

JESUIT PRINCIPLES.

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST IGNATIUS.

Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Meditations—Death, its Certainty, and the Uncertainty of the Time—Particular Judgment—The General Judgment.

NINTH MEDITATION—DEATH.

*First Point—Death is certain—*Even if Faith did not teach it, the experience of untold years proclaims most emphatically that since we have been born we must die. The sentence of death has been passed upon the human race. In every case from Adam till our day that sentence has been invariably executed. There is no escape. It is no delusion. Death was caused by sin—and from the hour of original-sin, at the very dawn of creation, till the fiery night that shall precede the day of judgment, every human being *must* die. But if it is *certain* we all must die; the hour, manner, place and circumstances of our death are all most uncertain. A man is condemned to be hanged to-morrow! There is no escape for him. He may be cut off before to-morrow, but certainly he will never see the sun set to-morrow night. His feelings must be fearful to contemplate: yet I too am under sentence of death, a mandate from which there is no appeal. It may be executed to-morrow, or to-night, or to-day. Then am I not even in a more trying position, if I look at it properly, than the man who knows the *hour* and prepares for it? But why should I not prepare? Is it because I am more uncertain than he is? That is madness. "Death is the wages of sin." I submit most humbly to the decree. I have only to beg of God to not cut the chord of life until I have made use of my opportunities, now afforded, to so prepare that death may have no sting and the grave no victory. It is not so fearful to contemplate if one is ready to meet the grim spectre with a pure heart.

*Second Point—Death puts an end to all:* Pleasures vanish, riches disappear, honors evaporate at the grave. Oh my death these pleasures will hang as clouds upon my past and I can only dread them and the memory of them. I will be as poor as when born. The honors may culminate in a funeral of imposing grandeur,—but the obsequies will only be to please the living not to benefit me. Me they will hurry off to the grave and get rid of me as quickly as they can. "Out of sight, out of mind." Soon, a month, a week, a day, I shall sink into the oblivion that covers the myriads that have gone before me. To think that I must lie under the ground and rot, the prey of worms and vermin; and that my immortal soul (all that is left to me of life) should be in the agonies of Hell! And yet such will infallibly be the case for my body; and unless I turn to God, rectify the past and live for my *great end*, using all creatures as instruments towards that end, such, also, will inevitably be the fate of my soul. Behold the *indifference* of St. Ignatius brought forth most clearly. I cannot escape death. It is not far off. What then care I whether I be rich or poor, healthy or sick, young or old, honored or despised, provided when death's angel strikes my soul is prepared to face God? All things that I cannot carry beyond the grave with me I must not cling to here; for soon they will be taken from me. Truly I should be *indifferent* to the means, provided the end is attained. May God grant me the grace to understand the awfulness of the certainty of death, and the variety of all those pleasures which hasten its hour, the folly of those things which I cherish from human motives and which I must leave at my death bed—provided God permits me to die on my bed! Open my eyes, that I may escape the real horrors of death.

*Third Point—Death is Near.*—The longest life is but short! How much like the visions of a vanished dream are the one and thirty years I have spent. Yet, at least, I am passing the mid-day of life. Even though I were to have half a century more (which I certainly will not) it is but as a day to look back upon. It is merely a dot in the lengthy line of ages. *Hodie homo est; eras non comporet.* In youth, manhood, old age—it is all the same; death strikes when least expected, and sin only hastens its approach. It was but the 22nd June that a fine, strong healthy young man asked me to secure

