

MEDITATIONS & READINGS

ST. ALPHONSUS

VOLUME I – PART I

ADVENT CHRISTMAS EPIPHANY

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MEDITATIONS & READINGS
FOR EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

VOLUME I.—PART I.
ADVENT CHRISTMAS EPIPHANY

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

VISITS TO THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT and TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, with Prayers for Mass, Preparation for Communion, Thanksgiving, etc. By ST. ALPHONSUS. From 2/6 to 5/-.

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Meditations and Readings

FOR
EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

Selected from the Spiritual Writings of
SAINT ALPHONSUS

VOLUME I.—PART I.

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

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SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

J.M.J.A.T.

SANT' ALFONSO — VIA MERULANA.
ROMA,

23rd October, 1923.

MY DEAR FATHER COYLE,

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

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

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

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PATRICK MURRAY, C. SS. RED.

ings to all. To all—to priests and to their flocks; to Catholics in the world as to those who have forsaken it to consecrate themselves to God in Religion; to fathers and mothers of families, that the reading of these holy pages in the domestic circle may make “the infinite amiability of Jesus Christ” better known, and so help “to restore all things in Christ” in our Christian homes. Lastly and especially, to the young I offer this volume in which St. Alphonsus speaks so beautifully of the tender love of the Heart of the Child Jesus for souls, of the boundless generosity of our Saviour, of the pressing claims of His love upon us, so that all may be inspired to consecrate the love of their young hearts to Jesus Christ. “Oh, how God longs to see hearts wholly His,” writes St. Alphonsus in these Meditations, “and how dearly He loves them! Who knows but the Infant Redeemer may now succeed in wounding and making a prize of some hearts which He has been long pursuing and hitherto has been unable to wound and capture! Devout souls, if Jesus gains possession of us, we shall gain possession of Jesus. The advantage is all on our side.

“O happy thou, most holy Virgin Mary, thou wert wholly and always God’s own—all fair, all pure, and without spot! O my hope, obtain for me the strength to be grateful and faithful to God till death. Amen.”

May this prayer be heard in favour of all who use this book, and may these Meditations and Readings and devout affections of St. Alphonsus—“prayers fragrant with seraphic love,” as Pope Benedict XV. styled them—reach the hearts of all, wound them and take them captive for Our Lord Jesus Christ.

J. B. C., C.S.S.R.

ST. JOSEPH’S, DUNDALK.

Feast of St. Alphonsus, August 2nd, 1923.

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MEDITATIONS AND READINGS

First Sunday of Advent

Morning Meditation.

THE DAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.

That day is a day of wrath . . . a day of calamity and misery.—Soph. i. 15.

On the Last Day will be verified the prediction of St. John: *And they say to the mountains and to the rocks: Fall upon us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.*—(Apoc. vi., 16).

Send forth O Lord, the Lamb, the Ruler of the earth Who by sacrificing Himself shall satisfy Thy justice for us, and so reign in the hearts of men. O Lamb of God, pardon me before the arrival of that day on which Thou shalt judge me.

I.

The Last Day is called in Scripture *a day of wrath and misery*; and such it will be for all those unhappy beings who have died in mortal sin; for on that day their most secret crimes will be made manifest to the whole world, and themselves separated from the company of the Saints, and condemned to the eternal prison of hell, where they will suffer all the agonies of ever dying yet always remaining alive. St. Jerome, in the Cave at Bethlehem, devoted to continual prayer and penance, trembled at the bare thought of the General Judgment. The Ven. Father Juvenal Ancina, hearing

(D515)

that *Sequence for the Dead*, sung, *Dies iræ, dies illa*, was so struck with the anticipation of Judgment that he left the world and embraced the Religious life.

O Jesus! what will become of me on that day? Shall I be placed on Thy right hand with the Elect, or on Thy left with the reprobate? I know that I have deserved to be placed on Thy left, but I know also that Thou wilt still pardon me if I repent of my sins: therefore do I repent of them with my whole heart, and am resolved rather to die than offend Thee any more.

II.

As this will be a day of calamity and terror for the reprobate, so will it be a day of joy and triumph for the Elect; for then, in the sight of all mankind, will the blessed souls of the Elect be proclaimed queens of Paradise and spouses of the Immaculate Lamb.

