

distribution was made to every one, according as he had need' (Acts iv. 34, 35).

(On the Sixth Commandment of the Church, 'Not to marry within certain degrees of kindred, or privately without witnesses, nor to solemnize marriage at the forbidden times,' see the Sacrament of Matrimony, quest. 7, 14, and 15.)

#### ON THE VIOLATION OF THE COMMANDMENTS.

##### § 1. *On Sin in general.*

###### 1. What is sin ?

Sin is a wilful violation of the Law of God.

###### 2. In how many ways may we sin ?

We may sin, 1. By *bad* thoughts, desires, words, and actions ; and 2. Also by the omission of the *good* which we are bound to do.

###### 3. Are all sins equally grievous ?

No ; there are grievous sins, which are also called *mortal* ; and there are lesser ones, which are also called *venial*.

Some sins in the Holy Scripture are compared to *motes*, and others to *beams* (Matt. vii. 3) ; and it is also written of the just man that 'he shall fall seven times' (Prov. xxiv. 16).

###### 4. When do we commit mortal sin ?

We commit mortal sin when we wilfully violate the Law of God in an important matter.

###### 5. Why are grievous sins also called *mortal* sins ?

Because grievous sin deprives the soul of supernatural life—that is, sanctifying grace—and renders us guilty of eternal death, or everlasting damnation.

'Sin, when it is completed, begetteth death' (James i. 15). 'I know thy works, that thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead' (Apoc. iii. 1).

###### 6. When do we commit venial sin ?

We commit venial sin when we transgress the Law of God in an unimportant matter only, or when our transgression is not quite voluntary.

###### 7. When is the transgression not quite voluntary ?

When with our understanding we do not sufficiently perceive the evil, or, with our will, we do not fully consent to it.

###### 8. Why are lesser sins also called *venial* sins ?

Because they can be forgiven more easily, and even without confession.

###### 9. Should we dread only grievous sins ?

No ; we should dread and carefully avoid any sin, whether it be grievous or venial, as the greatest evil on earth.

'How can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God ?' (Gen. xxxix. 9).

###### 10. What should deter us from committing sin ?

The consideration of its malice and evil consequences.

###### 11. In what does the malice of mortal sin principally consist ?

In this : that mortal sin is—

1. A grievous offence against God, our Supreme Lord, and the most criminal disobedience to His holy will ;

2. The most shameful ingratitude to God, our greatest Benefactor and best Father ;

3. Detestable infidelity to our most amiable Redeemer, and contempt of His graces and merits.

1 'Thou hast broken my yoke, and thou saidst : I will not serve' (Jerem. ii. 20). 2 'Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken : I have brought up children and exalted them ; but they have despised me' (Isai. i. 2). 3. Of those 'who were once illuminated, have tasted also the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and are fallen away [from God by mortal sin],' St. Paul says 'that they crucify again to themselves the Son of God, and make Him a mockery' (Heb. vi. 4-6). 'If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema' (1 Cor. xviii. 22).

###### 12. Can we comprehend the full malice of an offence against God ?

We cannot, because we do not comprehend the infinite greatness and goodness of the Lord our God, who is offended by sin.

**13.** What most of all shows us the malice of an offence against God?

1. The grievous punishment of the wicked angels and of our first parents; 2. The everlasting punishment in hell which every mortal sin deserves; and 3. The most bitter Passion and Death which the Only Son of God suffered for our sins.

**14.** What are the consequences of mortal sin?

Mortal sin, 1. Separates us from God, and deprives us of His love and friendship; 2. It disfigures in us the image of God, and disturbs the peace of our conscience; 3. It robs us of all merits, and of our heirship to Heaven; and 4. It draws upon us the judgments of God, and, lastly, eternal damnation.

'They that commit sin and iniquity are enemies of their own soul' (Tob. xii. 10).—Examples: Cain, Antiochus, Judas. Parable of the rich man.

**15.** Why should we also carefully avoid venial sin?

1. Because venial sin also is an offence against God, and is, therefore, after mortal sin, the greatest of all evils;

2. Because it weakens the life of the soul, and hinders many graces which God intends to give us; and

3. Because it also brings many punishments of God upon us, and leads us by degrees to grievous sins.

'He that is unjust in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is greater' (Luke xvi. 10). 'Behold how small a fire what a great wood it kindleth' (James iii. 5).

*Application.* 'My son, all the days of thy life have God in thy mind, and take heed thou never consent to sin. . . . We lead indeed a poor life; but we shall have many good things, if we fear God, and depart from all sin, and do that which is good' (Tob. iv. 6, 23).

