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PIOUS

REFLECTIONS,

FOR

EVERY DAY OF THE MONTH.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

FENELON,

ARCHBISHOP OF CAMBRAY.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED, THE
LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

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THE LIFE OF FENELON.

THE celebrated and virtuous Francis de Salignac de la Motte Fenelon, of an ancient and illustrious family, was son of Pons de Salignac, marquis de Fenelon, and was born at the castle of Fenelon, in the province of Perigord, which now forms the department of Dordogne, August 6th, 1651. He received private instruction in his father's house till he had attained the age of twelve; then was removed to the university of Cahors; and completed his studies at Paris, under the superintendance of his uncle, Anthony, marquis of Fenelon; of whom the great Conde said, that he equally shone in conversation, in a campaign, and in the cabinet. So great were young Fenelon's natural talent and capacity, that the most difficult studies proved to him mere amusements. He assumed early in life the ecclesiastical habit, and before he had attained his twentieth year he preached at Paris, with so much success as to attract the notice of Bossuet and Bourdaloue, the most celebrated divines of that age. His uncle, apprehensive that indiscrim-

inate praise might excite presumption, or corrupt the native goodness of the mind, persuaded his nephew to retire from public view, and continue his studies in solitude and silence. Fenelon evinced his discretion and power of self-denial by a cheerful consent, and by applying with unremitting zeal to the study of theology and the cultivation of polite literature. In truth, his retirement from the world only rendered him more worthy of it. At the age of twenty-four he entered into holy orders, and gave, at this early period, such proofs of exemplary piety and discretion, that three years afterwards the archbishop of Paris intrusted him with an office which required strict conduct and judgment; namely, that of Superior to newly converted catholic women. No one was more adapted to this employment than Fenelon: for no one better knew how to soften the authority of his mission by the most gentle manners, and to adapt the arguments of his warm and persuasive eloquence to the female temper and delicacy. His success in this ministry raised his reputation exceedingly, and rendered him known to Louis XIV. Occupied with the idea of abolishing by force the reformed religion, that mon-

arch selected Fenelon to undertake a mission in the provinces of Saintonge and Aunis, for the conversion of heretics. But Fenelon refused to undertake the office, if it was to be supported by military force, declaring that he would convert only by persuasion and argument, never by persecution; and would represent God such as he believed him to be, not an object of terror, but the benevolent father of his creatures. The monarch approved of this liberality of sentiment, of which none was inherited by himself. To the spirit and toleration of Fenelon these provinces were indebted for an exemption from the dreadful persecution which deluged with blood the rest of France.

On his return to Paris, he resumed his former humble office, incapable of fawning for preferment and power. His reputation, however, as an excellent preacher, a good man, and a profound scholar, daily increased.

In 1688, he published his *Treatise on Female Education*; and a work *Concerning the Functions of the Pastors of the Church*. In 1689, he was appointed preceptor to the dukes of Burgundy and Berry.

He owed this appointment solely to the duke of Beauvilliers, governor of

the young princes ; who thought him the only person he knew who seemed capable of fulfilling this important trust. Fenelon entered with enthusiasm on this laborious and difficult office. To give up his own comforts, and to devote himself solely to the government of his pupils ; not to utter a word which did not convey a lesson ; not to perform an action which was not an example ; to remind them of their high station, that they might become acquainted with its importance ; to annihilate their pride ; to combat those passions which flattery encourages, and eradicate those vices which are peculiar to a court ; to reprove them without losing their confidence ; to correct them without forfeiting their friendship ; to add to the consciousness of their duty, and to diminish the consciousness of their power ; in a word, never to deceive his pupils, his country, nor his conscience, was the task of Fenelon ; to whom the monarch said, “ I give you my sons,” and to whom the people cried, “ give us a father.”

