sanguine Person

The education of the sanguine person is comparatively easy. He must be looked after; he must be told that he is not allowed to leave his work unfinished. His assertions, resolutions, and promises must not be taken too seriously; he must continually be checked as to whether he has really executed his work carefully. Flatteries must not be accepted from him and especially constant guard must be kept lest any preference be shown him on account of his affable disposition. It must be remembered that the sanguine person will not keep to himself what he is told or what he notices about anyone. It is advisable to think twice before taking a sanguine person into confidence.

In the education of a sanguine child the following points should be observed:

1. The child must be consistently taught to practice self-denial especially by subduing the senses. Perseverance at work and observance of order must be continually insisted upon.
2. The child must be kept under strict supervision and guidance; he must be carefully guarded against bad company, because he can so easily be seduced.
3. Leave to him his cheerfulness and let him have his fun, only guard him against overdoing it.

The Choleric Or Bilious Temperament

Directorium Asceticum

The Bilious have a temperament of fire, and are ardent in their aspirations. They easily undertake great things, and carry them out with impetuosity. They wish, like fire, to be above all, and consequently their predominant passion is ambition and arrogance. They praise themselves, make much of their own affairs, and rely on their own strength. They contradict every one in conversation, and do not believe the truth though it be clearly set before them. They censure others in order to bring themselves into repute. They easily find fault, and are intolerant of reproof from others. But at the same time, on meeting with an obstacle, and also when a fiel^tl for their operations fails them, they become dejected and lose courage, as is the case with flames when not fed with fuel, or when they encounter strong opposition. When persons of this temperament overcome themselves, they acquire solid virtues, and are fitted for doing great things for their neighbour, but, like spirited young horses, they require a strong hand to tame them. The direction of these persons, as regards the interior, should consist in inducing them to meditate, and to have always before their eyes the meekness and humility of Jesus Christ, that, by the help of such an example, they may keep down the impatience and the impetuosity of their spirit, and may also mortify the great desire which they have to make a display. When they fall into any fault, they must not be vexed with themselves, but must humble themselves profoundly within their hearts. They must not be downcast, they must not lose courage (as often happens to such persons), but, mistrusting their own strength, they must put their confidence in God, and have recourse to Him with great fervour. With regard to the exterior, the Director must forbid them to speak about themselves except in cases of real necessity. He must not allow them to dispute with their friends, and he must enjoin upon them merely to propose their opinion, and then to hold their peace. He must induce them neither to speak nor act with too great ardour, but calmly and with moderation. He must not allow them all the corporal mortification that they wish to take, since, in this respect, they are apt to fall into excess; and this, in ardent temperaments, fans the fire within them, just as moderation stifles it. Let him check th'eir over-activity, because the bile, when too much stirred up, becomes excited, and the fire within them, in place of being

extinguished, is increased. Above all, the Confessor must be on his guard against warning and reprehending such persons with too great zeal, because he will thus only add fuel to their flames. Let him act with mildness, with tranquillity, and with gentleness, that they may learn from his example the calm which they themselves ought to preserve in all their actions. In fine, let the Director observe that, although in the bodies of his penitents one of the above-mentioned qualities,-namely, that of earth, of water, air, or fire,-usually predominates, yet the' quality which predominates never goes alone, but is always mingled up with some other. Consequently the direction given ought to be adapted to each quality that is present

Manual of Self-Knowledge and Christian Perfection

First, come the traits of this temperament that are more or less dangerous. The choleric temperament is gifted with an energetic mind and an indomitable will. Energy and determination are its characteristic traits. The choleric is also endowed with a fervid imagination. Honor, glory, dominion are his idols. He, so to speak, worships at the altar of fame. By every means possible he endeavors to procure renown for himself. He seeks celebrity by extensively praising his own achievements and accomplishments. His heart's desire is to exercise sway over others. Hence pride is his predominant passion. Again, as a rule, he is too impetuous, altogether too passionate. This renders him fond of strife. He finds great satisfaction in raising quarrels. If he meets with failure in all this he is little contented; he is seldom happy. But, the worst of all happens if the choleric should embrace a career of wickedness. Then he becomes contumacious, brazenfaced and incorrigible. He will prefer death to humiliation. If chastisement is inflicted on him, he will conceal his vices. By no means will he amend.

The good traits of this temperament are very serviceable in many respects. The choleric has an indomitable courage. He is not deterred by obstacles. At the same time he is magnanimous. He is ever ready to sacrifice his feelings and interests. Other good traits are constancy and fortitude. These enable him to achieve his purpose. If the choleric selects the pursuits of arts and sciences, he is apt to excel. For he will make noble efforts. If he choose a military career he will be a hero in war. However, he is in danger of becoming tyrannical, if invested with authority. Lastly, if he turns to the practises of a virtuous life, he will strive perseveringly for perfection. He will be noted for a profound humility. He will exhibit great constancy in the practises of a penitential life. He will be tireless in the observance of spiritual exercises. His obedience will be prompt. In fact, when his ardor has been inflamed by higher motives, he will be full of zeal for the best interests of his fellowmen. In a word, in all his undertakings he will be orderly and inciting.

The direction of this temperament must be above all firm and manly. The choleric abhors weakness and indecision. He finds it congenial to be placed under restraint. He is adverse to indulgence. He is opposed to being humored. He loves to be told his duties unreservedly and decisively. Yet, this must be done calmly and without passion.

Choleric

I. Character of the Choleric Temperament

The choleric person is quickly and vehemently excited by any and every influence. Immediately the reaction sets in and the impression remains a long time.²

The choleric man is a man of enthusiasm; he is not satisfied with the ordinary, but aspires after great and lofty things. He craves for great success in temporal affairs; he seeks large fortunes, a vast business, an elegant home, a distinguished reputation or a predominant position. He aspires to the highest also in matters spiritual; he is swayed with a consuming fire for holiness; he is filled with a yearning desire to make great sacrifices for God and his neighbor, to lead many souls to heaven.

The natural virtue of the choleric is ambition; his desire to excel and succeed despises the little and vulgar, and aspires to the noble and heroic. In his aspiration for great things the choleric is supported by:

1. A keen intellect. The choleric person is not always, but usually endowed with considerable intelligence. He is a man of reason while his imagination and his emotions are poor and stunted.

It is said that Julius Caesar was able to dictate different letters to several secretaries at the same time without losing the line of thought for each dictation.

2. A strong will. He is not frightened by difficulties, but in case of obstacles shows his energy so much the more and perseveres also under great difficulties until he has reached his goal. Pusillanimity or despondency the choleric does not know.

Hamilcar of Carthage in North Africa took his son Hannibal to the altar of their god and made him swear eternal hatred for Rome, their implacable enemy. Later, Hannibal assembled a complete army and elephants and led them through Spain, over the Pyrenees, through Southern France and over the Alps into Italy, a feat never equaled before or after, and came very close to conquering and destroying Rome.

3. Strong passions. The choleric is very passionate. Whenever the choleric is bent upon carrying out his plans or finds opposition, he

² If in the following treatise it is said: the choleric or the sanguine person acts thus or thus, it does not mean that he must act this, or that he acts thus always, but that he usually acts in this manner or has a strong tendency to act in this manner.

is filled with passionate excitement. All dictators, old and new, are proof of this statement.

4. An oftentimes subconscious impulse to dominate others and make them subservient. The choleric is made to rule. He feels happy when he is in a position to command, to draw others to him, and to organize large groups.

A very great impediment for the choleric in his yearning for great things, is his imprudent haste. The choleric is immediately and totally absorbed by the aim he has in mind and rushes for his goal with great haste and impetuosity; he considers but too little whether he can really reach his goal.

A high Nazi official told a former chum, (later a priest): "We cannot back out; we have gone too far."

He sees only one road, the one he in his impetuosity has taken without sufficient consideration, and he does not notice that by another road he could reach his goal more easily. If great obstacles meet him he, because of his pride, can hardly make up his mind to turn back, but instead he continues with great obstinacy on the original course. He dashes his head against the wall rather than take notice of the door which is right near and wide open. By this imprudence the choleric wastes a great deal of his energy which could be used to better advantage, and he disgusts his friends, so that finally he stands almost alone and is disliked by most people. He deprives himself of his best successes, even though he will not admit that he himself is the main cause of his failures. He shows the same imprudence in selecting the means for the pursuit of perfection, so that in spite of great efforts he does not acquire it. The choleric can safeguard himself from this danger only by willing and humble submission to a spiritual director.

II. Dark Sides of the Choleric Temperament

1. Pride which shows itself in the following instances:

a) The choleric is full of himself. He has a great opinion of his good qualities and his successful work and considers himself as something extraordinary and as one called upon to perform great feats. He considers even his very defects as being justified, nay, as something great and worthy of praise; for instance, his pride, his obstinacy, his anger.

The Italian dictator Mussolini had himself called "Il Duce," the Leader. Adolf Hitler followed his example by assuming the title: "Der Fuehrer," The Leader.

b) The choleric is very stubborn and opinionated. He thinks he is always right, wants to have the last word, tolerates no contradiction, and is never willing to give in.

The Russian dictator Stalin brooked no opposition. A friend of his, during a drinking bout, voiced his disagreement with Stalin's opinion. Fearing for his safety some of his friends approached Stalin the next day to excuse their friend on the ground of having been drunk. Stalin coolly told them that their intervention came too late.

c) The choleric has a great deal of self-confidence. He relies too much upon his own knowledge and ability. He refuses the help of others and prefers to work alone, partly because he does not like to ask for help, partly because he believes that he is himself more capable than others and is sure to succeed without the help of others.

Hitler relied on his "hunches" in his war against Russia despite the advice of his generals, convinced that he knew better. He lost the war and everything.

