

Besides these works of assault against sin, there are others for which fasting and retirement make room, which tend greatly to our advancement in holiness. Such are prayer and meditation, and the thoughtful reading of Holy Scripture. Not to speak of these now at length, it may still be well to mention that in each of them we are likely to gain much ground by giving some time to them in such a season as this. Not only by giving on the whole rather more time than usual to such occupations, but by setting apart a space of time such as will allow the mind to gather up its whole strength into the work, and do it in a way that we have not thought of before. Thus we may remain in prayer not only till we have said our usual devotions, but till our souls have poured themselves out in fervent longing for increased holiness. We may wait for the power to exert ourselves thus in prayer, and pray that we may pray, and then again with renewed strength pray for holiness and victory over sin; over this and that sin, if so be, that besets us. Or we may fix beforehand on subjects for meditation, and then shut out every thing else while we dwell on them for a good long time, and return again to the same, or kindred subjects, and collect our thoughts at the end in an earnest movement of the will and affections toward God. Or again we may take a portion of Holy Scripture, such as the Sermon on the Mount, or the history of the passion of our Lord, or some of His Dis-