His plan of education is said to have been a master-piece of judgment. When he entered on his charge, he found the duke of Burgundy haughty, imperious, and passionate, or rather furious to ex-

cess, on the most trifling opposition to his will. He was of so untractable a disposition that it was apprehended, should he attain the age of maturity, he would be the scourge of mankind. He was exceedingly obstinate, fond of voluptuous pleasures, the chase, and gaming. He was naturally stern, barbarous and tyrannical. Yet the extent and sagacity of his understanding was prodigious. One subject of study at a time was too trifling for his attention: the most abstract sciences were play. So proud was he, that he regarded himself as on a level with omnipotence, and he looked on men in general as mere atoms in the universe. Instead of adopting a painful train of arguments, Fenelon ordered, when any of those passions were in agitation, that his studies and amusements should be immediately suspended; that the most profound silence and an air of the deepest melancholy should be maintained by all who approached him. The prince finding himself thus avoided, and considered as unworthy of attention, always grew weary of solitude, acknowledged his fault, requested forgiveness, and endeavoured again to conciliate esteem and favor. Fenelon ever received his humiliation with

complacency, and then took opportunities of representing the unhappy effects of such violent passions, both on himself and on those around him ; and, that if persisted in, he would be regarded as an object of consternation and terror.

Fenelon's system of education was regular, yet design was not obvious ; every measure appeared the effect of accident, and derived from necessary occurrences. He laid down no regular hours for application, yet every hour and every place were made subservient to improvement and instruction. At dinner, at play, riding, walking, or in company, his curiosity was continually excited by casual hints, and judicious remarks were introduced in the course of the most desultory conversation ; these hints led to questions and explanations. His pupil's studies were generally engaged in at his own request. In short, by the power of education, Fenelon transformed his royal pupil ; rendered him from the haughtiest, the most humble ; from the most ungovernable, the most easy of control ; and from the most passionate and furious, the meekest of mankind. On any accident or situation, which was either calculated to correct a foible, or to re-

commend any particular virtue, Fenelon wrote a tale, a fable, or a dialogue. In this mode of instruction, he inculcated, that crooked policy in a sovereign always recoils upon himself; that to deceive his subjects, or his enemies, is not only immoral, but prejudicial; that greatness which is purchased with crimes, yields neither glory nor happiness; that tyranny is more baneful to the sovereign than to the subject; that a prince can only find happiness and security in the love of his people; that the complaints of subjection, and the cries of misfortune, if rejected, ascend to the throne of God; that the glory of a wise and pacific prince is more solid than that of an unjust conqueror; that the frenzy of wars is the epidemic distemper of kings and ministers; and that, except under the pressure of natural calamities, as times of pestilence and famine, it is the fault of those who govern, if the subject be unhappy. Such are the exalted maxims which may be found in the *Dialogues of the Dead*; a work abounding with the soundest historical knowledge and the purest principles of government:—in the *Directions for the conscience of a King*; which has been styled the catechism of princes:—and

more particularly in *Telemachus*, that master-piece of genius.

Such is the power of a wise and pleasing mode of education, that from an impetuous character arose a prince affable, mild, humane, patient, modest, and humble; austere towards himself, benevolent to others; zealous to fulfil his duty, and to be worthy of his future destination of ruling a great kingdom. This astonishing change of character was formed by gradual and almost imperceptible degrees.

Fenelon wrote against the Jansenists. The idea he had formed of the Divine goodness, rendered him averse to the doctrines of Father Quesnel, which he called cruel, unpitying, and tending to plunge their votaries into despair. "What a terrible being," said he, "do they make of God! for my part, I consider him as a *good* being; and I can never consent to regard him as a tyrant, who, having fettered us, commands us to walk, and then punishes us because we cannot obey him."

He continued at court eight years, with no other benefice than a small priory. At length the king bestowed on him the abbey of St. Vallery. He afterwards promoted him to the archbishopric of Cambray. On accepting

this promotion he resigned the abbey of St. Vallery. When pressed by the king to retain it, he answered, that "the revenues of the archbishopric were amply sufficient, and that he would not keep what might provide for some deserving person." But while acting thus disinterestedly, and thus promoted, he was suddenly removed from his office, and banished from court.

Several causes contributed to his disgrace. Perfection is unattainable, and foibles are the concomitants of man. He became captivated with the visionary and enthusiastic tenets of Madame de Guyon, whose spiritual ideas he supported, in the conferences held at Issy to condemn them; and in a book entitled, *An Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints*. His religious principles were now questioned; he was publickly accused of maintaining the extravagant notions of Quietism, and the cause was carried to Rome, to be decided by the Pope, by whom the book was condemned.

To enter into a detail of this theological dispute, would be highly uninteresting. It may be sufficient to remark, that the opinions of Fenelon, however enthusiastick and extravagant, were the effusions of a pure heart

and warm imagination, as strikingly is evidenced in the present little manual, containing his *Reflections for every Day in the Month*, which is said to be the last of his works.

