

## JESUIT PRINCIPLES.

## THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST. IGNATIUS.

The First Five Meditations—The "Foundation"—Each Meditation Briefly Outlined—The Development of the Reflections Left to the Reader.

## FIRST MEDITATION.

The Past—"Many sins and no acts of penance."

The Present—"Live in forgetfulness of God."

The Future—"What will be your lot if you continue to pursue the road upon which you have entered?"

As to that road misery and misfortune lurk along it, ruin is its terminus. To leave that road it is necessary to think of God and make use of these "Exercises" to repair the past and build up the future. The chance may never come again. In order to have the fruits of this grand opportunity it is imperative that I recall those sins of commission and omission and have them wiped out. The road pursued heretofore must end here at this retreat; and on going forth from this house I must step upon another path, otherwise there is no hope. Therefore, may God, whose wisdom led me here, grant me the grace to so perform this retreat that I shall be cleansed from the dust of the highway I have trod, and may His Holy Mother and St. Ignatius grant their powerful intercession.

## SECOND MEDITATION.

Reason, as well as Faith, teach me that I emanate from God, and to God I must return. Of His free will He sent me into the world to be sanctified here for His glory and to enjoy that glory in eternal salvation with Him. In gratitude to Him for my very existence and being, my duty is to obey His mandates and follow the course His commandments point out for me; also for my own sake, otherwise, by continuing to frustrate the designs of God, I risk His enmity and incur His condemnation. By a change now—peace and prosperity on earth, joy and happiness hereafter; by neglecting to correspond with the graces so miraculously offered, in the very midst of my forgetfulness, sin and more than wickedness, I risk all esteem, friendship, love, and prospects here below, and I ensure the certain condemnation of God when eternity dawns upon me. Therefore, from St. Ignatius' "Foundation" I learn that gratitude to God and my own safety and salvation, as well as that of many others, depend upon my immediately corresponding with the graces of this retreat, and rectifying the past and securing the future, by an acknowledgment, in the present, of my total dependence upon Him and by walking, as closely as I can, in His foot-steps. May He, through the intercession of Mary and St. Ignatius, direct me; may the Father who created, the Son who redeemed, and the Holy Ghost who sanctified me, make this retreat the point of a new departure in life. "What benefiteth a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (St. Paul.) There are ten thousand roads to Hell; there is but one to Heaven. As, without my consent, God created me when he saw fit, so shall He cut me off, at any hour, when it suits His purposes. He may be tempted once too often—so now is the time for me to wash away the stains of the past and try to so act that I need not dread His call, come when it may!

## THIRD MEDITATION.

God drew me from nothingness to give me life, both temporal and eternal. The former as a means whereby I may attain the latter, and both for His own glory. He gave me life—as a means, and created all other things to be used by me as instruments whereby I may gain the end for which He created me. They are perishable tools, yet, they are sufficiently lasting to serve His purposes or to frustrate them. They serve His purposes if I make proper use of them; in a proper manner, and at proper times; they frustrate His desire if I abuse them, and instead of employing them as so many stepping-stones to eternal happiness, I convert them into an inclined plane leading downwards to perdition. He needs them not; for me they were all created. Another evidence of His goodness and love; another proof of my ingratitude if I acknowledge not this truth; another load-stone about my neck if I refuse to use them as He desires and for His glory. The more favors received from God, the greater my

obligation to thank Him. And the fittest way to thank Him for these gifts is by making a proper use of them. Therefore is it my bounden duty to use, but not abuse, of these gifts. For each of them shall I have to render a severe account some day. May He enable me, by grace, and through the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Ignatius, to so use these gifts that when my time comes I can render the account of "the good and faithful servant." May He so aid me as that when all these things pass away and I put on immortality, I will hear Him say "Well done;" and the memory of those numberless means, animate and inanimate, of salvation shall not rise up in accusation against me. The grandest words we can ever say are "*bonum certamen certavi*," when that fight has really been fought.

## FOURTH MEDITATION.

The indifference referred to by St. Ignatius is not what, at least, some would suppose to be a *neglectful carelessness*. As we have seen, all created objects, all things coming from the hand of God, are destined to be used by man as means of salvation. And man should be *indifferent* to which of them he is to employ; for provided they are all or any of them used as God desires them to be used, it is of little consequence to man which he is allotted to employ. St. Ignatius points out four cases: (1) indifference to health or sickness; (2) to riches or poverty; (3) to honor or dishonor; (4) a long life or a short one. Naturally we are inclined to health, wealth, honor and long life. But as our destination is God, and we have no determined lease of our existence upon earth, and as we are certain it cannot at best exceed a certain period, it is of little moment to us whether our salvation is worked out by illness or health, poverty or wealth, etc. In fact we must be *indifferent* to the means.