him a place in Ottawa. It was evening, and as I left him he said he could do any work, as he had a powerful constitution and much strength. On the morning of the 23rd I obtained the place, and hastened to Aylmer to inform him of it. On arriving I found him dead. A fit of coughing came on at mid-night, and he died from bursting a vessel in his exertions. Last May a young man walked out to a boom camp on the Ottawa river with me. It was Sunday; he had not been to church. He told me he saw not pleasure in wasting time in a church on a fine day. At noon we had dinner at the camp. He went out on a boom to fish. His line got tangled in some debris of logs and bark, and in turning to pull it out, he fell in, was carried under some 30,000 logs and never appeared again. A few days ago a Father of this community went out for a boat sail, strong, robust, full of life and hope. Before evening his body floated down the St. Lawrence—his soul was before God. We cannot tell when, how, or where we are to die—but die we must, and dying leave all we cherish behind us; and not only die, but die very soon. There is no thought to make one feel more potently the hollowness of life, the vanity of things that we cling to, the necessity of indifference to all, except what may lead us to God who is our end. As St. Ignatius says: "It is like going to the gallows by one road or another," sooner or later the cuprit gets there.

When I look back over the troubled sea of my life, each wave of which is a sin, each tide bearing me nearer and nearer to my destined termination—the shores of Death—I feel as if I am underserving of God's bounty. His mercy has held back as yet the Angel of Death. But it is only for a short time. O! God, grant me, through the intercession of Christ Thy Son, His Holy Mother, and St. Ignatius to so perform this retreat, this work of purification, that when the supreme moment comes I may be ready to meet the inevitable with a calm conscience; not dreading the torments of Hell, nor Thy just wrath, not shrinking from the grave; for if the soul be prepared to go to Thee, it little matters as to the body—for "it will be sown in corruption." The terror of Death, is the terror of Thy judgment. Grant me the grace to so purify my life and detach it from the fleeting phantoms of worldly allurements, that when my body goes to the tomb, my soul may go to Thy Presence forever! Thou wilt restore that body to men at the end. Grant me to save it from Hell since I cannot save it from the grave. Amen.

TENTH MEDITATION.—PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.

*First Point.*—We must each appear, immediately after death before the tribunal of God. We know not *when* death may come or *how*. But after it comes Judgment. We cannot then ask God to "wait a while," as we do now, when He knocks at our hearts. The Doctor or Priest will say, "he is dead" i. e. "he is before God's Judgment-seat." No more hope, save that derived from the good done in life. No longer a God of Mercy, He is a God of Justice. One moment the man is on his bed, cared for by the doctor, prayed for by the priest, wept for by the family. In a flash he is before the Infinite Majesty of God. Power, riches, favor, love, all gone like the stars that disappear in the sky at sunrise. They are lost in the blaze of Eternity's Day. Saints feared the Judgment; how should I not tremble who knows that were I to die now I would be a million times condemned? No appeal, no hope, no delay, no time given. As we live we generally die (except by a miracle of grace.) As we die we are judged.

*Second Point.*—Think of the surprise and confusion of the soul before God. When the unbeliever, the thoughtless, the scoffer at Eternity, rises up in all his iniquity before the tribunal and the past is paraded before him, in all its wickedness,—think of his confusion. *Words, thoughts, deeds, from the dawn of reason till the end, shall all stand out in broad relief. None missing—all there!* The recording angel will read the long list of hatred, injustice, obstinacy, bad examples, etc. The only thing riches, honors, etc, leave him is the grief of having loved them. Just reflect upon the consternation and suffering of that moment; all alone, self-accusing, in the presence of the August Justice of the Most High!

*Third Point.*—The sentence will be irrevocable. All will pass in a twinkling.

God will be judge and witness. Mercy past, Justice commenced: to summon, accuse, prove, sentence and execute will not take in one visible point of time. Before the corpse is cold the soul has been tried, sentenced and suffering in Hell. If the soul is guilty; the one glimpse of God's splendor vanishes, leaving eternal darkness and remorse over the soul as demons whirl it off to hell. The world says: "he is dead;" "he was a good man;" how much did he leave." The family says "he is gone to a better home." Meanwhile, he may have had only *one simple vice*, one disorderly affection, one evil inclination not subdued, *one mortal sin*; he is in hell, scarcely has his breath fled when he is judged and in the bottomless pit. Some say "the majority live as I do." That won't be a plea before God. Because a million go to Hell, is it a reason for you to risk the anger of God. The judgments of this world are wicked and erroneous,—and many and many a one of them is reversed before the High Tribunal of Divine Justice. God and not the world will be your judge. Remember you may be called at any hour; and that hour will be the one of eternal happiness or eternal torment. The only safety then is to be ever and always prepared. So that whenever Death's Angel strikes you can say: "I am not afraid of the account which I shall have to render." May the Most Merciful God grant me such a fear of death and judgment, that when the hour come, as come it will, I may be prepared to face that Judgment-seat and hear the sentence—"come thou blessed of my Father."