His mystic opinions, however, were not the sole cause of his disgrace; the education which he gave to the duke of Burgundy, was an indirect disapprobation of the conduct of Louis the fourteenth; and that haughty monarch thought he saw in the *Adventures of Telemachus* his own despotism and ambition censured.

It has been justly remarked, that the heresy of the Archbishop of Cambray might be attributed more to his politics than to his theology. Fenelon supported the persecution, as became him, with firmness and moderation. He neither complained of the virulent abuses of his enemies, nor of the cabals employed to disgrace him; he neither descended to invective nor altercation. When Bossuet called him an heretic and a blasphemer, he mildly replied, "Why do you load me with abuse instead of argument? is it because you call my arguments abuse?" All the services of Fenelon were forgotten; he received an order to retire to Cambray; his friends were exiled; and his relations deprived of their employments.

Madame de Sillery, while recounting her own distresses, says, "It is known that in the case of Fenelon and the duke of Burgundy, that the preceptor and pupil were forbidden to write to each other, and corresponded in secret. We must hate the man who could enjoin such a command; but Fenelon is not without blame for having authorized the disobedience of his pupil. For the rest, when I consider that Fenelon was hated and disgracefully dismissed for the atrocious crime of writing the *Adventures of Telemachus* for his pupil; when I recollect that Louis the great, after reading this work, exclaimed, "I knew M. de Cambray possessed a weak mind, but I never before suspected him of having a corrupt heart," I feel the fullest conviction that I have no right to complain.

The duke of Burgundy always considered his venerable preceptor as a father and a friend. In the height of an abominable persecution, when it was dangerous to mention the name of Fenelon at court, his amiable pupil wrote thus: "At last my dear archbishop, I find an opportunity of breaking the silence which I have been constrained to keep during four years. I have since suffered many evils; but one of the

greatest has been, my not being able to prove to you what I felt on your account during this interval; and how greatly my friendship has increased instead of being lessened by your misfortunes. I look forward with delight to the time when I shall be able to see you; but I fear that this time is still very distant. I was greatly shocked at the treatment which you have met with, but we must submit to the divine will, and believe that whatever happens is for the best.—Versailles, Dec. 22, 1710.

Fenelon passed the last sixteen years of his life at his diocese, performing not only the usual functions of his episcopal office, but exercising the duties of an ordinary priest. Many of the letters which he wrote at this time, were published after his death, and shew a perfect knowledge of the windings and turnings of the human heart, a pure and unaffected piety, and great mildness towards the defects of others. At Cambray was a seminary for the instruction of persons in his diocese designed for holy orders. He frequently assisted at the examinations, and himself questioned each candidate before he ordained him. He explained to the students, every week, the principles of

religion ; exhorted them to lay before him any difficulties or objections which occurred to them ; listened to them with patience, and answered them with candor and mildness. Ramsay, his disciple and biographer, who was frequently present at these conferences, says, he does not know which to admire most, his extreme condescension, or the sublimity of his discourses. He preached frequently, during his visitations ; and always adapted his discourses to the capacity of his hearers. That voice which had charmed the court of Louis the fourteenth ; that genius which had enlightened Europe, spoke to peasants and mechanics ; and no style was foreign to him in his endeavours to instruct and improve mankind.

Ramsay has related various anecdotes of this amiable prelate, during his residence at Cambray, which prove the benevolence and excellency of his disposition. When a clergyman of his diocese boasted of having abolished the dances of the peasants on sundays and holidays, " My good friend," returned Fenelon, " though we do not dance ourselves, let us allow these poor people to amuse themselves ; let us not deprive them of the momentary satisfaction of forgetting the wretchedness of their fate."

He often walked alone in the environs of Cambray; entered frequently the cottages of poor peasants, conversed with them in the most familiar manner, partook of their coarse fare, and soothed and assisted them in their difficulties and afflictions. Long after his death, the chairs on which he sat were regarded with veneration.

The saying of a man of letters on viewing the destruction of his library by fire, that "he should have gained little from his books if he knew not how to bear the loss of them," has been justly admired. Fenelon, who lost his library by a similar accident, expressed himself, if not so exaltedly, at least not less affectingly; "God be praised," said he, "that it was not the cottage of some poor family!"