§ 2. *On the different kinds of Sin.*

**16.** What particular kinds of sin are there?

1. The seven Capital or Deadly Sins; 2. The six sins against the Holy Ghost; 3. The four sins crying to Heaven for vengeance; and 4. The nine ways of being accessory to another person's sins.

**17.** Which are the seven Capital Sins?

1. Pride; 2. Covetousness; 3. Lust; 4. Anger; 5. Gluttony; 6. Envy; and 7. Sloth.

**18.** Are these sins always grievous?

They are grievous sins as often as a weighty duty either to God, our neighbor, or ourselves is violated by them.

**19.** Why are they called Capital Sins?

Because they are so many main sources from which all other sins take their rise.

**20.** When do we sin by *Pride*?

When we think too much of ourselves, do not give God the honor due to Him, and despise our neighbor.

From pride spring especially: Vanity, ambition, hypocrisy, disobedience, and resistance to superiors; coldness and hard-heartedness towards inferiors; an inordinate desire of ruling; quarrel and strife; ingratitude, envy, cruelty, infidelity and heresy, hatred of God.—Examples: Lucifer, Nabuchodonosor, Holofernes, Aman, Herod, the Pharisee, etc. 'Pride is hateful before God and men. It is the beginning of all sin; he that holdeth it shall be filled with maledictions, and it shall ruin him in the end' (Ecclus. x. 7, 15).

**21.** When do we sin by *Covetousness*?

When we inordinately seek and love money or other worldly goods, and are hard-hearted towards those who are in distress.

Covetousness, or avarice, leads people to an excessive care for earthly things, to hardness of heart, lying, perjury, theft, fraud, usury, simony, treachery, superstitious seeking after hidden treasures, to manslaughter and murder.—Examples: Achan, Ahab, Giezi, Judas, Ananias, and Saphira. 'There is not a more wicked thing than to love money; for such a one setteth even his own soul to sale' (Ecclus. x. 10). 'They that will be-

come rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires which drown men into destruction and perdition' (1 Tim. vi. 9).

**22.** How do we sin by *Lust*?

By indulging in immodest or impure thoughts, desires, words, or actions.

The ordinary effects of lust, or impurity, are: Aversion to prayer and to all that is good; excessive fondness for amusement and dissipation; neglect of the duties of our state of life; great desire of attracting notice; insensibility and cruelty; all sorts of shameless excesses and of unnatural crimes; seduction of innocence; false promises and oaths; theft, ruin of health and of domestic happiness; enmity, duels, suicide or self-murder; and likewise atheism, sacrilege, worship of the devil, madness, and despair. (See the Sixth Commandment of God.)

**23.** When do we sin by *Anger*?

When we are exasperated at that which displeases us, fly into a passion, and suffer ourselves to be carried away by a violent desire of revenge.

Anger leads to hatred, enmity, quarrelling, cursing, blaspheming, reviling, and to all the sins and crimes against the Fifth Commandment of God.—Examples: Esau, whilst in anger, designs to kill his brother Jacob; Absalom kills his brother Amnon. 'Let all bitterness, and anger, and indignation, and clamor, and blasphemy, be put away from you, with all malice' (Ephes. iv. 31).

**24.** When do we sin by *Gluttony*?

When we eat and drink too much, or when, out of time and in an inordinate manner, we long for eating and drinking.

From this vice proceed: Daintiness, profusion, idleness, drunkenness, destruction of domestic peace and comfort, indecent jests and buffooneries, lewdness, adultery, debauchery, impenitence; and likewise cursing, railing, striking, and murdering.—Examples: The rich man (Luke xvi. 19, etc.); King Baltasar. 'Take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and that day [of judgment] come upon you suddenly' (Luke xxi. 34). 'Their [the intemperate] God is their belly' (Philip. iii. 19).

**25.** When do we sin by *Envy*?

When we repine at our neighbor's good, and are

sad when he is in possession of temporal or spiritual blessings, and rejoice when he is deprived of them.

Envy produces: Ingratitude and murmuring against God, blasphemy, blindness, whispering and calumny; hatred, desire of revenge, deceit and knavery, persecution and murder.—Examples: Satan, Cain, the brothers of Joseph, Saul, the Pharisees. 'By the envy of the devil death came into the world; and they follow him that are of his side' (Wisd. ii. 24, 25).

**26.** When do we sin by *Sloth*?

When we give way to our natural repugnance to labor and exertion, and thus neglect our duties.