ELEVENTH MEDITATION.—THE LAST JUDGMENT.

*First Point.*—The last judgment is the public account we must all give at the end of the world, and in presence of united creation receive either the reward or punishment due to our lives. Signs most potent will precede the final day; Antichrist shall appear to draw men down by all means of deceit or violence. The fiery night that is predicted will burst upon the earth and all things be consumed.

*Second Point.*—Gabriel's trumpet will resound in the four quarters of the earth and summon the dead to arise and come to judgment. At that sound sea and earth will give up all the dead—all who lived, without exception, from Adam to the last man. In Jehosaphat Valley they shall assemble to behold the separation of the good and bad. The standard of the cross will be flung out against the sky; signal of hope and joy to the just, of despair and misery for the wicked. Christ, as judge, amidst His myriad army of angels, in power and majesty, will appear, and all the nations will weep and lament most bitterly at sight of Him who comes with so severe and wrathful an array.

*Third Point.*—Seated there, the just on His right, the wicked on His left, all acts, words and thoughts shall be laid bare. Each one will answer in proportion to the graces, favors, offices, talents, etc., received. We have three accusers: our consciences, our guardian angel and the devil. In severity shall He say to the wicked, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire"; with sweetness to the just He will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, to take possession of the Kingdom which has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

What shall be my fate that day? If I follow in my present course it will inevitably be a day of doom for me. This body of mine, instead of being luminous, impassible and glorious like those of the just; but rather horrible, coarse, filthy, yet immortal for eternal torment. I shall stand on the left, my most hidden sins will be made public to the universe. He will rebuke me with almighty anger; point out to me the greatness of God, which I now undervalue; the blood He shed for me and which I spurned; my injustice toward God and the Hell which I have deserved. Then will come the sentence, "Depart from Me, thou cursed, into everlasting fire." Then the earth shall open and with damned and demons I shall fall into that Hell out of which there is no redemption and which never ends.

Let me now resolve to go at once before the minister of Reconciliation and blot out my past by a true confession; and may I henceforth neither do, say, nor consent to anything which might be a subject of accusation, reprehension or condemnation on the dread day of public judgment. Grant me grace, O my Lord and Re-

deemer, to comply, without excuse or delay, with these resolutions; and since Thou still holdest out to me Thy kind indulgence, awaiting me with open arms, I give myself to Thee with full confidence, confused and abashed at having offended Thee. Be merciful towards me, and allow me to be now reconciled forever with Thee. By this means I shall be allowed to hear that sweet and blessed sentence, which with serene and placid countenance Thou wilt pronounce in favor of Thy elect: "Come, blessed of my Father, possess the Kingdom which has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

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*Second Year.*—H. Ortiz, W. Higgins, J. Cartier, J. Duffey, H. Chapdelaine, L. Ortiz, G. Deroach, A. Dion, A. Poire, H. Leclere, A. Blanchard, J. Levesque, F. Goyer.

*Third Year.*—F. McKenna, J. O'Neil, L. Palmer, F. Foster, E. O'Reilly, E. Berard, J. Coburn, F. Ryan, L. Scott, F. O'Reilly, Z. Blanchard, J. Millard, G. Call, B. Donnelly, T. Lablance, J. Hurthubise, H. Payett, J. Bourdon, P. Rohland, H. Delage, G. Beaudry, J. Benoit, C. Brodeur, J. DeMontigny, E. Dechalet, S. Desmarchais, H. Leclere, O. Payett, L. St. Arnaud, T. St. Arnaud, E. Maurault.

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