

contemplation of death is the most efficacious and infallible means you can employ, to preserve the spirit of your religion in your condition of life, and in the midst of the world. It follows, therefore, that you should be faithful to this grace, and that in corresponding with the designs of God, you should derive from thence all the advantage which it may impart, for the sanctification of your life, and the completion of the great work of your conversion.

II. The first impression which this grace, or thought of preparing for death should produce in you is, a firm and entire detachment from all worldly objects. Perhaps, in the dispositions with which God has favoured you, you imagine you have already attained this virtue, and if this be the case I should return God thanks in your behalf; but when you will have reflected well on the nature of a solid and perfect detachment, you may also confess, that you are still far from possessing it. However this may be, you should commence the practice by frequent meditation on these words of St. Paul: "Behold then brethren, what I say to you: the time is short; it remaineth, therefore, that those who have goods, should live as if they possessed them not; that those who rejoice should be as if they rejoiced not; and those who use this world should be as if they used it not, for the fashion of this world passeth away."—1 Cor. vii. There is something divine in these words, which makes them come home to our hearts. In reality, to be

elevated, and honoured, and happy in the world, and nevertheless to be obliged to die soon is, as if you were not elevated, or honoured, or happy at all.—This word, *to die*, effaces and destroys all the others, and if we have the least shore of reason, it annihilates, in our opinion and esteem, those pretended goods and honours which we are on the eve of quitting for ever.

III. Be also persuaded, that this detachment from the world can be neither solid nor perfect, if it do not include a detachment from yourself; and that it is in yourself particularly this world of corruption dwells, from which the remembrance of death should detach you; that except this, a detachment from every thing else will cost you nothing; that it is only a detachment from one's self that is difficult, and is a Christian virtue, since every other detachment may be found amongst the pagans; that it is not, therefore, a question of detaching you from the riches or pleasures of the world, about which, perhaps, you care very little, but of detaching you from yourself; that is to say, for example, it is a question of your being sincerely prepared to endure all the mortifications and humiliations which may befall you—to behold, calm, and untroubled, your opinions contradicted, your designs crossed, your inclinations thwarted.

(To be continued)

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