**27.** What sort of sloth is particularly hateful to God?

Lukewarmness, or laziness in whatsoever concerns the service of God or the salvation of our soul. Therefore God says: 'I would thou wert cold or hot. But because thou art *lukewarm*, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth' (Apoc. iii. 15, 16).

The effects of *sloth in general* are: Neglect of the duties of our calling, ruin of property, lying, deceit, effeminacy, and a great many sins against the Sixth and Seventh Commandments. 'Idleness hath taught much evil' (Ecclus. xxxiii. 29). 'Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways, and learn wisdom' (Prov. vi. 6). The effects of *Spiritual Sloth, or Lukewarmness*, are: Aversion to all religious exercises, contempt of the word of God and of all means of grace, irritation at salutary admonitions, love of the world, pusillanimity, impenitence, infidelity.—Examples: The slothful servant; the foolish virgins (Matt. xxv.)

**28.** What benefit should we reap from the doctrine of the Capital Sins?

We should carefully avoid them as the sources of all evil, and most earnestly endeavor to acquire the opposite virtues.

*Application.* Every morning, when you get up, resolve to guard most carefully during the day against your chief fault. At night examine your conscience on it; and if you have failed, repent, and purpose to confess it as soon as possible.

*The different kinds of Sin (continued).*

**29.** Which are the Six Sins against the Holy Ghost ?

1. Presumption of God's mercy ; 2. Despair ; 3. Resisting the known Christian truth ; 4. Envy at another's spiritual good ; 5. Obstinacy in sin ; and 6. Final impenitence.

Examples : Cain, Pharaoh, the Pharisees, Elymas the magician (Acts xiii.)

**30.** Why are they called sins against the Holy Ghost ?

Because by them we resist, in an especial manner, the Holy Ghost, since we knowingly and willingly despise, reject, or abuse His grace.

'You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you also resist the Holy Ghost : as your fathers did, so do you also' (Acts vii. 51).

**31.** Why should we particularly avoid these sins ?

Because they obstruct the entrance of God's grace into the heart, and therefore hinder our conversion, or render it very difficult.

Speaking of these sins, Jesus Christ says 'that they shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come' (Matt. xii. 32); that is to say, that they are hardly ever forgiven, because it is very, very seldom that people truly repent of them.

**32.** Which are the Four Sins crying to Heaven for vengeance ?

1. Wilful murder ; 2. Sodomy ; 3. Oppression of the poor, of widows and orphans ; 4. Defrauding laborers of their wages.

1. 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth' (Gen. iv. 10). 2. 'The cry of Sodom and Gomorrha is multiplied, and their sin is become exceedingly grievous. We will destroy this place, because their cry is grown loud before the Lord' (Gen. xviii. 20, and xix. 13). 3. 'Do not the widow's tears run down the cheek, and her cry against him that causeth them to fall? From the cheek they go up even to Heaven' (Eccles. xxxv. 18, 19). 4. 'Behold the hire of the laborers, which by fraud has been kept back by you, crieth, and the cry

of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth' (James v. 4).

**33.** Why are they called sins crying to Heaven for vengeance ?

Because, on account of their heinous malice, they cry, as it were, for vengeance, and call on Divine Justice to punish them signally.

**34.** In how many ways may we become accessory to another person's sin, and be answerable for it ?

In these nine ways: 1. By counsel ; 2. By command ; 3. By consent ; 4. By provocation ; 5. By praise or flattery ; 6. By silence ;<sup>1</sup> 7. By connivance ;<sup>2</sup> 8. By partaking ; 9. By defence of the ill done.

<sup>1</sup> When we could and should prevent another's sin either by kindly admonishing him or by giving information to his parents, his pastor, etc. 'If thou declare it not to the wicked, that he may be converted from his wicked way, and live, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand' (Ezec. iii. 18). <sup>2</sup> When we could and should punish the sinner. Thus Heli sinned, 'because he knew that his sons did wickedly, and did not chastise them' (1 Kings iii. 13).

**35.** Why are we answerable for the sin which another commits ?

Because, in any of the above ways, we are either the cause of his sin or co-operate with him in it, and thus are as guilty before God as if we had committed it ourselves ; or, it may be, even more so.

'Not only they that do such things are worthy of death, but they also that consent to them that do them' (Rom. i. 32).