O Jesus! Thy precious Blood is my hope. Remember not the offences that I have committed against Thee, and inflame my whole soul with Thy love. I love Thee, my sovereign Good, and I trust that in that day I shall be associated with those loving souls who will praise and love Thee for all eternity.

Choose, my soul; choose now either an eternal crown in that blessed kingdom, where God will be seen and loved face to face in the company of the Saints, of the Angels, and of Mary, the Mother of Jesus; or the prison of hell, where you must weep and lament for ever, abandoned by God and by all.

“O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us!” O divine Lamb, Who, to deliver us from the pains of hell, wast pleased to sacrifice Thy divine life by a bitter death upon the Cross, have compassion on us; but more particularly upon me who have more than others offended Thee. I am sorry above every evil for having dishonoured Thee by my sins, but I hope on that day to honour Thee before men and Angels, by proclaiming Thy mercies towards me. O Jesus! help me to love Thee; I desire Thee alone. O Mary, holy Queen! protect me on that day.

Spiritual Reading.*

THE NATIONS IN THE VALLEY OF JOSAPHAT.

St. Jerome spent his days in the Cave of Bethlehem in prayer and penance, and trembled at the thought of Jesus coming at the Last Day to judge the world.

At present God is not known, and, therefore He is as much despised by sinners as if He could not avenge, whenever He pleases, the injuries offered to Him. The wicked lokeheth upon the Almighty as if he could do nothing.—(Job, xxii., 17). But the Lord has fixed a day, called in the Scriptures, the day of the Lord, *Dies Domini*, on which the Eternal Judge will make known His power and majesty. The Lord, says the Psalmist, shall be known when he exerciseth judgment.—(Ps. ix., 17). On this text St. Bernard writes: “The Lord, Who is now unknown while He seeks mercy, shall be known when He executes justice.” The Prophet Sophonias calls the Day of the Lord a day of wrath—a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery.—(Soph. i., 15).

This day shall commence with fire from the heavens which will burn the earth, all men then living, and all things upon the earth. And the earth and the works which are in it shall be burnt up.—(2 Pet. iii., 10). All shall become one heap of ashes.

After the death of all men, the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again.—(1 Cor. xv., 52). St. Jerome used to say: “As often as I consider the Day of Judgment, I tremble. Whether I eat or drink, or whatever else I do, that terrible trumpet appears to sound in my ears, ‘Arise ye dead, and come to judgment’;” and St. Augustine declared, that nothing banished earthly thoughts from him so effectually as the fear of the Judgment.

*The Spiritual Reading should, if possible, be read at some quiet, convenient time on the particular day for which it has been selected.

At the sound of that trumpet the souls of the Blessed shall descend from Heaven to be united to the bodies with which they served God on earth; and the unhappy souls of the damned shall come up from hell to take possession again of those same bodies with which they offended God. Oh! how different the appearance of the former, compared with that of the latter! The damned will appear deformed and black, like so many fire-brands of hell; but *the just shall shine as the sun*.—(Matt. xiii., 43). Oh! how great will then be the happiness of those who have mortified their bodies by works of penance! We may estimate their felicity from the words addressed by St. Peter of Alcantara, after death, to St. Teresa: "O happy penance! which merited for me such glory!"

After the Resurrection they shall be summoned by the Angels to appear in the Valley of Josaphat. *Nations, Nations in the valley of destruction, for the day of the Lord is near*.—(Joel, iii., 14). Then the Angels shall come and separate the reprobate from the Elect, placing the latter on the right, and the former on the left. *The Angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just*.—(Matt. xiii., 40). Oh! how great will then be the confusion which the unhappy damned shall suffer! This punishment alone, says St. Chrysostom, would be sufficient to constitute a hell for the wicked. Brother shall be separated from brother, husband from wife, son from father.

But, behold! the heavens are opened—the Angels come to assist at the General Judgment, carrying, as St. Thomas says, the Standard of the Cross and the other instruments of the Passion of the Redeemer. The same may be inferred from the Twenty-fourth Chapter of St. Matthew: *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn*.—(xxiv., 30). Sinners shall weep at the sight of the Cross; for, as St. Chrysostom says, the nails will complain of them—the Wounds and the Cross of Jesus Christ will speak against them.