In one of his rambles, observing a peasant in great distress, he demanded the cause; "Alas!" said the peasant, "I am driven from my cottage, and the enemy hath taken away my cow: ah, sir! I shall never possess another!" Fenelon instantly departed under the protection of his passport, after much trouble found the cow and brought her to the peasant.

Fenelon, during the ravages of a war which had driven many unfortunate

country people from their habitations, received them into his palace ; maintained, and even waited on them. When the army of Flanders, the only defence of the kingdom, was unprovided with magazines, and on that account incapable of acting, he opened his granaries, and set the example of disinterested liberality, which was followed by neighbouring districts ; the troops were supplied ; and Flanders saved. Nay, after the battle of Malplaquet his palace became an hospital for the sick and wounded, a refuge to persons of distinction, and an asylum for the poor ; to whom, like a beneficent angel, he distributed succors and consolations.

A veneration for Fenelon was not confined to the French armies ; Eugene and Marlborough sent detachments of troops to guard his estates from pillage, and ordered grain for his use to be escorted to the gates of Cambray.

In 1711, the Dauphin died ; the duke of Burgundy became heir apparent, and the advanced age, and increasing infirmities of Louis the fourteenth, rendered the prospect of his ascension to the throne no distant event. But, having attained his twentieth year, beloved and esteemed by all, his wife, the duchess of Burgundy, on whom he

doted, was seized with the small-pox, and died after a few days illness. He bore this afflicting stroke with apparent calmness, yet his soul bled. He unfortunately caught the same distemper which had hurried his wife to the grave, and which also proved fatal to him. In this last scene he acquitted himself as became the greatness of his mind, with profound composure and invincible patience.

Thus fell, in the year 1712, a prince which France did not deserve, which earth did not deserve ; he was fit only for eternity.

Though Fenelon bore this stroke with perfect resignation, yet the loss of one created by his care and industry, under whose auspices he fondly expected to see his country recovering from a long series of calamities, so deeply affected him, that in the grief of his soul he exclaimed, " All my ties are broken !" He survived this irreparable loss only three years, lingering, not living. In the commencement of 1715 an inflammation of the lungs brought on a violent fever, attended with excruciating pains. He bore his illness with that christian resignation which is equally removed from timid superstition, or philosophic indifference ; and died with the composed tranquillity of

a good man, who sees in death the instant in which virtue is going to approach the throne of grace.

It is remarkable, that Fenelon died without leaving any debts to discharge, or any wealth to be disposed of; there remained only what was sufficient to defray the expenses of his funeral.

His relations placed on his monument a tedious and cold epitaph. D' Alembert has proposed the following inscription; but there is a quaintness and hyperbole in it, which one is surprised to see in the composition of so ingenious a writer.

“ Sous cette pierre repose Fenelon. Passant, n'efface point par les pleurs cette epitaphe, afin que d'autres la lisent et pleurent comme toi.”

Under this stone Fenelon reposes!

Passenger,

*let not thy tears efface this inscription;
that others may hereafter read it,
and weep also.*

It is said, that Louis the fourteenth, towards the close of Fenelon's life, became reconciled to his conduct; for almost every one else had deceived or misled him. On hearing of his death, he exclaimed, “ Alas! we have lost him when we required him the most.”

—The qualities which rendered Fen-

elon an object of esteem and admiration, and which will endear his name to every future age, consisted in a temper always mild and serene ; a polite yet simple address ; an animated conversation ; a mild cheerfulness tempering the dignity of his station ; a religious zeal highly tinged with enthusiasm, yet unaccompanied with the bitterness of fanaticism : and a wonderful perspicuity of expression in explaining the most abstruse and difficult subjects. He possessed also the power of reducing himself to a level with persons of all capacities, and never appeared anxious to display the superiority of his own understanding. His exalted talents and profound learning, instead of filling him with pride and superciliousness, rendered him more humble and unassuming.

A collection of all the religious works of Fenelon was printed at Rotterdam, under the inspection of the Marquis Fenelon, his grand-nephew, when he was ambassador to the States General.

The Female Mentor.—D'Alembert's Eulogy.

PIOUS REFLECTIONS, &c.

FIRST DAY.

Of the scarceness of true faith.