It is not easy to convince the choleric that he is in need of God's help even in little things. Therefore he dislikes to ask God's help and prefers to combat even strong temptations by his own strength. Because of this self-confidence in spiritual life the choleric often falls into many and grievous sins. This trait is one of the main reasons why so many choleric do not acquire sanctity in spite of great efforts. They are infected to a great extent with the pride of Lucifer. They act as if perfection and heaven were not in the first place due to grace but to their own efforts.

d) The choleric despises his fellow man. To his mind others are ignorant, weak, unskilled, slow, at least when compared with himself. He shows his contempt of his neighbor by despising, mocking, belittling remarks about others and by his proud behavior toward those around him, especially toward his subjects.

A Russian general, asked what he would do if his soldiers came to a mine field, responded that he would order a company of soldiers across it. The fact that he would sacrifice the lives of these soldiers meant nothing to him. (Gen. Eisenhower)

e) The choleric is domineering and inordinately ambitious. He wants to hold the first place, to be admired by others, to subject others to himself. He belittles, combats, even persecutes by unfair means those who dare to oppose his ambition.

Julius Caesar said that he would rather be the first in the smallest Alpine village than the second in Rome. Alexander the Great, considered one of the greatest generals of all times, was found by a

friend of his one clear night looking at the stars and weeping. Asked why he wept he said: "See those thousands of stars in the sky to be conquered, and I cannot even conquer this world of ours."

f) The choleric feels deeply hurt when he is humiliated or put to shame. Even the recollection of his sins fills him with great displeasure because these sins give him a lower opinion of himself. In his disgust over his sins he may even defy God Himself.

2. Anger. The choleric is vehemently excited by contradiction, resistance, and personal offenses. This excitement manifests itself in harsh words which may seem very decent and polite as far as phrasing is concerned, but hurt to the core by the tone in which they are spoken. Nobody can hurt his fellow man with a few words more bitterly than a choleric person. Things are made even worse by the fact that the choleric in his angry impetuosity makes false and exaggerated reproaches, and may go so far in his passion, as to misconstrue the intentions and to pervert the words of those who irritated him, thus, blaming with the sharpest of expressions, faults which in reality were not committed at all. By such injustice, which the choleric inflicts in his anger upon his neighbor he can offend and alienate even his best friends.

The choleric may even indulge in furious outbursts of anger. His anger easily degenerates into hatred. Grievous offenses he cannot forget. In his anger and pride he permits himself to be drawn to actions which he knows will be very detrimental to himself and to others; for instance, ruin of his health, his work, his fortune, loss of his position, and complete rupture with intimate friends. By reason of his pride and anger he may totally ignore and cast aside the very plans for the realization of which he has worked for years.

P. Schram says "The choleric prefers to die rather than to humble himself."

3. Deceit, disguise, and hypocrisy. As noble and magnanimous as the choleric is by nature, the tendency to pride and self will may lead him to the lowest of vices, deceit and hypocrisy. He practices deceit, because he is in no way willing to concede that he succumbed to a weakness and suffered a defeat. He uses hypocrisy, deception, and even outright lies, if he realizes that he cannot carry out his plans by force.

For the true Communist everything that will help his cause is right and just: he makes and breaks treaties and promises; robbery and lies and murder are considered justified if done for the Party and the Cause, without consideration of the cost in human suffering.

4. Lack of sympathy. The choleric, as said above, is a man of reason. He has two heads but no heart.

Wars, torture, concentration camps, the death of millions of people meant nothing to modern dictators like Lenin, Hitler, Stalin, Mao Tse tung, and their like.

This lack of human sentiment and sympathy is, in a way, of great advantage to him. He does not find it hard to be deprived of sensible consolations in prayer and to remain a long time in spiritual aridity. Effeminate, sentimental dispositions are repugnant to him; he hates the caresses and sentimentality which arise between intimate friends. False sympathy cannot influence him to neglect his duties or abandon his principles. On the other hand, this lack of sympathy has its great disadvantages. The choleric can be extremely hard, heartless, even cruel in regard to the sufferings of others. He can cold-bloodedly trample upon the welfare of others, if he cannot otherwise reach his goal. Choleric superiors should examine their conscience daily, to discover whether they have not shown a lack of sympathy toward their subjects, especially if these are sickly, less talented, fatigued, or elderly.

III. Bright Side of the Choleric

If the choleric develops his faculties and uses them for good and noble purposes, he may do great things for the honor of God, for the benefit of his fellow men, and for his own temporal and eternal welfare. He is assisted by his sharp intellect, his enthusiasm for the noble and the great, the force and resolution of his will, which shrinks before no difficulty, and the keen vivacity which influences all his thoughts and plans.

Saul, the persecutor of the infant Church, became Paul, the great Apostle who, as he himself said, did more than any other apostle for the spread of Christianity. He made himself "all things to all men that I might save all." (I. Cor. 9:22) He suffered all kinds of trials and persecution (see 2 Cor. ch. 12) in order to preach Christ, and Him Crucified, and sealed his mission by his martyrdom for the Gospel.

Many Saints, men and women, have done likewise, dedicating their unremitting labor and intense sufferings under severe persecutions to the service of Christ, as is proved by the thousands and thousands of martyrs of years past and of the present, outstanding among them Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary.

The choleric may with comparative ease become a saint. 'The persons canonized, with few exceptions, were choleric or melancholic. The choleric who is able to control his temperament is recollected in prayer, because by his strong will he can banish distractions and especially because by force of his nature, he can with great facility concentrate his attention upon one point. The latter may also be the cause, why the choleric so easily acquires the prayer of simplicity, or as St. Francis calls it, the prayer of recollection. 'With no other temperament do we find the spirit of contemplation, properly so called, as often as with the choleric. The well-trained choleric is very patient and firm in endurance of physical pains, willing to make sacrifices in sufferings, persevering in acts of penance and interior mortification, magnanimous and noble toward the indigent and conquered, full of aversion against everything ignoble or vulgar. Although pride penetrates the very soul of the choleric in all its fibers and ramifications, so much so that he seems to have only one vice, i.e., pride, which he shows in everything he undertakes, he can, nevertheless, if he earnestly aspires for perfection, easily bear the greatest and most degrading humiliations and even seek them. Because the choleric has not a soft but a hard heart, he naturally suffers less from temptation of the flesh and can practice purity with ease. But, if the choleric is voluntarily addicted to the vice of impurity and seeks his satisfaction therein, the outbursts of his passion are terrible and most abominable.'

The choleric is very successful also in his professional work. Being of an active temperament, he feels a continual inclination to activity and occupation. He cannot be without work, and he works quickly and diligently. In his enterprises he is persevering and full of courage in spite of obstacles. Without hesitation he can be placed at difficult posts and everything can be entrusted to him. In his speech the choleric is brief and definite; he abhors useless repetitions. This brevity, positiveness, firmness in speech and appearance gives him a great deal of authority especially when engaged in educational work. Choleric teachers have something virile about themselves and do not allow affairs to get beyond their control, as is often the case with slow, irresolute, melancholic persons. A choleric can keep a secret like a grave.

IV. Things to be Observed by the Choleric in his Training

1. A choleric needs high ideals and great thoughts; he must draw them from the word of God by meditation, spiritual reading, sermons, and also from the experience of his own life. There is no need of a multiplicity of such thoughts. For the choleric St. Ignatius it was sufficient to think: All for the greater glory of God; for the choleric St. Francis Xavier: What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his soul? One good thought which deeply impresses the choleric acts as a miraculous star which leads him, in spite of all obstacles, to the feet of the Redeemer.

2. A choleric must learn day by day and repeatedly to implore God fervently and humbly for His assistance. As long as he has not learned to beg he will not make big strides on the road to perfection. To him also apply the words of Christ: "Ask and you shall receive." The choleric will make still greater progress if he can humble himself to ask his fellow men, at least his superiors, or his confessor, for instructions and direction.

3. The choleric must above all keep one strong resolution in his mind: I will never seek myself, but on the contrary I will consider myself:

a) An instrument in the hands of God, which He may make use of at His pleasure.

b) A servant of my fellow men, who desires to spend himself for others. He must act according to the words of Christ: "Whosoever will be first among you, shall be the servant of all" (Matt 20:27 or Mark 10:44), or as St. Paul says of himself: He must become all things to all men, in order to save them. (1 Cor. 9:22)

4. The choleric must combat his pride and anger continually. Pride is the misfortune of the choleric, humility his only salvation. Therefore he should make it a point of his particular examination of conscience for years.

5. The choleric must humiliate himself voluntarily in confession, before his superiors, and even before others. Ask God for humiliations and accept them, when inflicted, magnanimously. For a choleric it is better to permit others to humiliate him, than to humiliate himself.

6. He must practice a true and trusting devotion to the humble and meek Heart of Jesus.

V. Special Considerations in the Training and Treatment of the Choleric

Cholerics are capable of great benefit to their family, their surroundings, their parish, or to the state on account of their ability. The choleric is naturally the born and never discouraged leader and organizer. The well-trained choleric apostle indefatigably and without fear seeks souls who are in danger; propagates good literature perseveringly, and in spite of many failures labors joyfully for the Catholic press and societies and consequently is of great service to the Church. On the other hand, the choleric can, if he does not control the weak side of his temperament, act as dynamite in private and public and cause great disturbance. For this reason it is necessary to pay special attention to The Training of the choleric, which is difficult but fruitful.

1. The choleric should be well instructed so that he can apply his good talents to the best advantage. Otherwise he will in the course of time pursue pet ideas to the neglect of his professional work, or what is worse, he will be very proud and conceited, although in reality he has not cultivated his faculties and is not, in fact, thorough.

Cholerics who are less talented or not sufficiently educated can make very many mistakes, once they are independent or have power to command as superiors. They are likely to make life harder for those around them, because they insist stubbornly upon the fulfillment of their orders, although they may not fully understand the affairs in question or may have altogether false ideas about them. Such choleric often act according to the ill famed motto: Sic volo, sic jubeo; stat pro ratione voluntas: Thus I want it, thus I command it; my will is sufficient reason.