Most holy Mary, the Queen of Saints and Angels, shall come to assist at the Last Judgment; and lastly, the

Eternal Judge shall appear in the clouds, full of splendour and majesty. *And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty*.—(Ib.). Oh, how great shall be the agony of the reprobate at the sight of the Judge! *At their presence*, says the Prophet Joel, *the people shall be in grievous pains*.—(Joel, ii). According to St. Jerome the presence of Jesus Christ will give the reprobate more pain than hell itself. "It would," he says, "be easier for the damned to bear the torments of hell than the presence of the Lord." Hence on that day, the wicked shall, according to St. John, call on the mountains to fall on them and to hide them from the sight of the Judge. *And they shall say to the mountains and the rocks: Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb*.—(Apoc. vi., 16).

Evening Meditation.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD IN THE WORK OF THE REDEMPTION.

I.

And He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost . . . and was made man.—Nicene Creed.

Consider that God, having created the first man to serve Him and love Him in this life, and to be afterwards taken by Him to reign eternally with Him in Paradise, enriched him for this end with many lights and graces. But ungrateful man rebelled against God, refusing Him the obedience which he owed Him both in justice and gratitude; and thus he unhappily remained as a rebel, deprived, with all his posterity, of Divine grace, and for ever excluded from Paradise. Behold then, in consequence of this ruin caused by sin, all mankind lost!

All were spiritually blind, living in the midst of darkness and the shadow of death.

But God, seeing men reduced to this so miserable a condition, was moved to pity and resolved to save them. And how did He save them? He did not send an Angel, or a Seraph; but to show to the world the immense love that He bore to these ungrateful worms, *He sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.*—(Rom. viii., 3). Yes, He sent His own Son to become Man, and to clothe Himself with the same flesh as that of sinful men, in order that He, by His sufferings and death, might satisfy Divine justice for their crimes, and thus deliver them from eternal death, and reconciling them to His Divine Father, obtain for them Divine grace, and render them worthy to enter the eternal kingdom of Heaven.

But how is it, my Jesus, that after Thou hadst repaired this ruin of sin by Thy death, I have so often wilfully renewed it again by the many offences I have committed against Thee? Thou didst save me at so great a cost, and I have so often chosen to lose myself by losing Thee, O infinite Good! But Thy words give me confidence, for Thou hast said that when the sinner who has turned his back upon Thee is afterwards converted to Thee, Thou dost not refuse to embrace him: *Turn ye to me and I will turn to you.*—(Zach. i., 3). And Thou hast likewise said: *If any man . . . open to me the door, I will come in to him.*—(Apoc. iii., 20). Behold, O Lord, I am one of these rebels, an ungrateful traitor, who have often turned my back upon Thee, and driven Thee from my soul; but now I repent with all my heart for having thus ill-treated Thee and despised Thy grace; I repent of it, and I love Thee above every thing. Behold, the door of my heart is now open, enter Thou in, but enter never to leave it again. I well know that Thou wilt never leave me, if I do not again drive Thee away; but this is my fear, and this is the grace which I ask of Thee, and which I hope always to ask: let me die rather than be guilty of this fresh and greater ingratitude.

II.

Here pause to consider, on the one hand, the immense ruin that sin brings upon souls, since it deprives them of the friendship of God, and of Paradise, and condemns them to an eternity of torments. And consider, on the other hand, the infinite love which God showed in this great work of the Incarnation of the Word, causing His only begotten Son to come and sacrifice His Divine life by the hands of executioners, in a sea of pain and infamy, to obtain for us pardon and eternal salvation. Oh, when we contemplate this great mystery and this excess of Divine love, each one of us should do nothing but exclaim: O infinite Goodness! O infinite Mercy! O infinite love! That a God should become Man and die for me!