I. “WHEN the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” *Luke* xviii. 8. If he should now come, would he find it in us? What fruits of faith have we to shew? Do we look upon this life only as a short passage to a better? Do we believe that we must suffer with Jesus Christ, before we can reign with him? Do we consider this world as a deceitful appearance, and death as the entrance to true happiness? Do we live by faith? Does it animate us? Do we relish the eternal truths it presents us with? Are we as careful to nourish our souls with those truths, as to maintain our bodies with proper diet? Do we

accustom ourselves to see all things in the light of faith? Do we correct all our judgments by it? Alas! the greater part of Christians think and act like mere heathens. If we judge (as we justly may) of their faith by their practice, we must conclude they have no faith at all

II. Let us fear, lest the kingdom of God should be taken from us, and given to others, who may bear better fruits. "That kingdom of God," is faith reigning in us, and governing all our thoughts. Happy he, who has eyes to see this kingdom. Flesh and blood cannot discern it. The wisdom of the animal man is wilfully blind to it. The inward operations of God appear as a dream to him. To know the wonders of God's kingdom, we must be born again; and to be born again, we must die: this is what the world cannot consent to.

Let the world then despise and censure, and condemn the truth, as it pleases : as for us, O Lord thou hast commanded us to believe, “and to taste thy heavenly gift.” We desire to be of the number of thine elect, and we know that no person can be of that number, who does not conform his life to what thou teachest.

SECOND DAY.

Of the only way to heaven.

I. “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.” *Matt. vii. 13.* The kingdom of heaven is not to be entered but by violence ; it must be taken, as it were, by assault, like a besieged place. The gate is strait and narrow, we must bow, we must bend, we must make ourselves little to gain admittance. The great gate, which

opens wide, and is passed by multitudes, leads to perdition. All broad and smooth ways are dangerous. Woe to us when the world favours us, and our life seems void of trouble. Crosses and difficulties are the surest marks of the way to heaven. Let us be aware, therefore, of going on with the multitude, and let us seek the traces of the few; let us follow the footsteps of the saints along the craggy paths of repentance; climbing over the rocks, seeking secure places in the sweat of our face, and expecting that the last step of our lives should still be a violent struggle to enter the narrow gate of eternity.

II. We are not predestinated by God, but to be made conformable to the image of his Son; to be fastened, as he was, to a cross; renouncing, as he did, all ~~secular~~ treasures; and

to be content, like him, in the midst of sufferings. But, blind as we are, we would get down from this cross, which unites us to our Master. We cannot leave the cross, but we must also forsake Christ crucified; for the cross and he are inseparable. Let us then live and die with him, who came to shew us the true way to heaven; and let our only fear be, lest we should not finish our sacrifice on the same altar, whereon his was consummated. Alas! all our endeavours here, tend to be more at ease, and thereby to withdraw ourselves from the true way to heaven. We know not what we do. We do not comprehend the mystery of grace, which joins a beatitude with tears, pronouncing the mourners happy. The way which leads to a throne is delightful, although it should be overgrown with thorns. The

way which leads to a precipice is dreadful, although it should be covered with roses. We suffer, but we see heaven open; we suffer, but with a willing mind; we love God, and are beloved of him.

THIRD DAY.

Of true devotion.

I. How frequently do men deceive themselves by that vain religion, which St. James warns us of, chap. i. 26. Some think it consists in saying over many prayers; others, in doing many outward works to the glory of God and service of our neighbour. Some place it in continual desire of salvation, and others in great mortifications. These things are all good, and even necessary, to a certain degree; but none of these is the principal thing, or essence of true piety.

That piety by which we are sanctified, and entirely devoted to God, consists in doing his will precisely in all circumstances of life. Take what steps you please, do what good works you will, yet shall you not be rewarded, but for having done the will of the sovereign Master. Although your servant should do wonders, yet if he did not that very business which you would have done, you would not value his performances, and might justly complain of him as a bad servant.

II. That perfect devoting ourselves to God, from which devotion has its name, requires that we should not only do the will of God, but also that we should do it with love. "He loveth a cheerful giver," and without the heart, no obedience is acceptable to him. We ought to think it a happiness to serve such a master. Let me add,

that this devoting ourselves to God, must be habitual ; we must be alike resigned to him in all circumstances, even those that are most opposite to our views, our inclinations, and our projects ; and it must keep us in a constant readiness to part with our estate, our time, our liberty, our life, and our reputation. To be effectually in this disposition, is to have true devotion. But as the will of God is often hid from us, there is still one step farther to make in this renouncing ourselves ; it is to do the divine will with a blind obedience ; I say a blind, but judicious obedience. This is what all men are obliged to ; even those, who are most enlightened and capable to lead others to God, must themselves submit to be led by him.