2. The choleric must be influenced to accept voluntarily and gladly what is done for the humiliation of his pride and the soothing of his anger. By hard, proud treatment the choleric is not improved, but embittered and hardened; whereas even a very proud choleric can easily be influenced to good by reasonable suggestions and supernatural motives. In The Training of choleric the teacher should never allow himself to be carried away by anger nor should he ever give expression to the determination to "break" the obstinacy of the choleric person. It is absolutely necessary to remain calm and to allow the choleric to "cool off" and then to persuade him to accept guidance in order to correct his faults and bring out the good in him. In The Training of the choleric child one must place high ideas before him;

appeal to his good will, his sense of honor, his abhorrence of the vulgar, his temporal and eternal welfare; influence him voluntarily to correct his faults and develop his good qualities. Do not embitter him by humiliating penances, but try to show him the necessity and justice of the punishment inflicted; yet be firm in what you must demand.

Concluding Thoughts

Manual of Self-Knowledge and Christian Perfection

Now, kind reader, you may feel inclined to institute a comparison between these different temperaments. You may ask which of them is preferable. You will perceive the phlegmatic abounds in judgment, or, if you prefer, in intellect. The sanguinic excels in sentiment. The melancholic is greatly influenced by the imagination. The choleric towers over the others in will-power. Yet as R. Kiest (*Die Erzlehung im Elternhause*) states, it would be misleading to prefer one temperament to another. Every temperament has its bright side as well as its unfavorable characteristics. Neither may you assert that any one is led astray by the evil influences of his temperament. He cannot invoke these latter as an excuse for or justification of sin or wrong. For, if any one goes wrong, it is his own fault and want of proper direction. The root lies in the wrong tendency of his own selfishness. Similarly, the advantageous traits of the temperaments are of no moral value. Of themselves, they do not proceed from, nor lead to self-renunciation.

It will, however, be of great advantage to observe the distinguishing and analogous characteristics of these temperaments. These four temperaments form, as it were, two groups. Each group contains two temperaments that have distinguishing, but withal analogous, characteristics. They rest on the same foundation. There is an affinity between them. Thus there is an affinity between the melancholic and sanguinic temperaments. All their tendencies are personal, relate to the individual. The melancholic strives to refer everything to his own use and enjoyment. The sanguinic finds delight, amusement, in everything. These are the receptive temperaments. The choleric and phlegmatic temperaments relate to things external. The choleric endeavors to cultivate, change and ameliorate everything. The phlegmatic is intent on appropriating, putting in order and preserving things. These are the operative or spontaneous characters. These two groups are mutually repellent. Very seldom do they amalgamate. On the contrary, they avoid one another, they shun one another. They even antagonize one another. Thus you will not meet with choleric-phlegmatic or melancholic-sanguinic. But you will find choleric-melancholic, choleric-sanguinic; as well as phlegmatic-melancholic and phlegmatic-sanguinic characters. The reason is that, in every

individual there is found a fundamental temperament. This is circumscribed by another, but less pronounced temperament.

There are some unfortunate characters that have a well-nigh irresistible tendency to a career of crime. These unfortunates have a most violent hankering for lust. This is called the erotic temperament. It may be hereditary. It may be adventitious. In this connection it will suffice to notice the following. Rev. Jos. Aertuys, C.SS.R. *Theologia Pastoralis (Temperamenta)*, Rev. Jos. Antonelli, *Medicina Pastoralis (Temperamenta)*, and Alexander E. Sanford, M.D., *Pastoral Medicine (Appendix, Neurasthenia)*, remark that this temperament requires both a somatic and psychical treatment.³ These unhappy souls must be placed under the direction of a spiritual adviser as soon as possible.

³ A somatic treatment would be a physical or nutritional treatment.

The Perfection of Charity Consists in Conformity to the Will of God

All our perfection consists in the love of our infinitely amiable God. But the perfection of charity consists in the conformity of our will with the will of God. For as St. Dionysius the Areopagite teaches, the principal effect of love consists therein that, it unites the hearts of the lovers most intimately, to the extent that they have but one will. Thus the more we are one with the will of God, the greater is our love of God. As hatred holds apart the will among enemies, love unites the will among lovers. Thus St. Jerome writes, "Two persons will love one another truly, when one desires but what the other wills." For this reason the Book of Wisdom says, "They that are faithful in love shall rest in Him." (Wis. 3:9) Souls that are attached to God in true love concur in everything He arranges. Accordingly, St. Francis de Sales was right in maintaining that piety consists in the firm will to do everything one knows to be pleasing to God. St. Thomas maintains the same, saying, "Piety consists in the readiness to do all that God demands."

In order that a thing may be good and perfect it must conform to its destiny. Thus a tool is good only, when it is serviceable to the workman in his labor. For of what use will it be otherwise? Thus, of what use to a decorator will a brush be that resists his hand, that goes to the left when the delineator wishes it to go to the right, that rises when he wishes it to descend? Would not the artist instantly cast such a brush into the fire? Man is in this world to serve God only and thus glorify Him. This sublime end he can attain only by doing the will of God, the Supreme Lord. If, therefore, man desires to be good and perfect he must spend his life in accomplishing what God wills.

Does a man that follows his own inclinations serve God? Certainly not! Let us take the case of a man that has two servants. The one labors unceasingly all day long but does what is pleasing to himself only. The other exerts himself less, but is subservient in all things.

Certainly the master will cherish the latter but not the former. The malice of sin consists in willing what God does not will. For sin, according to St. Anselm is, so to speak, an attempt to rob God of His crown. "He that follows his own will," says St. Anselm, "robs, as it were, God of His crown. For as crowns belong to kings only so it

belongs to God to carry out His will independently of others." Indeed according to the words of Samuel to Saul it is a species of idolatry to refuse to be directed by God's will. "It is like the crime of idolatry, to refuse to obey." (I Kings 15:23) He is right, for instead of adoring the will of God man worships his own will. In as far as the whole malice of a creature consists in resisting God, thus all his greatness consists in making the will of God his own. According to the prophet Isaías God gives a soul that seeks His good pleasure the name "My Will." "My pleasure in her." (Is. 62:4) This appellation is fully justified for the will of God lives in him that has forsaken his own will. In order to be according to the heart of God, a Christian must accomplish His holy will. "I have found David, a man according to my own heart, who shall do all my wills." (Acts 13:22) That great king, as he often attests, was ever ready to fulfil the Word of God. "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready." (Ps. 66:8) All he desired was that God teach him to accomplish His holy will, "Make the way known to me, wherein I should walk," (Ps 112:8), he sighed. O how happy is the man that can always say with the spouse in the Canticles "My soul melted, when he spoke." (Canticle 5:6) As liquids have no form of their own but take the form of the vessel that contains them, thus the souls that love God have no will of their own but correspond in all things to their beloved; or rather they have a pliable heart that conforms itself to everything that is pleasing to the Lord in opposition to the hard hearted that resist Him.

How can our works be conducive to the honor of God if they are not accomplished according to His good pleasure? "And Samuel said, Doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed?" (I Kings 15:22) The greatest honor we can bestow on God consists in doing His holy will in all things. This our divine Saviour sought to teach us by example when He came down upon this earth to spread the honor of His heavenly Father among men. Listen! St. Paul makes Him address His eternal Father, "Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldest not; but a body Thou hast fitted to me. . . . Then said I: "Behold I come to do Thy will O God." (Hebrews 10:5,9) That is, "The holocaust offered Thee by men Thou hast rejected. Thou wiliest that I should sacrifice to Thee the body Thou has given me. Behold I am ready to accomplish Thy will." Our Saviour attested repeatedly that He had come to do the will of His Father. "I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." (St. John 6:38) He declares He will look upon him who accomplishes the will of God as a brother. "For whosoever

shall do the will of My Father, that is in heaven, he is My brother." (Matt. 12:50) The saints had no other object in all they did than to do the will of God according to the example of their divine Master. They knew full well that the perfection of a soul consists therein. Blessed Henry Suso says, "God does not demand that we enjoy many and sublime revelations but that in all things we subject ourselves to the will of God." St. Teresa said: "During meditation we should not seek anything else than to make our will conformable to the will of God, being persuaded that herein consists the height of perfection. He that excels in this regard will also receive the greatest gifts of grace from God and make the greatest progress in the interior life." (Castles of the Soul II. Chapt. i.) One day the blessed Dominican Sister Stephanie of Soncino was transported in spirit into heaven. There she saw several souls among the Seraphim she had known on earth. It was revealed to her they had attained this sublime degree of glory because they had practised conformity to the will of God so perfectly on earth.

From the blessed denizens of heaven we must learn how to love God. Their pure and perfect love of our Lord consists in the perfect oneness of their will with His. Should the Seraphim happen to believe it to be God's will that for all eternity they should heap up the sands on the shores of the oceans or root out the weeds in the gardens, they would do so with the greatest joy. Nay, should God utter the wish that they burn in hell they would instantly plunge themselves into the fiery abyss to comply with His holy will. Therefore our Lord teaches us to pray that we on earth may accomplish the will of God as the Angels are doing in heaven. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Since we possess nothing that is so dear to us as our own will the sacrifice of it is the most pleasing offering we can give the Lord. It is also the sacrifice that he most urgently demands, saying: "My son, give me thy heart." (Prov. 23:26) That is to say, thy will. St. Augustine says we cannot offer God anything more pleasing than when we say: "Take entire possession of us, we give Thee our entire will." He that gives to God his own will gives Him everything. He that offers God his property in bestowing alms, his blood by scourging, his food by fasting gives a part of what he possesses. But he that gives God his own will gives Him everything and can then say: "O Lord, I am poor (have but little to offer) but I will give Thee all I am able to give; after giving up my will nothing more remains to me that I could give."

In order that this sacrifice be perfect it must possess two qualities: it must be entire and constant. Some persons do give their

will to God but with a sort of reservation. Such a gift is not very pleasing to God.