My dearest Redeemer, I do not deserve to love Thee, after all the offences I have committed against Thee; but I ask of Thee through Thy merits, the gift of Thy holy love. Therefore, make me know the great good Thou art, the love Thou hast borne me, and how much Thou hast done to oblige me to love Thee. Ah, my God and my Saviour, let me no longer live ungrateful to Thy great goodness. My Jesus, I will never leave Thee again; I have offended Thee enough already. It is but right that I should spend the remaining years of my life in loving Thee and pleasing Thee. My Jesus, my Jesus, help me; help a sinner who desires to love Thee. O Mary my Mother, thou hast all power with Jesus, for thou art His Mother. Tell Him to pardon me; tell Him to enchain me with His holy love. Thou art my hope, in thee do I trust.

Monday—First Week of Advent

Morning Meditation.

GOD DISHONOURED BY SIN.

Previous to the coming of our Redeemer, the whole unhappy race of mankind groaned in misery upon this earth: all were children of wrath, nor was there one who could appease God, justly indignant at their sins. O God of Mercy, lest Thy Divine Wisdom might reproach us with our offences against Thee, Thou hast hidden it under an infant's form! Thou hast concealed Thy Justice under the most profound abasement that it might not condemn us!

I.

Consider how sin dishonours God. *By transgression of the law thou dishonourest God* (Rom. ii., 23), says St. Paul. When the sinner deliberates whether he shall give or refuse his consent to sin, he takes the balance into his hands to decide which is of greater value—the favour of God, or some passion, some worldly interest or pleasure. When he yields to temptation, what does he do? He decides that some wretched gratification is more desirable than the favour of God. Thus it is that he dishonours God, declaring, by his consent, that a miserable pleasure is preferable to the Divine friendship. Thus, then, O God, have I so many times dishonoured Thee, by esteeming Thee less than my miserable passions!

Of this the Almighty complains by the Prophet Ezechiel, when He says: *They violated me among my*

people for a handful of barley and a piece of bread. (Ezech. xiii., 19). If the sinner should exchange God for a treasure of jewels, or for a kingdom, it would indeed be doing a great evil, because God is of infinitely more value than all the treasures and kingdoms of the earth. But for what do so many exchange Him? For a vapour, for a little dirt, for a poisoned pleasure, which is no sooner tasted than it is fled. O God, how could I have had the heart, for such vile things, so often to despise Thee, Who hast shown so much love for me! But behold, my Redeemer, how I now love Thee above all things; and because I love Thee, I feel more regret for having lost Thee, my God, than if I had lost all my other goods, and even my life. Have pity on me, and forgive me, I will never more incur Thy displeasure. Grant that I may rather die than offend Thee any more.

II.

Lord, who is like to thee?—(Ps. xxxiv., 10). And what good things, O God, can be comparable to Thee, O infinite Goodness? And how could I have turned my back upon Thee, to give myself to those vile things which sin held out to me? *Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord, thou hast gone backward.*—(Jer. xv., 5). God complains and says: Ungrateful soul, thou hast forsaken Me! I would never have forsaken thee hadst not thou first turned thy back upon Me! *Thou hast gone backward.* O God, with what consternation will these words fill the soul of the sinner when he shall stand to be judged before the divine tribunal! O Jesus, Thy precious Blood is my hope. Thou hast promised to hear him who prays to Thee. I ask Thee not for the goods of this world; I ask Thee for the pardon of the sins I have committed against Thee, and for which I am sorry above every other evil. I ask Thee for perseverance in Thy grace until the end of my life. I ask Thee for the gift of Thy holy love; my soul is enamoured of Thy goodness: hear me, O Lord. Only grant that I may love Thee both here and hereafter, and

as to all things else, do with me as Thou pleasest. My Lord and my only Good, suffer me not to be any more separated from Thee! Mary, Mother of God, do thou also listen to me, and obtain for me that I may ever belong to God, and that God may be my inheritance for ever.

Spiritual Readings.

THE JUDGMENT AND THE SENTENCE.

The judgment sat and the books were opened.—(Dan. vii., 10). The books of conscience are opened, and the Judgment commences. The Apostle says, that the Lord *will bring to light the hidden things of darkness.*—(1 Cor. iv., 5). And, by the mouth of His Prophet, Jesus Christ has said: *I will search Jerusalem with lamps.*—(Soph. i., 12). The light of the lamp reveals all that is hidden.