FOURTH DAY.

Concerning imperfect conversions.

Some persons, who have been long estranged from God, and are, as it were, at a great distance from him, think their return to him perfect, as soon as they have taken a few steps towards it. The most ingenious and sensible of men are, upon this occasion, as ignorant and absurd, as some country clown, who should think himself in favour at court, because he had seen the king. They have forsaken the more heinous kind of vices, their way of living is less criminal than it used to be. And then they judge of themselves, not by the gospel, (the only sure rule) but by comparing their present life with their former. By these means they persuade themselves that they are in a

safe condition ; and take no further care for their salvation. This state, perhaps, is more dangerous than that of notorious sinners ; for the condition of the latter may some time or other trouble their consciences, and put them upon endeavours of amendment ; but the imperfect conversion of the former, serves only to stifle the remorse of conscience, to give them a false security, and render their malady incurable. I have examined my past life, saith one, and remark'd the faults of it ; I read good books ; I go to church constantly ; and I say my prayers, as I think, heartily enough. I now refrain from all great sins at least, but I cannot say, that I am so far affected, as to live as if I did not belong to the world, and kept no measures with it. Religion would be too rigorous, if it left not room for some molli-

fyng expedients. The refinements in devotion, which some propose to us, are carried too far, and serve rather to discourage, than inspire a love of what is good. Such are the sentiments of a lukewarm christian, who would purchase heaven at a cheap rate ; who considers not what is due to God, nor what it has cost those who have attained the enjoyment of him. A man of this character is far from a true conversion ; he knows neither the extent of God's law, nor the duties of repentance. If he had been engaged in composing the gospel, it would have been a different kind of institution, and more indulgent to self-love. But the gospel is unchangeable, and by it we shall be judged at the last day. Let us then embrace it as a certain guide. And fear nothing so much as flattery and deception.

FIFTH DAY.

Of renouncing the world.

I. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." 1 *John*, ii. 15. How comprehensive are these words! The world is that blind and depraved multitude which Jesus Christ condemns in his gospel, and for which he refused to pray at his death. The world, in one word, is all those who love themselves, or the creatures, without regard to God. We are then that world ourselves, as long as we so love ourselves, and seek that in the creatures which can be found only in God. Happy that apostle, "to whom the world was crucified, and he crucified to the world." *Gal.* vi. 4.

II. What a happiness is it to be convinced, how truly contemptible the world is! He that

parts with the world for God, parts but with a trifle ; and they are lamentably weak, who think they have done some great matter in forsaking it. Every christian has already renounced it in his baptism ; those who live in the strictest retirement, only keep to that engagement with more precaution than others. To seek the haven, is to fly the storm.

SIXTH DAY.

Of patience in sufferings.

I. "In your patience possess ye your souls." *Luke* xxi. 19. The soul loses itself by impatience ; whereas, when it submits without repining, it possesses itself in peace, and it also possesses God. To be impatient, is to desire what one has not ; or not to be content with what one has. An impatient soul is a slave to passion, having cast off the re-

straints of reason and faith: what weakness ! what error is this ! As long as we endure willingly an evil, it is not an evil ; why then should we make it a real evil, by refusing to bear it willingly ? The inward peace resides, not in the senses, or inferior appetites, but in the will. It may be preserved amidst the bitterest sorrows, as long as the will continues firmly resigned. The peace of this world consists not in an exemption from suffering, but in bearing it voluntarily.

II. To hear your murmurings and repinings, it would seem that you are the most innocent soul living ; and that it is great injustice that you are not admitted into the terrestrial paradise. Remember how you have offended God, and you must acknowledge his righteous dealing with you. Confess to

him with the humility of the prodigal son, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and thee;" I know that I am indebted to thy justice, but I have not courage to discharge the debt. If it were left to me, I should deceive, I should spare, I should betray myself. But thy merciful hand executes what I should never have had the courage to do; it corrects me in love. Grant also that I may endure with patience its salutary corrections. If a sinner has a just indignation against himself, the least he can do is to receive the penance which he has not the fortitude to choose.

SEVENTH DAY.

Of submission and conformity to the will of God.