Others give God their will but later on take the gift back again. These are in the greatest danger of being abandoned by God. To avert such a misfortune all our efforts, all our desires and prayers ought to be for perseverance that we may never desire aught but what God wills. Let us daily renew our entire abandonment into the hands of God. Let us beware of desiring anything whatever except the good pleasure of God. This will rid us of all passions, concupiscences, fear and disorderly attachments. One act of perfect conformity to the will of God is able to lead us to perfection. Let us look on Saul. When on the point of persecuting the Christians he is enlightened and converted by Jesus Christ. What does Saul do? What does he say? One thing only. He pledges himself to do the will of God. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6) Behold, at once the Lord calls him a vessel of election to carry his name before the Gentiles.

Very few Christians understand wherein true piety consists. The majority accommodate it to their inclinations. If they are sad they seek solitude. If they feel drawn to an active life, they devote themselves to works for the zeal of souls. If they feel drawn to a life of severity they practise penance and mortification. If they are inclined to liberality they give alms. Others practise prayer and devotions diligently, and in these things they place their whole sanctity. All these are mistaken. The external works may be the fruit of the love of God. But the essence of charity is entire conformity with the divine will. On that account it is necessary to renounce oneself and choose what is most pleasing to God from the sole motive that He is deserving of it.

Those that place sanctity in undergoing penances, in receiving Communion frequently, and reciting many vocal prayers, most certainly deceive themselves. Perfection does not consist in these things. According to St. Thomas, perfection consists in subjecting oneself to the will of God. Penances, prayers, communions are good only in as far as God wills them. If they are not according to the will of God instead of taking pleasure in them God will detest and punish them. They are, therefore, means to unite us to the divine will. But, I repeat, all perfection, all sanctity, consists in doing what God demands of us. In a word the divine will is the criterion of all that is good and is virtuous. As the will of God is holy it sanctifies everything, even in different works, provided they are performed to please God.

A great servant of God was right in saying, "It is better to resolve to do the will of God than to seek the honor of God." For if we

perform His will we also promote His honor. Hence we deceive ourselves if, under the pretext of seeking the honor of God, we follow our own will. From all that has been said it follows clearly that, if we wish to sanctify ourselves we must be wholly intent on doing not our will but the will of God. All the divine commandments and counsels have the purpose that we do and suffer what God wills and as He wills. Hence all perfection can be summed up in the words, "Do all that God wills, will all that God wills" and this with the sole purpose of pleasing Him. "Is it not therefore true that all can become saints, men and women, young and old, maidens and mothers of families, rich and poor, rulers and subjects, masters and apprentices, merchants and soldiers, business men and officials?" (Rev. A. Hellbach, C.SS.R.)

If we desire to please the heart of God completely we must not be content to conform ourselves to His will, but we must strive, so to speak, to become one with His will. We conform ourselves to the will of God simply by directing our will to the will of God. But we become one with His will when we make but one will of both, when we will only what God wills. Or if we so totally renounce our own will that the will of God alone remains and becomes ours. This is the height of perfection for which we should strive incessantly. All our actions, desires, meditations and prayers must tend to this. To strive for this more effectually we must ask for the assistance of our patron saints, our angel guardian, of St. Joseph, and above all of the blessed Mother of God. The blessed Virgin Mary is the holiest of creatures, because she most perfectly carried out the will of God.

The pious Dominican Father, John Tauler, relates the following incident that happened to himself. For a number of years he had ardently and fervently prayed God to send him someone that might instruct him in the truly spiritual life. One day he heard a voice saying, "Go to that church and you will find what you are seeking." The father obeyed. At the door of the church pointed out to him, he met a beggar, bare footed and clothed in rags. He saluted him with the words: "Good day, my friend." "Father," the poor man replied, "I cannot remember ever having had a bad day." "Well," replied the Father, "may God grant you a happy life!" "Thank God!" said the beggar, "I have never been unhappy," adding, "Father, it is not without reason that I say I never had a bad day. For, when I suffer hunger I praise God; when it snows or rains I bless Him; when any one treats me with contempt, repels me or when I have other sufferings I praise the Lord for them. I said I never felt unhappy and that, also, is true. I am accustomed to will unreservedly all that God wills. Whatever comes upon me, sweet .

and bitter, I joyfully accept from his hand as best for me. And in this consists my good fortune." "But," said Father Tauler, "should God wish to condemn you to hell what would you say then?" "Should God will that," answered the beggar, "I would, in love and humility, so firmly embrace Our Lord that if He cast me into hell He would necessarily have to follow me. And, then, I would feel happier in hell in His holy embrace than without Him in the enjoyment of all the joys of paradise." "Where did you find God?" "I found Him when I left creatures." "But who are you?" "I am a king." "Where is your kingdom?" "In my heart where all is kept in strict order; for my passions obey reason and my reason obeys God." Finally Father Tauler asked the beggar how he had attained such perfection. "By keeping silence with men in order to commune with God and by constantly remaining united to God, who is my peace and enjoyment." Thus this poor beggar had attained great perfection; despite poverty he esteemed himself richer than all the princes of the earth; despite suffering he esteemed himself happier than men in the midst of all earthly pleasures.

O my God, I thank Thee for having made the road to perfection so easy. I am determined henceforth, with the assistance of Thy grace, to walk the way of perfection. For this purpose I unite myself unreservedly to Thy will because it is always most holy, most good, most beautiful, most perfect, most amiable. O will of my God, how dear Thou art to me! I desire to live and die intimately united to Thy will. What is pleasing to Thee will be pleasing to me. Thy desires will also be my desires. O my God, assist me: grant that hence forth I may live to wish that only which Thou desirest and in order to accomplish Thy amiable will. I detest the days on which I did my own will to Thy great displeasure. I love Thee, O will of my God, as much as I love God, because Thou art one with God.

Means of Acquiring Perfection

The Desire of Perfection Holy Desires Are Useful and Even Necessary

An ardent desire of perfection is the first means that a Christian should adopt in order to acquire sanctity and to consecrate his whole being to God. As the sportsman, to hit a bird in flight, must take aim in advance of his prey, so a Christian, to make progress in virtue, should aspire to the highest degree of holiness which it is in his power to attain. "Who," says holy David, "will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest." (Ps. 54:7) Who will give me the wings of the dove to fly to my God, and, divested of all earthly affection, to repose in the bosom of the divinity? Holy desires are the blessed wings with which the saints burst every worldly tie, and fly to the mountain of perfection, where they find that peace which the world can not give.

But how do fervent desires make the soul fly to God? "They," says St. Laurence Justinian, "supply strength and render pains light and tolerable." (De Disc. mon. c. 6.) On the one hand, good desires give strength and courage, and on the other they diminish the labor and fatigue of ascending the mountain of God. Whosoever, through diffidence of attaining sanctity, does not ardently desire to become a saint, will never arrive at perfection. A man who is desirous of obtaining a valuable treasure which he knows is to be found at the top of a lofty mountain, but who, through fear of fatigue and difficulty, has no desire of ascending, will never advance a single step toward the wished-for object, but will remain below in careless indifference and inactivity. And he who, because the path of virtue appears to him narrow and rugged and difficult to be trodden, does not desire to climb up the mountain of the Lord, and to gain the treasure of perfection, will always continue in a state of tepidity, and will never make the smallest progress in the way of God.

On the contrary, he who does not desire, and does not strenuously endeavor, always to advance in holiness, will, as we learn from experience and from all the masters of the spiritual life, go backward in the path of virtue, and will be exposed to a great danger of eternal misery. "The path of the just," says Solomon, "as a shining light goeth forward and increaseth even to perfect day. The way of the wicked is dark some: they know not when they fall." (Prov. 4:18-19) As light increases constantly from sunrise to full day, so the path of the saints always advances; but the way of the sinners becomes

continually more dark and gloomy, till they know not where they go, and at length walk over a precipice. "Not to advance," says St. Augustine, "is to go back." (Ep. 17, E. B.) St. Gregory (Past. p. 3, c. i.) beautifully explains this maxim of spiritual life by comparing a Christian who seeks to remain stationary in the path of virtue to a man who is on a boat in a rapidly-flowing river, and striving to keep the boat always in the same position. If the boat be not continually propelled against the current, it will be carried away in the opposite direction, and consequently, without continual exertion, its station cannot be maintained. Since the fall of Adam man is naturally inclined to evil from his birth. "For the imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth." (Gen. 8:21) If he does not push forward, if he does not endeavor, by incessant efforts, to improve in sanctity, the very current of passion will carry him back. "Since you do not wish to proceed," says St. Bernard, addressing a tepid soul, "you must fail." "By no means," she replies; "I wish to live and remain in my present state. I will not consent to be worse; and I do not desire to be better." "You, then," rejoins the saint, "wish what is impossible." (Ep. 254.) Because in the way of God, a Christian must either go forward and advance in virtue, or go backward and rush headlong into vice.

In seeking eternal salvation, we must, according to St. Paul, never rest, but must run continually in the way of perfection, that we may win the prize, and secure an incorruptible crown. "So run that you may obtain." (I Cor. 9:24) If we fail, the fault will be ours; FOR GOD WILLS THAT ALL BE HOLY AND PERFECT. "This is the will of God your sanctification." (I Thess. 4:3) He even commands us to be perfect and holy. "Be you therefore perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. 5:48) "Be holy because I am holy." (Lev. 11:44) He promises and gives, as the holy Council of Trent teaches, abundant strength, for the observance of all His commands, to those who ask it from Him. "God does not command impossibilities; but by His precepts He admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask what you cannot do; and He assists you, that you may be able to do it." (Session 6) God does not command impossibilities; but he requires us to do what we can by the aid of his ordinary grace; and when greater helps are necessary, he exhorts us to seek them by humble prayer. He will infallibly attend to our petitions, and enable us to observe all, even the most difficult, of His commandments. Take courage, then, and adopt the advice of the Venerable Father Torres to a religious, who was one of his penitents: "Let us, my child, put on the wings of strong

desires, that, quitting the earth, we may fly to our Spouse and our Beloved, who expects us in the blessed kingdom of eternity."

St. Augustine teaches that the life of a good Christian is one continued longing after perfection. "The whole life," says the saint, "of a good Christian is holy desire." (i Jo. tr. 4.) He that cherishes not in his heart the desire of sanctity, may be a Christian; but he will not be a good one.