*Application.* Always receive wholesome admonitions willingly and gratefully. Never participate in the sins of others ; on the contrary, endeavor, to the utmost of your power, to hinder them ; and when, for that reason, you are to reveal them, do not say : 'I do not like to denounce others, because I should not like them to denounce me.' Ought you, then, to be sorry, if some one were to snatch from your hands the knife with which you were about to kill yourself ?

## ON VIRTUE AND CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

1. Should we be contented with avoiding grievous sins and crimes ?

No ; we should also diligently endeavor to become more and more virtuous, and to attain the perfection suitable to our condition.

'He that is just, let him be justified still ; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still' (Apoc. xxii. 11). 'Be not afraid to be justified even to death' (Eccles. xviii. 22).—Example of St. Paul : 'Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect ; but I follow after. . . . One thing I do ; forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before' (Philip. iii. 12, 13).

§ 1. *On Virtue.*

2. Why should we endeavor to become more and more virtuous ?

Because man is only good, and pleasing to God, inasmuch as he is virtuous.

3. In what does Christian virtue consist ?

Christian virtue, in general, consists in the perseverance of the will, and in its constant exertions to do what is acceptable to God.

4. How is Christian virtue divided with regard to its origin ?

Into *infused* and *acquired* virtue.

5. What is infused virtue ?

Virtue is called *infused*, inasmuch as it is a gift of God, which together with sanctifying grace is imparted to the soul, in order to qualify and dispose us for the practice of *supernatural* virtues—*i.e.*, for the performance of such pious actions as are worthy of life everlasting (Rom. v. 5).

6. Which virtues are chiefly infused into the soul ?

The three *Theological* Virtues: Faith, Hope, and Charity.

7. Why are they called '*Theological Virtues*' ?

Because they come directly from, and directly relate to, God.

8. When should we make Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity ?

We should make them frequently, but especially, 1. In great temptations against these virtues ; 2. When we receive the Holy Sacraments ; and 3. When we are in danger of losing our life, or on our death-bed.

9. How may we make Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity ?

We may make them in this manner :

## AN ACT OF FAITH.

O my God, I firmly believe all the sacred truths which Thy holy Catholic Church believes and teaches, because Thou hast revealed them, who neither canst deceive nor be deceived.

## AN ACT OF HOPE.

O my God, relying on Thy almighty power and Thy infinite mercy and goodness, and because Thou art faithful to Thy promises, I hope to obtain the pardon of my sins, the assistance of Thy grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

## AN ACT OF CHARITY.

O my God, I love Thee above all things with my whole heart and soul, purely because Thou art infinitely perfect and deserving of all love. I also love my neighbor as myself for the love of Thee. I forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

10. What is acquired virtue ?

Virtue is called *acquired*, inasmuch as it is a faculty

which, with the assistance of God, we acquire by constant practice.

**11.** What do we generally call those virtues which can be acquired by practice?

We call them '*Moral Virtues*,' because they regulate our moral conduct according to the will of God.

**12.** Which among them are the four '*Cardinal*'<sup>1</sup> or '*Principal Virtues*,' in which all the others are included?

1. Prudence; 2. Justice; 3. Fortitude; and 4. Temperance (Wis. viii. 7).

<sup>1</sup> They are called *Cardinal* virtues, because they are, as it were, the *hinges* (cardines) by which the whole moral life of a Christian is supported, and on which it must constantly move [The Transl.]

**13.** What is *Prudence*?

Prudence is a virtue which makes us discern what is truly good and agreeable to God from what only appears to be so, and thus prevents our being seduced to evil.

'Be not conformed to this world, but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God' (Rom. xii. 2). 'Beware of false prophets' (Matt. vii. 15).—Examples: The imprudent Josaphat (2 Paral. xix. 2); the wise Virgins (Matt. xxv.)

**14.** What is *Justice*?

Justice is a virtue by which we are always determined to do what is right, and, therefore, always disposed to give every one his due.

'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and to God the things that are God's' (Matt. xxii. 21).—Example: Tobias (Tobias ii. 21).

**15.** What is *Fortitude*?

Fortitude is a virtue which enables us to endure any hardship or persecution, rather than abandon our duty.

Examples: The seven Machabees and their mother, who esteemed the torments as nothing' (2 Mac. vii. 12).

**16.** What is *Temperance*?

Temperance is a virtue which restrains our sensual inclinations and desires, that they may not allure us from virtue.

'Refrain yourselves from carnal desires, which war against the soul' (1 Pet. ii. 11).—Example: Esther (Esth. xiv. 14, 15-18).