I. "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Nothing is

done here, any more than in heaven, but by the will or permission of God; but men do not always love that will, because it is often opposite to their desires. If we sincerely loved this will of God, and only this, we should change our earth into a heaven. We should thank God for every thing: for evil as well as good; because evil becomes good from his hand. We should not then murmur at the ways of Providence, but approve and adore its wisdom. O my God! what do I see in the course of the stars, in the revolutions of the seasons, in the events of life, but the accomplishment of thy will: may it also be accomplished in me; may I love it; may it sweeten and endear all events to me; may I annihilate my own, to cause thy will to reign in me! For it is thine, O Lord, to will, and mine to obey.

II. Thou hast said, O Lord Jesus, of thyself, with relation to thy heavenly Father, "That thou always didst what pleased him." *John* viii. 29. Teach us how far that example should lead us. Thou art our pattern. Thou didst nothing upon earth but according to the will of *thy* Father, who vouchsafes also to be called *our's*. Do thou fulfil his will in us, as thou didst in thyself. Grant, that we, being inseparably united to thee, may never seek to do our own will, but *his* ; so that not only our religious actions, but even our eating, sleeping, conversing, may all be done with no other view but that of pleasing him. Then shall our whole conduct be sanctified ; then shall all our deeds become a continual sacrifice, incessant prayers, and uninterrupted love. When, O Lord, shall we arrive at this disposition ?

Do thou vouchsafe to conduct us to it ; do thou vouchsafe to subdue our rebellious will by thy grace, for it knows not what it would have, and nothing is truly good, but a conformity to *thy* will.

EIGHTH DAY.

Of prayer.

I. “ Pray without ceasing.”
 1 *Thess.* v. 17. Such is our dependance upon God, that we are obliged not only to do every thing for his sake, but also to seek from him the very power. This happy necessity of having recourse to him in all our wants, instead of being grievous to us, should be our greatest consolation. What a happiness is it, that we are allowed to speak to him with confidence ; to open our hearts, and hold familiar conversation with him by prayer ! He himself invites us to it ; and.

as St. Cyprian well observes, we may judge how ready he is to give us those good things, which he himself solicits us to ask of him. Let us pray then with faith, and not lose the fruit of our prayers by a wavering uncertainty ; which as St. James testifies, hinders the success of them.— The same apostle advises us to pray when we are in trouble, because thereby we should find consolation ; yet, we are so wretched, that this heavenly employment is often a burthen, instead of a comfort to us. The lukewarmness of our prayer is the source of all other infidelities.

II. “ Ask and it shall be given you : seek, and ye shall find : knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” *Matt.* vii. 7. If riches were to be had for asking, with what earnestness, assiduity, and perseverance, would men ask for them ? If treasures

were to be found with looking for, what place would escape their search? if by knocking they could gain admittance into the king's council, or the highest places of preferment, what a knocking should we hear! But what reproaches, pains, and disappointments we undergo, in search of false happiness, vain honours, and wretched pleasures of this world, where nothing remains to us besides remorse.— Divine grace is the only true good, yet the only thing they neglect; the only thing which they have not patience to wait for. The promise of Christ is infallibly certain, and it is our own fault if we do not find the effect of it.

NINTH DAY.

Of hearkening to the voice of God.

I. “ Lord, to whom shall we

go? thou hast the words of eternal life." *John* vi. 68. It is Jesus Christ who must be hearkened to. Men are no farther to be heard or believed, than as they have the truth and authority of Jesus Christ. Books are only so far good as they teach us the gospel. Let us go then to this sacred source. He, therefore, only spoke and acted, that we might hear him, and apply ourselves to study the particulars of his life. Wretched as we are, we follow our own vain thoughts, and neglect the truth itself, whose words give eternal life. O uncreated Word, yet incarnate for me, make thyself understood in my soul! speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth, and desireth to obey thee!

II. Men often say, that they would gladly know what they should do to advance in virtue. But when the spirit of God has

taught us what is to be done, our courage often fails in the execution. We are sensible that we are not what we ought to be; yet we behold our miseries daily increasing, and think we do much in barely wishing that we were better. All kinds of wishing or willing, that are not strong enough to make us sacrifice whatever is an obstacle to us in our way to God, pass for nothing. Let us, therefore, no longer hold the truth captive in an unrighteous lukewarmness. Let us hear what God suggests to us. Let us prove the spirit that moves us, to discern whether it be of God; and if it be, let nothing hinder our obedience. The Psalmist prayed to God, not only to teach him his will, but also to teach him to do it. "Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God: thy spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness." *Psalm cxliii. 10.*

TENTH DAY.