It is the end we must look to. However, we cannot be indifferent to things commanded or forbidden by God. For example it cannot be a matter of indifference to us whether we make our Easter Duty or not, or whether we eat meat on Friday or not. But in all things where we have the exercise of our will and where we ignore which of them is the most certain means to our salvation, we should be indifferent. Let God rule as he sees fit; we have but to obey. To the soldier it is a matter of indifference whether he is sent north or south, whether told to charge to the right or left. He has a duty to perform. He is as liable to death in one place as the other. The general sees what he cannot see; so he goes on cheerfully and completely indifferent to what command may be given. We are all soldiers in the Church Militant, and we should be indifferent to what orders we receive from God: "Our's not to make reply, our's not to reason why, our's not to do" and not "die," but live. Had I health I might commit sin that in sickness I could not commit; were I sick I might be enabled to do good that I could do if in health. Had I riches I might damn my own soul and that of others by bad use of them, while poverty would prevent all that; were I poor I might be tempted to steal or commit crimes that if rich I would not commit. Had I honors, I might lose my salvation through pride etc., had I no honors, I might murmur against God's justice. Had I honor I might not deserve it and be the cause of unjustly depriving others of it; had I dishonor, (provided it was not due to my own fault) I might be so humbled that I would find grace with God. "*Deponit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles*." Had I a long life—and the longest is short—I might commit errors that were I out off earlier I would never have been guilty of. In a word, do I want to save my soul and go to God? Yes! Are not all desires, affections and objects the creatures of God? Yes! Did he not create them as means whereby I am to serve Him and reach Him? Yes! Then provided that object and end can be gained by the medium of any one or more of them, it is a matter of perfect indifference to me which of them I am called upon to use or which one is allotted to me by God! This is St. Ignatius' idea; in a word, place God before His creatures; love Him and not them; place Heaven above Earth; place Eternity before Time. As to the former, it is of great moment—the greatest of all important things; the only real important one; as to the latter it is a matter of indifference to us, for "Time flies, and Creatures perish."

May St. Ignatius procure from God

that spirit of indifference for me that I may not be chained to things which might satisfy my passing desires, feelings, passions or inclinations, while debarring me from eternal salvation. "*Vanitas, vanitatum et omnia est vanitas, præter amorem deum et ille soli servivo*." Indifferent to nothing that God commands or forbids; indifferent to all that the world suggests or the means whereby God wishes to save the soul.

## FIFTH MEDITATION—THE THREE-FOLD SIN.

1st. For one sin of thought, one moment of pride, one flash of disobedience, one second of ambition, Lucifer was, in a twinkling, "hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal city, amidst horrid ruin and combustion, down to bottomless perdition, there to dwell in adamantine chains and penal fire, who durst defy the Almighty to arms." A pure spirit, created to enjoy heaven, the sin was so great in God's eye that He cast Lucifer and his myriad companions into hell, which was at that moment prepared for their reception. God is just—for He never punishes, nor rewards without cause. *Infinite in wisdom*, for He cannot err. He is Holy, for He can have no passions to govern Him. But is He not a God of Mercy? The angels were at once and forever banished into uttermost darkness for one sin of thought—the *non serviam*! How many sins of thought I have committed, of not only pride, disobedience, envy, but of every nature, each one of which is greater than that of Lucifer; for I am but man; he was an angel? How many thousand times I have been more guilty than the fallen angels, yet I live; I am not punished. He is a God of Mercy, for He spares me yet and extends to me still another chance to escape Hell. Loaded with thousands of sins, how black my soul must be in His eyes, when one single flash sufficed to convert angels of light into fiends of darkness! How grateful I should be for that mercy and how careful not to strain it beyond endurance.