As it is impossible to arrive at perfection in any art or science without ardent desires of its attainment, so no one has ever yet become a saint, but by strong and fervent aspirations after sanctity. "God," observes St. Teresa, "ordinarily confers his signal favors on those only who thirst after His love." "Blessed," says the Royal Prophet, "is the man whose help is from Thee: in his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps in the vale of tears. . . . They shall go from virtue to virtue." (Ps. 83:6-8) Happy the man who has resolved in his soul to mount the ladder of perfection: he shall receive abundant aid from God, and will ascend from virtue to virtue. Such has been the practise of the saints, and especially of St. Andrew Avellino, who even bound himself by vow "to advance continually in the way of Christian perfection." (Offic. 10 Nov.) St. Teresa used to say that "God rewards, even in this life, every good desire." It was by good desires that the saints arrived in a short time at a sublime degree of sanctity. "Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time." (Wis. 4:13) It was thus that St. Aloysius, who lived but twenty-five years, acquired such perfection, that St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, who saw him in bliss, declared that his glory appeared equal to that of most of the saints. In the vision he said to her: "My eminent sanctity was the fruit of an ardent desire, which I cherished during my life, of loving God as much as He deserves to be loved: and being unable to love Him with that infinite love which He merits, I suffered on earth a continual martyrdom of love, for which I am now raised to that transcendent glory which I enjoy."

The works of St. Teresa contain, besides those that have been already adduced, many beautiful passages on this subject. "Our thoughts," says the saint, "should be aspiring: from great desires all our good shall come." In another place she says: "We must not lower our desires, but should trust in God, that by continual exertion we shall, by His grace, arrive at sanctity and the felicity of the saints." Again she says: "The divine Majesty takes complacency in generous souls who are diffident in themselves." The great saint asserted that in all her experience she never knew a timid Christian to attain as much

virtue in many years as certain courageous souls acquire in a few days. The reading of the lives of the saints contributes greatly to infuse courage into the soul.

It will be particularly useful to read the lives of those who, after being great sinners, became eminent saints; such as the lives of St. Mary Magdalen, St. Augustine, St. Pelagia, St. Mary of Egypt, and especially of St. Margaret of Cortona, who was for many years in a state of damnation, but even then cherished a desire of sanctity, and who, after her conversion, flew to perfection with such rapidity, that she merited to learn by revelation, even in this life, not only that she was predestined to glory, but also that a place was prepared for her among the seraphim.

St. Teresa says that the devil seeks to persuade us that it would be pride in us to desire a high degree of perfection, or to wish to imitate the saints. She adds, that it is a great delusion to regard strong desires of sanctity as the offspring of pride; for it is not pride when a soul diffident of herself and trusting only in the power of God, resolves to walk courageously in the way of perfection, saying with the Apostle: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." (Phil. 6:13) Of myself I can do nothing; but by His aid I shall be able to do all things, and therefore I resolve, with his grace, to desire to love Him as the saints have loved Him.

It is very profitable frequently to aspire after the most exalted virtue, and to desire it; such as to love God more than all the saints; to suffer for the love of Him more than all the martyrs; to bear and to pardon all injuries; to embrace every sort of fatigue and suffering, for the sake of saving a single soul; and to perform similar acts of perfect charity. Because these holy aspirations and desires, though their object may never be attained, are, in the first place, very meritorious in the sight of God, who glories in men of good will, as He abominates a perverse heart and evil inclinations. Secondly, because the habit of aspiring to heroic sanctity animates and encourages the soul to perform acts of ordinary and easy virtue. Hence, it is of great importance to propose in the morning to labor as much as possible for God during the day; to resolve to bear patiently all crosses and contradictions; to observe constant recollection; and to make continual acts of the love of God. Such was the practise of the seraphic St. Francis. "He proposed," says St. Bonaventure, "with the grace of Jesus Christ, to do great things." St. Teresa asserts that "the Lord is as well pleased with good desires as with their fulfilment." Oh! how much better it is to serve God than to serve the world. To acquire goods of the earth, to procure

wealth, honors and applause of men, it is not enough to pant after them with ardor; no, to desire and not to obtain them only renders their absence more painful. But to merit the riches and the favor of God, it is sufficient to desire His grace and love. St. Augustine relates that in a convent of hermits there entered two officers of the emperor's court, one of whom began to read the life of St. Anthony. "He read," says the holy Doctor, "and his heart was stripped of the world." Turning to his companion, he said: "What do we seek? Can we expect from the emperor anything better than his friendship? Through how many dangers are we to reach still greater perils? and how long shall this last? Fools that we have been, shall we still continue to serve the emperor in the midst of so many labors, fears and troubles? We can hope for nothing better than his favor; and should we obtain it, we would only increase the danger of our eternal reprobation. It is only with difficulty that we shall ever procure the patronage of Caesar, but if I will it, behold I am in a moment the friend of God." Because whoever wishes with a true and resolute desire for the friendship of God, instantly obtains it.

I say, "with a true and resolute desire," for little profit is derived from the fruitless desires of slothful souls, who always desire to be saints, but never advance a single step in the way of God. Of them Solomon says: "The sluggard willeth and willeth not." (Prov. 13:4) And again: "Desires kill the slothful." (Ibid. 21:25) The tepid soul desires perfection, but reflecting on the fatigue necessary for its attainment, she desires it not. Thus "she willeth and willeth not." Her desires of sanctity are not efficacious; they have for their object means of salvation incompatible with her state. ... "I do not," says St. Francis de Sales, "approve of the conduct of those who, while bound by an obligation, or placed in any state, spend their time in wishing for another manner of life, inconsistent with their duties; or for exercises incompatible with their present state. For these desires dissipate the heart, and make it languish in the necessary exercises." (Introduct. ch. 37.) It is, then, the duty of every Christian to aspire only after that perfection which is suitable to his present state and to his actual obligations; and whether a superior, or a subject, whether in sickness or in health, the vigor of youth or the imbecility of old age, to adopt, resolutely, the means of sanctity suitable to his condition of life. "The devil," says St. Teresa, "sometimes persuades us that we have acquired the virtue, for example, of patience, because we determine to suffer a great deal for God. We feel really convinced that we are ready to accept any cross, however great, for His sake; and this conviction

makes us quite content, for the devil assists us to believe that we are willing to bear all things for God. I advise you not to trust much to such virtue, not to think that you even know it, except in name, until you see it tried. It will probably happen that on the first occasion of contradiction all this patience will fall to the ground."

Moral Necessity of Mental Prayer

Let us now come to what is most important the means to be adopted for acquiring perfection. The principal means is mental prayer, and particularly the meditation of the claims which God has to our love, and of the love which He has borne us, especially in the great work of redemption. To redeem us, a God has even sacrificed His life in a sea of sorrows and contempt; and to obtain our love He has gone so far as to make Himself our food. To inflame the soul with the fire of divine love, these truths must be frequently meditated. "In my meditation," says David, "a fire shall flame out." (Ps. 38:4). When I contemplate the goodness of my God, the flames of charity fill my whole heart.

Let us examine what makes mental prayer so necessary.

1. In the first place, without mental prayer a soul is without light. "They," says St. Augustine, "who keep their eyes shut, cannot see the way of their country."⁴ The eternal truths are all spiritual things that are seen, not with the eyes of the body, but with the eyes of the mind, that is, by reflection and consideration. Now, they who do not make use of mental prayer do not see these truths, nor do they see the importance of eternal salvation, and the means that they must adopt in order to obtain it. The loss of so many souls arises from the neglect of considering the great affair of our salvation, and what we must do in order to be saved. "With desolation," says the prophet Jeremias, "is all the land made desolate: because there is none that considereth in the heart." (Jer. 12:11) On the other hand, the Lord says that he who keeps before his eyes the truths of faith, death, judgment, and the happy or unhappy eternity that awaits us, shall never fall into sin. "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin." (Ecclus. 7:40.) "Come near to Him," says David, "and you shall be enlightened." (Ps.

⁴ By insisting on the moral necessity of mental prayer, St. Alphonsus does not demand that every one must follow a certain method. There are many methods and degrees of mental prayer. There is a method of mental prayer that all can use, viz., calling to mind a sermon; reading from some pious book and stopping between the sentences; then reflecting a moment, applying the reading, etc., to oneself, making short aspirations, asking for pardon, for help of grace and taking an appropriate resolution. By this means many are converted on missions and in retreats. This sort of mental prayer may be said to be necessary for all Christians to obtain conversion and holy perseverance. By reflecting on the disadvantageous traits of one's temperament, as explained above, it will be easy to discover the faults to which one is prone. This reflection will render easy the petitions for one's spiritual wants. To facilitate this sort of mental prayer, the prayers composed by St. Alphonsus were retained in the following chapters.

33:6) In another place our Saviour says "Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands." (Luke 12:35)

These lamps are, according to St. Bonaventure, holy meditations; for in prayer the Lord speaks to us, and enlightens, in order to show us the way of salvation. "Thy word is a lamp to my feet." (Ps. 118:105) St. Bonaventure also says that mental prayer is, as it were, a mirror, in which we see all the stains of the soul. In a letter to the Bishop of Osma, St. Teresa says: "Although it appears to us that we have no imperfections, still when God opens the eyes of the soul, as He usually does in prayer, our imperfections are then clearly seen." (Letter viii.) He who does not make mental prayer does not even know his defects, and therefore, as St. Bernard says, he does not abhor them. (De Consid. i. i, c. 2.) He does not even know the dangers to which his eternal salvation is exposed, and therefore he does not even think of avoiding them. But he that applies himself to meditation instantly sees his faults, and the dangers of perdition, and seeing them, he will reflect on the remedies for them. By meditating on eternity, David was excited to the practise of virtue, and to sorrow and works of penance for his sins. "I thought upon the days of old, and I had in my mind the eternal years, . . . and I was exercised, and I swept my spirit." (76:6) The spouse in the Canticles said: "The flowers have appeared in our land: the time of pruning is come: the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." (Cant. 2:12) When the soul, like the solitary turtle, retires and recollects itself in meditation to converse with God, then the flowers, that is, good desires appear; then comes the time of pruning, that is, the correction of faults that are discovered in mental prayer. "Consider," says St. Bernard, "that the time of pruning is at hand, if the time of meditation has gone before." (De Consid. 12, c. 6.) "For," says the saint in another place, "meditation regulates the affections, directs the actions, and corrects defects." (Ibid, i, 2, c. 7.)