“A judgment,” says St. Chrysostom, “terrible to sinners, but desirable and sweet to the just.” The Last Judgment will fill sinners with terror, but will be a source of joy and sweetness to the elect; for God will then give praise to each one according to his works. The Apostle tells us that on that day the just will be raised above the clouds to be united to the Angels, and to increase the number of those who pay homage to the Lord. *We shall be taken up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ, into the air.*—(1 Thess. iv., 16).

Worldlings now regard as fools the Saints who led mortified and humble lives; but then they shall confess their own folly, and say: *We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints.*—(Wis. v., 4). In this world, the rich and the noble are called happy; but true happiness consists in a life of sanctity. Rejoice, ye souls who live in tribulation; *your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*—(Jo. xvi., 20). In the valley of Josaphat you shall be seated on thrones of glory.

But the reprobate, like goats destined for the slaughter, shall be placed on the left to await their last condemnation. On the Day of Judgment there is no hope of mercy for poor sinners. The greatest punishment of sin for those who live in enmity with God is to lose the fear and remembrance of the divine judgment. Continue, continue, says the Apostle, to live obstinately in sin; but in proportion to your obstinacy, you shall have accumulated for the Day of Judgment a treasure of the wrath of God. *But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath.*—(Rom. ii., 5).

Then sinners will not be able to hide themselves; but, with insufferable pain, they will be compelled to appear in judgment. “To lie hid,” says St. Anselm, “will be impossible—to appear will be intolerable.” The devils will perform their office as accusers, and, as St. Augustine says, will say to the Judge: *Most just God, declare him to be ours, who was unwilling to be yours.* The witnesses against the wicked shall be: first, their own conscience—*Their conscience bearing witness to them*—(Ib. ii., 15); secondly, the very walls of the house in which they sinned shall cry out against them—*The stone shall cry out of the wall*—(Hab. ii., 11); thirdly, the Judge Himself will say—*I am the judge and the witness.*—(Jer. xxix., 28). Hence, according to Saint Augustine, “He who is now the witness of your life shall be the judge of your cause.” To Christians particularly He will say: *Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida; for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes.*—(Matt. xi., 21). Christians, He will say, if the graces which I have bestowed on you had been given to the Turks or to the Pagans, they would have done penance for their sins; but you have ceased to sin only with your death. He shall then manifest to all men their most hidden crimes. *I will discover thy shame to thy face.*—(Nah. iii., 5). He shall expose to view all their secret impurities, injustices and cruelties. *I will set all thy abominations against thee.*—(Ezech. vii., 8).

Each of the damned shall carry his sins written on his forehead.

What excuses can save the wicked on that day? Ah! they can offer no excuses. *All iniquity shall stop her mouth.*—(Ps. cvi., 42). Their very sins will close the mouth of the reprobate, so that they will not have courage to excuse themselves. They shall pronounce their own condemnation.

The Sentence of the Judge.

Jesus Christ, then, will first turn to the Elect, and with a serene countenance will say: *Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*—(Matt. xxv., 34). He will then bless all the tears shed through sorrow for their sins, and all their good works, their prayers, mortifications, and communions; above all, He will bless for them the pains of His Passion and the Blood shed for their salvation. And, after these benedictions, the Elect, singing Alleluias, shall enter Paradise to praise and love God for all eternity.

The Judge shall then turn to the reprobate, and pronounce their condemnation in these words: *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.*—(Ib. 41). They shall then be forever accursed, separated from God, and sent to burn for ever in the fire of hell. *And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just into life everlasting.*—(Ib. 46).

After this Sentence, the wicked shall, according to St. Ephrem, be compelled to take leave for ever of their relatives, of Paradise, of the Saints, and of Mary the divine Mother. "Farewell, ye just! Farewell, O Cross! Farewell, O Paradise! Farewell, fathers and brothers: we shall never see you again! Farewell, O Mary, Mother of God!" Then a great pit shall open in the middle of the valley: the unhappy damned shall be cast into it, and shall see those gates shut which shall never again be opened. O accursed sin! to what a miserable end will you one day conduct so many souls redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ. O unhappy souls! for whom is

prepared such a melancholy end. But let us have confidence, for Jesus Christ is now a Father, and not a Judge. He is ready to pardon all who repent. *For us men and for our salvation, He came down from Heaven and was made man.*

Evening Meditation.