**17.** What virtues are especially opposite to the seven Capital Sins?

1. Humility; 2. Liberality; 3. Chastity; 4. Meekness; 5. Temperance in eating and drinking; 6. Brotherly love; and 7. Diligence.

**18.** What is *Humility*?

Humility is a virtue which teaches us to acknowledge our own unworthiness, weakness, and sinfulness, and to look upon all good as coming from God.

Examples: Abraham (Gen. xviii. 27); the Publican (Luke xviii. 13); St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 8, 9). 'Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven' (Matt. xviii. 3).

**19.** What is *Liberality*?

Liberality is a virtue which inclines us to use our property for the relief of the needy, or for other laudable purposes.

Examples: Tobias (Tob. i. 19, 20); Solomon (3 Kings v. -viii.); the first Christians (Acts ii. 45). 'Give, and it shall be given to you' (Luke vi. 38).

**20.** What is *Chastity*?

Chastity is a virtue which subdues all impure inclinations and desires by which modesty is violated.

Examples: Joseph, Susanna, and, above all, the Blessed Virgin Mary. 'They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences' (Gal. v. 24).

**21.** What is *Meekness*?

Meekness is a virtue which suppresses all desire of revenge, and any motion of unjust anger and displeasure.

Examples: David (1 Kings xxiv. and xxvi.); St. Stephen (Acts vii. 58). 'Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart' (Matt. xi. 29).

**22.** What is *Temperance in eating and drinking*?  
Temperance in eating and drinking is a virtue by which we control ourselves, especially our appetite for eating and drinking.

Examples: Daniel, Ananias, Misael, and Azarias (Dan. i.); John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 4). 'Let us walk honestly, not in rioting and drunkenness' (Rom. xiii. 13).

**23.** What is *Brotherly Love*?  
Brotherly Love is a virtue by which we wish every one well, and sincerely rejoice and condole with our neighbor.

Examples: The history of Ruth and of Tobias. 'Love one another with the charity of brotherhood. Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep' (Rom. xii. 10, 15).

**24.** What is *Diligence*?  
Diligence is a virtue which enables us to serve God readily and cheerfully, to promote His honor as much as lies in our power, and faithfully to perform all our duties.

Examples: Mathathias (1 Mac. ii.); St. Paul (Philip. iii. 13, 14). 'In carefulness [be] not slothful; in spirit fervent; serving the Lord' (Rom. xii. 11).

*Application.* Unless you perseveringly struggle with your wicked inclinations, you will never acquire the Christian Virtues; therefore fight faithfully until death, and God will give you the crown of life (Apoc. ii. 10).

## § 2. *On Christian Perfection.*

**25.** Why should we all endeavor to attain the perfection suitable to our condition?

1. Because our Lord and Saviour says to all: 'Be you perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect' (Matt. v. 48);

2. Because we are commanded to love God with our whole heart, and with our whole soul, and with our whole mind, and with our whole strength (Mark xii. 30);

3. Because the more holy our life is upon earth, the greater will be our happiness in Heaven; and

4. Because we easily fall into grievous sin, and finally run into eternal perdition, if we do not continually endeavor to increase in virtue (Matt. xxv. 29).

**26.** In what does Christian Perfection consist?

Christian Perfection consists in this: that, free from all inordinate love of the world and of ourselves, we love God above all, and all in God.

'What have I in Heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever' (Psalm lxxii. 25, 26).

**27.** Which is in general the way to Perfection?  
The imitation of Jesus Christ.

'If thou wilt be perfect, . . . and come, follow me' (Matt. xix. 21).

**28.** What particular means of attaining Perfection have been recommended by Jesus Christ?

Chiefly those which are called '*Evangelical Counsels.*'

**29.** Which are the Evangelical Counsels?

1. Voluntary Poverty; 2. Perpetual Chastity; and 3. Entire Obedience to a Spiritual Superior.

**30.** What is *Voluntary Poverty*?

It is a free renunciation of all temporal things, in order to be less distracted in striving for those that are eternal.

'If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow me' (Matt. xix. 21).

**31.** What is *Perpetual Chastity*?

It is a free and perpetual renunciation, not only of all impure pleasure, but even of marriage, in order that we may render undivided service to God.

See Matt. xix. 10-12. 'Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord, but I give counsel: . . . He that giveth his virgin in marriage, doth well; and he that giveth her not, doth better' (1 Cor. vii. 25, 38). 'If any one shall say that the marriage state is to be preferred to the state of virginity, or of celibacy, and that it is not better and more blessed to remain in virginity, or in celibacy, than to be united in matrimony, let him be anathema' (Counc. of Trent, Sess. 24, Can. 10).