Besides, without meditation there is not strength to resist the temptations of our enemies, and to practise the virtues of the Gospel. "Meditation," says the Venerable Bartholomew of the Martyrs, "is like fire with regard to iron, which when cold is hard, and can be wrought only with difficulty, but placed in the fire it becomes soft, and the workman gives it any form he wishes." To observe the divine precepts and counsels, it is necessary to have a tender heart, that is, a heart docile and prepared to receive the impressions of celestial inspirations, and ready to obey them. It was this that Solomon asked of God: "Give, therefore, to thy servant an understanding heart." (3 Kings 3:9) Sin has made our heart hard and undocile; for being altogether inclined to

sensual pleasures, it resists, as the Apostle complained, the laws of the spirit. "But I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind." (Rom. 7:23) But the soul is rendered docile and tender to the influence of grace that is communicated in mental prayer. By the contemplation of the divine goodness, the great love which God has borne him, and the immense benefits that God has bestowed upon him, man is inflamed with love, his heart is softened, and made obedient to the divine inspirations. But without mental prayer his heart will remain hard and restive and disobedient, and thus he shall be lost. "A hard heart shall fare evil at the last." (Ecclus. iii. 27.) Hence, St. Bernard exhorted Pope Eugene never to omit meditation on account of external occupations. "I fear for you, O Eugene, lest the multitude of affairs (prayer and consideration being intermixed), may bring you to a hard heart, which abhors not itself, because it perceives not." (Consid. i. i. c. 2.)

Some may imagine that the long time which devout souls give to prayer, and which they could spend in useful works, is unprofitable and lost time. But such persons know not that in mental prayer souls acquire strength to conquer enemies and practise virtue. "From the leisure," says St. Bernard, "strength comes forth." Hence the Lord commanded that his spouse should not be disturbed. "I adjure you . . . that you stir not up, nor make the beloved to awake till she please." (Cant. 2:7) He says, until she please: for the sleep or repose which the soul takes in mental prayer is perfectly voluntary, but is at the same time necessary for its spiritual life. He who does not sleep, has not strength to work, nor to walk, but goes tottering along the way. The soul that does not repose and acquire strength in meditation is not able to resist temptations, and totters on the road. In the life of the Venerable Sister Mary Crucified we read that while at prayer she heard a devil boasting that he had made a certain pious soul omit the accustomed meditation, and that afterwards, because he continued to tempt her, she was in danger of consenting to mortal sin. The servant of God ran to her, and with the divine aid rescued her from the criminal suggestion. Behold the danger to which one who omits meditation exposes his soul. St. Teresa used to say that he who neglects mental prayer needs not a devil to carry him to hell, but that he brings himself there with his own hands. And the Abbot Diodes said that "the man who omits mental prayer soon becomes either a beast or a devil."

Without petitions on our part God does not grant the divine helps, and without aid from God we cannot observe the

commandments; hence the Apostle exhorted his disciples to pray always. "Pray without ceasing." (Thess. 5:17) "We are poor mendicants. I am a beggar and poor." (Ps. 39:18) The entire revenue of the poor consists in asking alms from the rich; and our riches also consist in prayer, that is, in the prayer of petition; for by prayer, says St. John Chrysostom, "we may obtain from God His Graces. Without prayer it is absolutely impossible to lead a good life." and, says the learned Monsignor Abelly, "what but the neglect of mental prayer can be the cause of the great relaxation of morals that we witness?" God has an ardent desire to enrich us with His graces, but, as St. Gregory writes, He wishes to be entreated, and, as it were, forced by our prayers to grant them to us. "God," says the holy Doctor, "wishes to be asked, He wishes to be compelled, He wishes to be overcome by a certain importunity." (In Ps. poenit. 6.) According to St. John Chrysostom, it is impossible for him who attends to prayer to fall into sin. And in another place he says that when the devils see that we pray, they immediately cease to tempt us.

From the absolute necessity of the prayer of petition arises the moral necessity of mental prayer; for he who neglects meditation, and is distracted with worldly affairs, will not know his spiritual wants, the dangers to which his salvation is exposed, the means which he must adopt in order to conquer temptations, or even the necessity of the prayer of petition for all men; thus he will give up the practise of prayer, and by neglecting to ask God's graces, he will certainly be lost. The great Bishop Palafox, in his Annotations to the letters of St. Teresa, says: "How can charity last, unless God gives perseverance? How will the Lord give us perseverance if we neglect to ask Him for it? And how shall we ask it without mental prayer? Without mental prayer, there is not the communication with God which is necessary for the preservation of virtue." And Cardinal Bellarmine says that for him who neglects meditation, it is morally impossible to live without sin. Some one may say, "I do not make mental prayer, but I say vocal prayers." But it is necessary to know, as St. Augustine remarks, that to obtain divine grace it is not enough to pray with the tongue: it is necessary also to pray with the heart. On the words of David: "I cried to the Lord with my voice." (Ps. cxli. 2) the holy Doctor says: "Many cry not with their own voices (that is, not the interior voice of the soul), but with that of the body." "Your thoughts are a cry to the Lord." (Enarr. in Ps. cxli.) This is what the Apostle inculcates. "Praying at all times in the spirit." (Eph. vi. 18.) "Cry within where God hears." (In Ps. 30 en. 4.) In general, vocal prayers are said distractedly with the

voice of the body, but not of the heart, especially when they are long, and still more especially when said by a person who does not make mental prayer; and therefore God seldom hears them, and seldom grants the graces asked. Many say the Rosary, the Office of the Blessed Virgin, and perform other works of devotion; but they still continue in sin. It is impossible for him who perseveres in mental prayer to continue in sin; he will either give up meditations or denounce sin. A great servant of God used to say that mental prayer and sin cannot exist together. And this we see by experience: they who make mental prayer rarely incur the enmity of God; and should they ever have the misfortune of falling into sin, by persevering in mental prayer they see their misery, and return to God. "Let a soul," says St. Teresa, "be ever so negligent, if she perseveres in meditation, the Lord will bring her back to the haven of salvation." (Life, ch. 8.)

All the saints have become saints by mental prayer. Mental prayer is the blessed furnace in which souls are inflamed with divine love. "In my meditation," says David, "a fire shall flame out." (Ps. 38:4) St. Vincent of Paul used to say, that it would be a miracle if a sinner who attends at the sermons in the mission, or in the spiritual exercises, were not converted. Now, he who preaches and speaks in the exercises is only a man; but it is God himself that speaks to the soul in meditation. "I will lead her into the wilderness; and I will speak to her heart." (Osee 2:14.) St. Catherine of Bologna used to say: "He who does not practise mental prayer deprives himself of the bond that unites the soul to God; hence, finding her alone, the devil will easily make her his own." "How," she would say, "can I conceive that the love of God is found in the soul that cares but little to treat with God in prayer?"

Where but in meditation have the saints been inflamed with divine love? By means of mental prayer St. Peter of Alcantara was inflamed to such a degree that in order to cool himself he ran into a frozen pool, and the frozen water began to boil like water in a caldron placed on a fire. In mental prayer St. Philip Neri became inflamed, and trembled so that he shook the entire room. In mental prayer St. Aloysius Gonzaga was so inflamed with divine ardor that his very face appeared to be on fire, and his heart beat as strongly as if it wished to fly from the body.

St. Laurence Justinian says: "By the efficacy of mental prayer temptation is banished, sadness is driven away, lost virtue is restored, fervor which has grown cold is excited, and the lovely flame of love is augmented." Hence, St. Aloysius Gonzaga has justly said that he who

does not make much mental prayer will never attain a high degree of perfection.

"A man of prayer," says David, "is like a tree planted near the current of waters, which brings forth fruit in due time; all his actions prosper before God. Blessed is the man . . . who shall meditate on His law day and night! And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season, and his leaf shall not fall off: and all, whatsoever he shall do, shall prosper." (Ps. 1:1-3) Mark the words, in due season; that is, at the time when he ought to bear such a pain, such an affront, etc.

St. John Chrysostom compared mental prayer to a fountain in the middle of a garden. Oh! what an abundance of flowers and verdant plants do we see in the garden which is always refreshed with water from the fountain. Such, precisely, is the soul that practises mental prayer; you will see that she always advances in good desires, and that she always brings forth more abundant fruits of virtue. Whence does she receive so many blessings? From meditation, by which she is continually irrigated. "Thy plants are a paradise of pomegranates with the fruits of the orchard, . . . the fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, which run with a strong stream from Libanus." (Cant. 4:13) But let the fountain cease to water the garden, and, behold, the flowers, plants, and all instantly wither away; and why? Because the water has failed. You will see that as long as a soul makes mental prayer she is modest, humble, devout, and mortified in all things. But let her omit meditation, you will instantly find her wanting in modesty of the eyes, proud, resenting every word, indevout, no longer frequenting the sacraments and the church; you will find her attached to vanity, to useless conversations, to pastimes, and to earthly pleasures; and why? The water has failed, and therefore fervor has ceased. "My soul is as earth without water unto thee . . . My spirit hath fainted away." (Ps. 112:6-7.) The soul has neglected mental prayer, the garden is therefore dried up, and the miserable soul goes from bad to worse. When a soul abandons meditation St. John Chrysostom regards it not only as sick, but as dead. "He," says the holy Doctor, "who prays not to God, nor desires to enjoy assiduously His divine conversation, is dead. . . . The death of the soul is not to be prostrated before God." The same Father says that mental prayer is the root of the fruitful vine. And St. John Climacus writes that prayer is "a bulwark against the assault of afflictions, the spring of virtues, the procurer of graces." Rufinus asserts that all the spiritual progress of the soul flows from mental prayer. (Ps. 36) And Gerson goes so far as to say, that "he who

neglects meditation cannot, without a miracle, lead the life of a Christian."

