

believe in him, but also that you should suffer for him." (Phil. i. 29.) And of himself, he writes elsewhere, (2 Cor. iv. 10) "always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies." He also glories in this: "I bear the marks of the Lord in my body." (Gal. vi. 17.)

From the exercise of these, we will also obtain the desire of imitating those heroic virtues, the living model of which our Lord displayed in his Passion. This is the principal end, and is recommended by St. Peter, when he says, (iv. 1.) "Christ, therefore, having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought."

But, in order to obtain the proposed end in meditating on the Passion of the Lord, we require preparation, not only on account of the general reason by which we are obliged to prepare our souls before prayer, that we may not be "like a man who tempteth God." (Eccl. xviii. 23.) but also on this special account, that our Lord himself prepared with great earnestness for the sufferings of his Passion. Wherefore, I will imagine, that Christ himself says to me, "Remember my poverty—the wormwood and the gall." (Lam. iii. 19) And I will answer him in the words that follow the above, (20. 21.) "I will be mindful and remember, and my soul shall languish within me. These things I shall think over in my heart, therefore will I hope," because the devout commemoration of the Passion of Christ excites great confidence.

Our preparation then should be such as St. Bonaventure prescribes. "A man should begin so noble a work,

humbly, confidently, earnestly, and with all possible purity of heart. In stim. p. i. c. 2.

1. *Humbly.* Not only because in the beginning of prayer, "The just man is first accuser of himself," (Prov. xxiii. 17.) but also, by the special consideration, that I have plunged my Saviour into so much misery, and this will be to me a subject of great confusion. Nay more, I will consider myself unworthy of assisting at the sufferings of Christ. For it was by great privilege, that he communicated the anguish of his mind to his three disciples in the garden, and that he wished St. John and Magdalen to be present with his Mother at his death. But the proud are hindered from beholding this spectacle, as it is written in Job, (xxxvii. 24.) "Therefore, men shall fear him, and all that seem to themselves to be wise, shall not dare to behold him.

2. *Confidently.* Because if I devote myself to the consideration of this Passion, I will share in those fruits and merits, for which the Lord suffered. Three motives will excite this confidence in me. The great merit of the Passion itself—the great love of Christ, which induced him out of compassion for us, to become our advocate—the example of the good thief, who found pardon and grace on the cross itself.

3. *Earnestly*; as Christ himself prayed before his Passion, not heavily, or tepidly, like the sleeping disciples.

4. *With a clean heart*—such as we ought to present ourselves with, to receive so precious a liquor as the blood of Christ, flowing into our souls, from the effect of this heavenly meditation.