**32.** What is *Entire Obedience*?

It is a renunciation of one's own will, in order to do the Divine will more surely under a Superior who represents God (Matt. xvi. 24).

**33.** Why are the Evangelical Counsels special means of Perfection?

1. Because by them the chief obstacles to Christian Perfection are removed—namely, the inordinate love and desire of earthly goods, sensual pleasures, and the pride of independence; and 2. Because by them man sacrifices to the Lord his God all that he has and is: his exterior goods, by the vow of poverty; his body, by the vow of chastity; and his mind or will, by the vow of obedience.

Of these Evangelical Counsels our Divine Redeemer meant to speak when He said: 'All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given' (Matt. xix. 11).

**34.** Who are obliged to observe the Evangelical Counsels?

All Religious, and all those who have bound themselves by vow to keep them.

The Secular Clergy also, when they receive the Greater Orders, bind themselves to perpetual chastity, in order to be able to devote themselves entirely, and with an undivided heart, to the service of God and of their neighbor. 'He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things

of the world, how he may please his wife; and he is *divided* (1 Cor. vii. 32, 33).

**35.** Can people in the world also lead a perfect life?

Yes, if they do not live according to the spirit of the world, but according to the spirit of Jesus Christ.

'If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him; for all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life' (1 John ii. 15, 16). 'Whosoever will be a friend of this world becometh an enemy of God' (James iv. 4). 'If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His' (Rom. viii. 9).

**36.** Is, then, the spirit of the world at variance with the spirit of Christ?

Most certainly it is, as we distinctly see from those sentences of our Saviour which are called the *'Eight Beatitudes.'*

**37.** Which are the Eight Beatitudes?

1. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.
2. Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land.
3. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.
4. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall have their fill.
5. Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.
6. Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God.
7. Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.
8. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven' (Matt. v. 3-10).

**38.** How do we know from the Eight Beatitudes



that the spirit of the world is at variance with the spirit of Christ ?

We know it from this: that the world esteems those very persons miserable and foolish whom Christ our Lord calls blessed.

The world is accustomed to set forth riches, reputation, honors, and sensual pleasures as the sources of happiness ; Jesus Christ, on the contrary, teaches us in the Eight Beatitudes to seek our happiness in God and in His holy service, and, therefore, willingly and cheerfully to endure poverty, persecution, and any hardships that may fall to our lot.

**39.** What means must a Christian use, let his condition be what it may, in order to attain to Perfection ?

He must, 1. Delight in prayer, diligently hear the word of God, and often receive the Holy Sacraments ; 2. He must steadily subdue and deny himself ; and 3. He must perform his daily actions in the state of grace, and in a manner acceptable to God.

1. 'They were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers' (Acts ii. 42). 2. 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me' (Matt. xvi. 24). 3. 'Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God' (1 Cor. x. 31).

**40.** How should we deny ourselves ?

We should refuse ourselves many things that are dear and agreeable to us, and should also deprive ourselves of lawful things, that we may the more easily abstain from unlawful ones.

**41.** How may we most easily perform our daily actions in a manner acceptable to God ?

By representing to ourselves how Jesus Christ performed them, and by striving to imitate Him for His sake.

**42.** How should we do our daily work after the example of Christ ?

We should do it diligently, patiently, and with a view to please God. Therefore we should form a good

intention at the beginning, and renew it sometimes when the work is of long continuance.

**43.** What should we do when we take our meals ?

We should before and after meals say grace, reverently and devoutly, and be temperate and modest at table.

**44.** May we also be allowed to take recreation ?

Yes ; for nothing forbids our taking proper recreation in due time. We should, however, sanctify it by a good intention and by the remembrance of God, and keep within the bounds of modesty.

**45.** What should our intercourse with our neighbor be ?

It should be, 1. Kind, that we may not offend any one ; and 2. Prudent, that we may not in any manner be seduced to evil.

**46.** How should we act in our afflictions ?

We should remember and feel that they come from God, and we should offer them up to Him, and beg of Him the grace necessary to make a good use of them.

*Application.* Think that these words, which God spoke to Abraham, are also addressed to you: 'Walk before me, and be perfect' (Gen. xvii. 1). Strive earnestly to become daily more pious and virtuous. Let this be every morning your resolution, and every night examine your conscience upon it. 'My son, serve God with a perfect heart and a willing mind ; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the thoughts of minds. If thou seek Him, thou shalt find Him ; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever' (1 Par. xxviii. 9).