Speaking of mental prayer, Jeremias says: "He shall sit solitary, and hold his peace; because he hath taken it up upon himself." (Lam. 3:28.) That is, a soul cannot have a relish for God, unless it withdraws from creatures, and sits, that is stops, to contemplate the goodness, the love, the amiableness of God. But when solitary and recollected in meditation, that is, when it takes away its thoughts from the world, it is then raised above itself, and departs from prayer very different from what it was when it began it.

St. Ignatius of Loyola used to say that mental prayer is the short way to attain perfection. In a word, he who advances most in meditation makes the most progress in perfection. In mental prayer the soul is filled with holy thoughts, with holy affections, desires, and holy resolutions, and with love for God. There man sacrifices his passions, his appetites, his earthly attachments, and all the interests of self-love. Moreover, by praying for them in mental prayer we can save many sinners, as was done by St. Teresa, St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, and is done by all souls enamoured of God, who never omit in their meditations to recommend to him all infidels, heretics and all poor sinners; begging him also to give zeal to priests who work in his vineyard, that they may convert his enemies. In mental prayer we can also, by the sole desire of performing them, gain merit of many good works which we do not perform. For as the Lord punishes the bad desires, so, on the other hand, He rewards all our good desires.

It is necessary, above all, to be careful not to go to mental prayer in order to enjoy consolation and tenderness, but for the purpose of pleasing God, and of learning from him how He wishes to be loved and served by us. Father Balthazar Alvarez used to say: "The love of God consists not in receiving his favors, but in serving him through the sole motive of pleasing him. And he would say that divine consolation is like the refreshment that we take on a journey not to rest in it, but in order to go forward with greater vigor. When you feel aridity in meditation, be careful to persevere, in spite of all the tediousness that you experience, and know then that you give great pleasure to your Spouse and acquire great merits. Say to Him then: "O my Jesus, why dost Thou treat me thus? Thou hast stripped me of all things, of property, of relatives, of my will, and I have been satisfied with all these privations, in order to gain Thee; but why dost Thou now deprive me also of Thyself?" Say this to Him with an humble affection; He will make thee feel that he does all because He loves

thee, and for thy greater good. Father Torres used to say: "To carry the cross with Jesus without consolation, makes the soul run and fly to perfection."

Prayer

My Jesus, Thou hast loved me in the midst of pains; and in the midst of sufferings I wish to love Thee.

Thou hast spared nothing: Thou hast even given Thy blood and Thy life in order to gain my love; and shall I continue as hitherto, to be reserved in loving Thee? No, my Redeemer, it shall not be so; the ingratitude with which I have hitherto treated Thee is sufficient. To Thee I consecrate my whole heart. Thou alone dost deserve all my love. Thee alone do I wish to love. My God, since Thou wishest me to be entirely Thine, give me strength to serve Thee as Thou deservest, during the remainder of my life. Pardon my tepidity and my past infidelities. How often have I omitted mental prayer in order to indulge my caprice. Alas! how often, when it was in my power to remain with Thee in order to please Thee, have I remained with creatures so as to offend Thee. Oh! that so many lost years would return! But, since they will not return, the remaining days of my life must be entirely Thine, O my beloved Lord. I love Thee, O my Jesus! I love Thee, O my Sovereign Good! Thou art, and shalt be for ever, the only love of my soul.

O Mother of fair love, O Mary, obtain for me the grace to love thy Son, and to spend the remainder of my life in His love. Thou dost obtain from Jesus whatsoever thou wishest; through thy prayers I hope for this gift.

(Saint Alphonsus)

The Practice of Mental Prayer

Having seen the great necessity of mental prayer for Christians, and the great blessings that they may draw from it, let us now consider the practise of meditation, with regard to the place, and the manner.

The Place Suitable For Mental Prayer

With regard to the place, it should be solitary. "But," said our Saviour, "when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret." (Matt, 6:6.). When you wish to pray, shut yourself up in your chamber, and thus pray to your Father. St. Bernard says that silence and the absence of all noise almost force the soul to think of the goods of heaven. (Epist. 78.).

To make mental prayer, the best place is, as has been said, your own room; but for Religious the most appropriate place is the church, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The Venerable Father Avila used to say that he knew no sanctuary more desirable than a church in which Jesus Christ remains in the Holy Eucharist.

In order to make mental prayer well, it is necessary to unite to the external silence interior silence, that is, detachment from earthly affections. Speaking of certain persons attached to the world, our Lord said one day to St. Teresa: "I would wish to speak to them, but creatures make such a noise in their ears that they do not give me a moment in which I can make them listen to me."

The Time of Making Mental Prayer

With regard to the time of making mental prayer, St. Isidore used to say, that, ordinarily speaking, the fittest time for meditation is the morning and evening. But according to St. Gregory of Nyssa, the morning is the most seasonable time for prayer; because, says the saint, when prayer precedes business, sin will not gain admission to the soul. The Venerable Father Charles Carafa, founder of the Congregation of the Pious Workers, used to say that a fervent act of love made in the morning during meditation is sufficient to maintain the soul in fervor during the entire day. Prayer, as St. Jerome has written, is also necessary in the evening. Let not the body go to rest before the soul is refreshed by mental prayer, which is the food of the soul. But at all times and in all places pious souls can pray, even at work, or at recreation; it is enough for them to raise the mind to God and to make good acts, for in this consists mental prayer.

2. With regard to the time to be spent in mental prayer, the rule of the saints was, to devote to it all the hours that were not necessary for the occupations of human life. St. Francis Borgia employed eight hours in the day in meditation, because his Superiors would not allow him a longer time, and when the eight hours were expired, he earnestly asked permission to remain a little longer at prayer, saying, "Ah! give me another little quarter of an hour." St. Philip Neri was accustomed to spend the entire night in prayer. St. Anthony the Abbot remained the whole night at prayer, and when the sun appeared, which was the time assigned for terminating his prayer, he complained of it for having risen too soon. Father Balthazar Alvarez used to say that a soul that loves God, when not in prayer, is like a stone out of its centre, in a violent state; for in this life we should as much as possible imitate the life of the saints in bliss, who are constantly employed in the contemplation of God.

It is right to observe, that with regard to the posture the fittest one is kneeling; but when it causes pain and distraction, a person may, as St. John of the Cross says, make meditation sitting in a modest posture.

The Manner of Making Mental Prayer

As to the manner of making mental prayer, I will suppose that you are already instructed in it; but allow me to explain briefly the principal parts of mental prayer for any beginner into whose hands this book may fall.

Mental prayer contains three parts: the preparation, the meditation, and the conclusion.

In the preparation there are three acts: an act of faith, of the presence of God, and of adoration; an act of humility and sorrow for our sins, and a petition for light. They may be made in the following manner: My God, I believe Thee present within me; I adore Thee with my whole soul.

Be careful to make this act with a lively faith, for a lively remembrance of the Divine Presence contributes greatly to remove distractions. Cardinal Carracciolo, Bishop of Aversa, used to say that when a person is distracted in meditation there is reason to think that he has not made a lively act of faith.

Lord, I should now be in hell in punishment of the offences I have offered to Thee. I am sorry for them from the bottom of my heart; have mercy on me.

Eternal Father, for the sake of Jesus and Mary, give me light in this meditation, that I may draw fruit from it.

We must, then, recommend ourselves to the Blessed Virgin by saying a Hail Mary, to St. Joseph, to our guardian angel, and to our holy patron.

These acts, according to St. Francis de Sales, ought to be made with fervor, but should be short, that we may pass immediately to the meditation.

On entering on the meditation we must take leave of all extraneous thoughts, saying with St. Bernard, "O my thoughts! wait here; after prayer we shall speak on other matters." Be careful not to allow the mind to wander where it wishes; but should a distracting thought enter, we must not be disturbed, nor seek to banish it with a violent effort, but let us remove it calmly and return to God. Let us remember that the devil labors hard to disturb us in the time of meditation in order to make us abandon it. Let him, then, who omits mental prayer on account of distractions be persuaded that he gives delight to the devil. "It is impossible," says Cassian, "that our minds should be free from all distractions during prayer." Let us, then, never give up meditation, however great our distraction may be. St. Francis

de Sales (Letter 629) says that if in mental prayer we should do nothing else than continually banish distractions and temptations, the meditation is well made. And before him St. Thomas taught that involuntary distractions do not take away the fruit of mental prayer. (II-II Q83 A13) When we perceive that we are deliberately distracted, let us desist from the voluntary defect, and banish the distraction, but let us be careful not to discontinue our meditation.

With regard to the subject-matter of meditation, the best rule is to meditate on the truths or mysteries in which the soul finds most nourishment and devotion. But above all, for a soul that loves perfection the most appropriate subject is the Passion of Jesus Christ. Blosius writes that our Lord revealed to several holy women, St. Gertrude, St. Bridget, St. Mechtilde, and St. Catherine of Siena that they who meditate on his Passion are very dear to him. According to St. Francis de Sales, (Introd. p. 2, ch. i.) the passion of our Redeemer should be the ordinary subject of the meditations of every Christian. Oh what an excellent book is the Passion of Jesus! There we understand better than in any other book the malice of sin, and also the mercy and love of God for man. To me it appears that Jesus Christ has suffered so many different pains, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the Crucifixion, etc., that having before our eyes so many painful mysteries we might have a variety of different subjects for meditating on His passion, by which we might excite sentiments of gratitude and love.

When she is alone at meditation a soul will do well always to make mental prayer with the aid of a book. St. Teresa used a book for seventeen years: she would first read a little, and then meditate for a short time on what she had read. It is useful to meditate in this manner, in imitation of a pigeon, that first drinks and then raises its eyes to heaven.