JESUS CHARGED WITH THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD.

I.

He shall bear their iniquities.—(Is. liii., 11).

Consider that the Divine Word, in becoming Man, chose not only to take the form of a sinner, but also to bear all the sins of men, and to satisfy for them as if they were His own: *He shall bear their iniquities.* Cornelius a Lapide adds: "as if He had committed them Himself." Let us here reflect what an oppression and anguish the Heart of the Infant Jesus must have felt, Who had already charged Himself with the sins of the whole world, in finding that Divine Justice insisted on His making a full satisfaction for them.

Well did Our Lord know the malice of every sin, for, through the divine light which accompanied Him, He knew immeasurably more than all men and Angels the infinite goodness of His Father, and how infinitely deserving He is of being revered and loved. And then He saw drawn up in array before Him a countless number of transgressions which would be committed by men and for which He was to suffer and die.

My beloved Jesus, I, who have offended Thee, am not worthy of Thy favours, but through the merit of that pain which Thou didst suffer, and which Thou didst offer up to God at the sight of my sins, and to satisfy divine justice for them, give me a share in that light by which Thou didst see their malice, and in that hatred with

which Thou didst then abominate them. O Lord! Thou hast indeed died to save me; but Thy death will not save me if I do not, on my part, detest every evil, and have true sorrow for the sins I have committed against Thee. But even this sorrow must be given me by Thee. Thou givest it to him that asks it of Thee. I ask it of Thee through the merits of all the sufferings Thou didst endure on this earth; give me sorrow for my sins, but a sorrow that will correspond to my transgressions.

II.

Our Lord once showed St. Catherine of Sienna the hideousness of one single venial sin; and such was the dread and sorrow of the Saint that she fell senseless to the ground. What, then, must have been the sufferings of the Infant Jesus when, on His entrance into the world, He saw before Him the immense array of all the crimes of men for which He was to make satisfaction!

And then He knew in particular every sin of each one of us: "He had regard to every particular sin," says St. Bernardine of Sienna. And Cardinal Hugo says that the executioners "caused Him exterior pain by crucifying Him, but we interior pain by sinning against Him." He means that each one of our sins afflicted the soul of Jesus Christ more than crucifixion and death afflicted His body. Such is the beautiful recompense which has been rendered to our Divine Saviour for His love by everyone who remembers to have offended Him by mortal sin!

O Eternal God, supreme and infinite Good! I, a miserable worm, have dared to lose respect for Thee, and to despise Thy grace; I detest above every evil and abhor the injustice I have committed against Thee; I repent of all with my whole heart, not so much on account of hell, which I have deserved, as because I have offended Thy infinite Goodness. I hope for pardon from Thee through the merits of Jesus Christ; and I hope also to obtain, together with Thy pardon, the grace of loving Thee. I love Thee, O God, Who art worthy of infinite love, and I will always repeat to Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee! And as Thy beloved St.

Catherine of Genoa said to Thee, while she stood in spirit at the foot of Thy crucified Image, so will I also say to Thee now that I am standing at Thy feet: "My Lord, no more sins, no more sins! No, for Thou indeed dost not deserve to be offended, O my Jesus, but Thou only deservest to be loved. My Blessed Redeemer, help me. My Mother Mary, assist me, I pray thee; I only ask of thee to obtain for me that I may love God during the time that is left me in this life.

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Morning Meditation.

THE GREAT AFFAIR OF SALVATION.

Consider that our most important affair is that of our eternal salvation. Upon our eternity depends our happiness or misery for ever. Whether we shall live for ever happy or for ever miserable.

Before man is life and death . . . that which he shall choose shall be given him.—(Eccclus. xv., 18).

Oh, let us make such a choice now as we shall not have to regret in eternity.

I.

The affair of our eternal salvation is of all affairs the most important. But how comes it that men use all diligence to succeed in the affairs of this world, leave no means untried to obtain a desirable situation, to gain a lawsuit, or to bring about a marriage; reject no counsels, neglect no measures by which to secure their object; neither eat nor sleep, and yet do nothing to gain eternal salvation—nothing to gain it, but everything to forfeit it.