2nd. Adam and Eve—the parents of the human race—were at once cast out of the Earthly Paradise. For 900 years they suffered sorrow, pain, hardship and misery; death was their sentence and that of our whole race. "All ills that flesh is heir to" come from the one sin of disobedience, coupled with curiosity or an unlawful desire for knowledge, so as to be equal to God. Man had everything; he was "monarch of all he surveyed;" but God, in His wisdom, forbid him the use of one out of all the millions of objects about him. Again the *non serviam*; he would not obey God. Eve, through curiosity—then Adam, through false love for Eve—disobeyed God: and for that one sin, so heinous was it in His eyes, the human race for four thousand years had to suffer. Christ had to come to earth to walk the *via dolorosa* and save mankind, and death, misery and desolation formed the sad lot of all future generations. Then, if Lucifer was cast out for one sin, if Adam was condemned, and his whole posterity, for one sin, how comes it that I am allowed to go on heaping up sins of disobedience, ambition, false love, pride, &c., until the pile would now suffice to crush a million men? It is because God again shows His mercy—as when He sent Christ to save us. He loves men's souls so intensely and with such an infinite love that He wishes to spare and spare them, giving them chance after chance to gain salvation. Lucifer sinned without ever having had an example of God's justice: Adam sinned without having experienced or comprehended God's goodness and mercy: I have sinned hundreds of times more than either, with these and thousands of other examples of God's wrath before me, with a full knowledge of His love and mercy, from creation to the cross. What then must I not deserve? One more chance and this may be the last one. "It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of a living God."

3rd. How hideous sin must be in God's eyes, what an outrage upon His Majesty, what an act of ingratitude for His favors and love can be learned from the fact that for one mortal sin a soul is sent into the eternal torments of the damned. A soul, no matter how pure heretofore, how blessed by God, how faithful, how bright, becomes guilty of one mortal sin; that sin blackens its purity as Satan was changed from light to gloom, it effaces all acts of past faith, it tarnishes with a dye of Hell all former brightness; and dying in that state, the soul goes to Hell. Yet it is only one

sin. And I have lived for years covered with a very leprosy of sin. Unclean as the lepers from the tombs of Bethany; yet God's mercy has spared me and given me a chance to be relieved of all those sins, any one of which would open Hell for me. Filthy as were the lepers, by faith and repentance, love and prayer, they were cleansed by Christ. So can I be cleansed of all my sins. But the hour of mercy may go by unchecked and the hour of justice come, and if it comes—and if one sin suffices for eternal damnation—what would be my fate! I fear to contemplate it. May God grant me grace again to wipe out all stains of sin—for before Him we must appear pure—or else our lot is torture eternal with the sullen lord of the first revolt.

## BRAVE WORDS.

At the banquet of the Jackson Club, Columbus, Ohio, on the 8th instant, Hon. Lawrence T. Neal, of Chillicothe, Ohio, made the following spirited address, in reply to the toast, "The Proscription of Religious Liberty the Destruction of the Republic":—

Mr. President, Gentlemen of the Jackson Club, and Fellow-Democrats:—The right to worship God according to the dictates of one's own conscience is an indefensible one.

He who would abridge this right is not a good citizen; and he who would attempt to destroy it is an enemy to freedom and free government.

A secret political organization of any kind is hostile to the spirit of our free institutions. But when such an organization, in a Republic like ours, obligates its members, by oath, to violate the constitutional provision which guarantees religious freedom to every citizen, and secures immunity to Christian and infidel alike, in his belief or unbelief, it reverses the progress of civilization, wages war upon civil, as well as religious liberty, and, if successful in its aims and purposes, will strike the death-blow, not only to the fundamental principles of American liberty but to Christianity itself.

Cowardice alone will prevent ignorance, bigotry and hate, upon which such an organization must depend for its support, from restoring the persecutions and crimes of the darkest periods of the dark ages of the world.

Such an organization or order cannot, legitimately, hold a place among the political parties of our country, either as an independent organization, or as an auxiliary to some other party, no matter how high sounding and patriotic its name may be. It may live for a time upon the credulity and prejudices of those who may be induced by the wiles and artifices of designing, unscrupulous, and corrupt demagogues and leaders, to adopt its dogmas, but the intelligence and patriotism of the people, when aroused, will reject and destroy it; and the conspirators against public liberty, who, renouncing the teachings of our fathers that neither creed nor sect shall be considered or recognized in the selection of public officials, have been instrumental in founding such a party, shall, banished from public notice, lost to all influence and power, in disgrace and dishonor, close their ignoble career in ignominious obscurity.

The union between American liberty and religious freedom must be indissoluble. They must stand or fall together. If we are to retain the one we must preserve inviolate the other.

Our highest duty is to resist, with unfaltering courage, every attempt, insidious or open, to proscribe the political and other rights of any of our citizens because of their religion, as a dangerous assault upon constitutional liberty.

I speak, not only as a Democrat, but as a Protestant, and say, that we shall prove ourselves dastards in the Democratic faith, if we fail to discharge such duty.

Let us then, one and all, now and here, bearing aloft the banner of free thought, free speech and religious toleration, and renewing our allegiance to these underlying principles of justice, right and liberty, pledge ourselves and those who are to come after us, until, with universal acclaim, they shall be declared the inalienable heritage of our people.—*Western Watchman*.

A large snowdrop—An avalanche.