However, let it be remembered that the advantage of mental prayer consists not so much in meditating as in making affections, petitions and resolutions: these are the three principal fruits of meditation. "The progress of a soul," says St. Teresa, "does not consist of thinking much of God, but in loving Him ardently; and this love is acquired by resolving to do a great deal for Him." Speaking of mental prayer, the spiritual masters say that meditation is, as it were, the needle which when it has passed must be succeeded by the golden thread composed, as has been said, of affections, resolutions, and petitions. When you have reflected on the point of meditation, and feel any pious sentiment, raise your heart to God and offer Him acts of

humility, of confidence, or of thanksgiving; but above all, repeat in mental prayer acts of contrition and of love.

The act of love, as also of contrition, is the golden chain that binds the soul to God. An act of perfect charity is sufficient for the remission of all our sins. "Charity covereth a multitude of sins." (I Pet. 4:8.) The Lord has declared that He cannot hate the soul that loves Him: "I love them that love me." (Prov. 8:17.) The Venerable Sister Mary Crucified once saw a globe of fire in which some straws that had been thrown into it were instantly consumed. By this vision she was given to understand that a soul by making a true act of love obtains the remission of all its faults. Besides, the Angelic Doctor teaches that by every act of love we acquire a new degree of glory. "Every act of charity," says the saint, "merits eternal life." (i. 2. q. 114, a. 7.) Acts of love may be made in the following manner:

My God, I esteem Thee more than all things.

I love Thee with my whole heart. I delight in Thy felicity.

I would wish to see Thee loved by all.

I wish only what Thou wishest.

Make known to me what Thou wishest from me, and I will do it.

Dispose as Thou pleasest of me and of all that I possess.

This last act of oblation is particularly pleasing to God. St. Teresa was accustomed to offer herself to God in this manner at least fifty times day.

Remember in this chapter we speak of the ordinary mental prayer; for should a soul feel itself at any time united to God by supernatural or infused recollection, without any particular thought of an eternal truth or of any divine mystery, it should not labor then to perform any other acts than those to which it feels itself sweetly drawn to God. It is then enough to endeavor with loving attention to remain united with God without impeding the divine operation, or forcing oneself to make reflections and acts. But this is to be understood when the Lord calls the soul to this supernatural prayer; but until we receive such a call we should not depart from the ordinary method of mental prayer, but should, as it has been said, make use of meditations and affections. However, for persons accustomed to mental prayer it is better to apply themselves in affections than in considerations.

Moreover, in mental prayer it is very profitable, and perhaps more useful than any other act, to repeat petitions to God, asking with humility and confidence His graces; that is, His light, resignation, perseverance, and the like; but above all, the gift of His holy love. St.

Francis de Sales used to say, that by obtaining the divine love we obtain all graces; for a soul that truly loves God with its whole heart will of itself, without being admonished by others, abstain from giving him the smallest displeasure, and will labor to please him to the best of its ability.

When you find yourself in aridity and darkness, so that you feel, as it were, incapable of making good acts, it is sufficient to say: "My Jesus, mercy. Lord, for the sake of Thy mercy, assist me." And the meditation made in this manner will be for you, perhaps, the most useful and fruitful.

The Venerable Paul Segneri used to say that until he studied theology he employed himself during the time of mental prayer in making reflections and affections; but "God" (these are his own words) "afterwards opened my eyes, and thence forward endeavored to employ myself in petitions, and if there is any good in me, I ascribe it to the exercise of recommending myself to God." Do you likewise do the same; ask of God his graces in the name of Jesus Christ, and you shall obtain whatsoever you desire.. This our Saviour has promised, and his promise cannot fail: "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father any thing in My Name, He will give it you." (John, 16:23)

In a word, all mental prayer should consist in acts and petitions. Hence the Venerable Sister Mary Crucified, while in an ecstasy, declared that mental prayer is the respiration of the soul; for as by respiration the air is first attracted and afterward given back, so by petitions the soul first receives grace from God, and then by good acts of oblation and love it gives itself to him.

In finishing the meditation it is necessary to make a particular resolution; as, for example, to avoid some particular defect into which you have more frequently fallen, or to practise some virtue, such as to suffer the annoyance that you receive from a fellowman, to obey more exactly a certain superior, to perform some particular act of mortification. We must repeat the same resolution several times until we find that we have got rid of the defect or acquired the virtue. Afterwards reduce to practise the resolutions you have made as soon as an occasion presents itself.

The conclusion of meditation consists of three acts: 1. In thanking God for the lights received; 2. In making a purpose to fulfil the resolutions made; 3. In asking of the eternal Father for the sake of Jesus and Mary grace to be faithful to them.

Be careful never to omit at the end of meditation to recommend to God the souls in Purgatory and poor sinners. St. John Chrysostom

says that nothing more clearly shows the love of a soul for Jesus Christ than her zeal in recommending her brethren to him.

St. Francis de Sales remarks that in leaving mental prayer we should take with us a nosegay of flowers, in order to smell them during the day; that is, we should remember one or two points in which we felt particular devotion in order to excite our fervor during the day.

The ejaculations that are dearest to God are those of love, of resignation, of oblation of ourselves. Let us endeavor not to perform any action without first offering it to God, and not to allow at the most a quarter of an hour to pass, in whatever occupations we may find ourselves, with out raising the heart to the Lord by some good act. Moreover, in our leisure time, such as when we are waiting for a person, or when we walk in the garden, or are confined to bed by sickness, let us endeavor to the best of our ability to unite ourselves to God. It is also necessary by observing silence, by seeking solitude as much as possible, and by remembering the presence of God, to preserve the pious sentiments conceived in meditation.

I here add, that in order to be a soul of prayer, a Christian must resist with fortitude all temptations to discontinue mental prayer in the time of aridity. St. Teresa has left us very excellent instructions on this point. In one place she says: "I hold for certain that the Lord will conduct to the haven of salvation the soul that perseveres in mental prayer, in spite of all the sins that the devil may oppose." (Life, ch. 8.) In another place she says: "The devil knows that he has lost the soul that perseveringly practises mental prayer." (Life, ch. 19.) Again she says: "He that does not stop in the way of mental prayer, reaches the end of his journey, though he should delay a little." (Life, ch. 19.) "The love of God does not consist in experiencing tender affections, but in serving him with courage and humility." (Life, ch. 11.)

Finally she concludes, saying: "By aridity and temptations the Lord proves his lovers. Though aridity should last for life, let not the soul give up prayer: the time will come when all will be well rewarded." (Life, ch. 11.)

The Angelic Doctor says that true devotion consists not in feeling, but in the desire and resolution to embrace promptly all that God wills. (II-II Q82 A1) Such was the prayer that Jesus Christ made in the garden; it was all full of aridity and tediousness, but it was the most devout and meritorious prayer that had ever been offered in this world: it consisted of these words: "Not what I will, but what thou wilt." (Mark, 14:36)

Dear Christian, never give up mental prayer in the time of aridity. Should the tediousness that assails you be very great, divide your meditations into several parts, and employ yourself for the most part in petitions to God, even though you should seem to pray without confidence and without fruit. It will be sufficient to say and repeat: "My Jesus, mercy." "Lord, have mercy on me." Pray, and doubt not that God will hear you and grant your petitions.

And in going to meditation, never propose to yourself, your own pleasure and satisfaction, but only to please God, and to learn what he wishes you to do. And for this purpose pray always that God may make known to you his will, and that he may give you strength to fulfil it. All that we ought to seek in mental prayer is light to know and strength to accomplish the will of God in our regard.

Prayer

Ah! my Jesus, it appears that Thou couldst do nothing more, in order to gain the love of men. It is enough to know that Thou hast wished to be come man; that is, to become like us, a worm. Thou hast wished to lead a painful life, of thirty-three years, amid sorrow and ignominies, and in the end to die on an infamous gibbet. Thou hast also wished to remain under the appearance of bread, in order to become the food of our souls; and how is it possible that Thou hast received so much ingratitude, even from Christians that believe these truths and still love Thee so little? Unhappy me! I have hitherto been among those ungrateful souls; I have attended only to my pleasures, and have been forgetful of Thee and of Thy love. I now know the evil I have done; but I repent of it with my whole heart; my Jesus, pardon me. I now love Thee; I love Thee so ardently that I choose death, and a thousand deaths, rather than cease to love Thee. I thank Thee for the light that Thou hast given me. Give me strength, O God of my soul, always to advance in Thy love. Accept this poor heart to love Thee. It is true that it has once despised Thee, but now it is enamoured of Thy goodness; it loves Thee and desires only to love Thee. O Mary, Mother of God, assist me; in thy intercession I place great confidence.

Conclusion

Rev. Gerard Tillmann, C.SS.R., in his book, *Das Gebet*, Vol. II, speaks of different methods of meditation. He has a number of chapters on the methods of meditation of the Fathers of the Desert, of St. Bonaventure, St. Peter of Alcantara, St. Ignatius and St. Francis de Sales. Of the above method of St. Alphonsus he says it is the easiest and simplest. The distinctive mark of the method of St. Alphonsus is that the Saint insists in a most especial manner on making frequent and fervent acts of petition. The Saint regards this as the most important and useful part. Ven. Fr. Passerat, C.SS.R., said on one occasion, "You complain you cannot meditate. Well, then, propound to yourself these four questions: What did I read? What conclusion must I draw? What have I done hitherto? What must I do in future? Strive to answer these questions the best way you can and you will have made an excellent meditation." From all this it becomes clear that in meditation we employ the three faculties of the soul. The memory recalls the subject of consideration. The intellect thinks the matter over. The will utilizes it for acts of faith, charity, humility and petition, etc.

In connection herewith it may be remarked that many complain of the difficulty of remaining recollected. The distractions that assail us are incessant. What is the remedy? Endeavor to have some method or rule to guide you. For instance make an act of contrition, a spiritual communion and a short salutation to Our Lady every quarter of an hour. The latter also may be short, as: Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation. "Every act of true sorrow is according to St. Thomas an act of love." (Fr. Boumanns, (C.SS.R.)

SALVE REGINA

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope, hail! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears! Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb Jesus. O clement, O merciful, O sweet Virgin Mary.