

glory of the Lord, meditating both on the benefits of the divine perfections, and on the depths of the incarnation. This 'rock is a refuge to herons,' that is, to sinners. Hither do purer souls flee like doves, and build their nest in the recesses of this rock; and others like harts, who are wont to seek the lofty mountains, and whose conversation is in heaven, here find their place of rest. From hence, "they suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the hardest stone." (Deuteron. xxxii. 13.) For, in his passion, Christ was like the hardest rock, in bearing torments and injuries; and when that rock was struck, there flowed out oil to heal our wounds, and the honey of divine consolations.

From hence we may conclude what end a Christian should propose to himself in meditating on the Passion, viz.: either to purify his soul from sin, or to advance it in virtue, or to unite it by the most ardent love to God.

Moreover, we may consider the Passion as a subject, either of joy, or sorrow.

It is a subject of joy, because in that mystery, the abyss of divine mercy is disclosed, the gate of heaven is opened, the extent and depth of divine love are exhibited, and the great value of man is most clearly manifested. Hence, Abraham seeing this day of the Lord's Passion, in the ram which was substituted for his son Isaac, "saw it and rejoiced," (Genes. xxii. 13. John viii. 56.) and Christ himself in the Canticles, terms this the day of his coronation, of his espousals, and of the joy of his heart. This mode of considering the Passion is suited to the perfect.

The next mode is by way of grief and compassion, because Christ has suffered so much, and his sufferings

have been caused by me. And as he himself felt so much sorrow and sadness it is just that I should sympathize with him, lest that complaint which he made should be applicable to me: "And I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none; and for one to comfort me, and I found none." Psal. lxxviii. 21.

Christ likewise drank the chalice of his Passion, not only by enduring torment in his body, but also by thinking of his torments beforehand in his mind. Of the former, he said to the sons of Zebedee: "Can you drink the chalice which I am about to drink?" Mat. xx. 22. Of the latter, there is the addition, (in St. Mark, x. 38.) "Can you drink the chalice which I drink; or be baptized with the baptism, with which I am baptized? as if he was even then daily drinking it, from the apprehension of his impending torments. But in the garden of Gethsemani, he entirely drained it. Wherefore, we should endeavour to drink our chalice in this two-fold manner, both by conformity of suffering, and an affection of compassion.

In this affection, we will follow the example of the Mother of Christ, whose soul was pierced through by the sword. Luke ii. 35. This is also the peculiar gift of God, concerning which we read in Zacharias, (xii. 10.) "And they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn, as one mourneth for an only son."

But this affection will not suffice, unless there be a similitude in suffering—either by voluntary punishment of the body, or by cheerfully enduring those afflictions which come to us from others. For amongst the gifts of God. St. Paul reckons: 'not only that you should