Of the right use of afflictions.

I. “They who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.” *Gal. v. 24.* The more we fear crosses, the more reason have we to think that we stand in need of them: let us not be discouraged when the hand of God layeth heavy ones upon us. We ought to judge of the violence of our disease by the violence of the remedies which our spiritual physician prescribes us. It is a great argument of our own wretchedness, and of God’s mercy, that notwithstanding the difficulty of our recovery, he vouchsafes to undertake our cure. Let us then draw from our very afflictions a source of love, of comfort, and trust in God, saying with his apostle, “our light affliction,

which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 *Cor.* iv. 17. Blessed are they who mourn, and sow in tears, because they shall reap with ineffable joy the harvest of eternal felicity.

II. "I am crucified with Christ," said St. Paul: we are fastened to the cross with him, and by him; for his grace fixes us there, and for his sake we choose to continue there, lest by forsaking it, we should part from him. O suffering and adorable Jesus! to whose sacrifice I unite myself, do thou communicate to me, together with thy cross, also thy spirit of love and resignation. Make me think less of my sufferings, than of the happiness of suffering with thee. Make me love thee, and I shall not fear the cross; and altho' my sufferings should be very great, yet will they not

be greater than I am willing to endure.

ELEVENTH DAY.

Of meekness and humility.

I. "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." *Matt. xi. 29.* If any other than Jesus had taught this lesson, the imperfection of the teacher would have furnished us with objections to the doctrine. He therefore taught it himself, and that too by his own example, which is such as should silence all objections: such as should make us adore, be confounded, and imitate. What! the Son of God descends from heaven to earth, takes a corruptible body and dies upon the cross, to shame us out of our pride! He who is All, annihilates himself; and I, who am nothing, would be, at least would have others think

me, otherwise than what I am !
—What an impudent vanity,
and diabolical presumption is
this ! our Lord saith not, Be ye
meek and lowly ; but he saith,
“ I am meek and lowly of heart.”
It is enough to know that he is
humble, to conclude that we
ought to be so. His example is
such an authority, as none may
find a dispensation for, much less
the sinner, who may well choose
humility, when he has deserved
condemnation.

II. Our Lord joins meek-
ness with humility, because hu-
mility is the source of true meek-
ness. Pride is ever haughty,
impatient, and captious ; but he
who despises himself is content
to be despised. He who thinks
nothing due to him, will not think
himself neglected. The true
virtue of meekness is never the
effect of constitution ; all ap-
pearances of it, that are the pro-

duct of mere nature, arise from weakness, indolence, or artifice. To be meek towards others, we must renounce ourselves. To meekness, our Lord adds, lowliness of *heart*. It is no speculative conviction he requires, but the real bent and inclination of the heart; it is a lowliness to which the will consents, and which it loves for the glory of God; it is an entire distrust of ourselves, our own abilities, and natural strength, that we may owe our cure to God alone. To despair at the sight of our own wretchedness is not humility, but a most abominable kind of pride.

TWELFTH DAY.

Of the faults of others.

I. "Bear ye one another's burdens." *Gal.* vi. 2. Charity does not require of us, that we

should not see the faults of others, but that we should avoid all needless and voluntary observations ; and that we should not be blind to their good qualities, when we are so clear-sighted to their bad ones. We should always remember what a change God may every moment work in the most unworthy of men ; we should bear in mind the many reasons we have to despise ourselves, and consider that true charity, as it sees all things in the same light that God does, must consequently extend itself to the meanest of his creatures. Grace does not take away our knowledge of what is contemptible, but teaches us to bear with it in a devout submission to the secret designs of providence. It does not permit us to humour ourselves in an impatient or disdainful temper ; and as it makes us principally regard, and only

rely upon God, so it prevents our being disappointed or provoked at the folly and corruption we see in the world.

II. What if others are weak, is that a reason for your disregard of them? You, that complain of their troubling you, do you give no body any trouble? You that are so much shocked at the faults of others, are you yourself without faults? If all to whom you have been troublesome, should return the trouble they have had with you, you would be oppressed with the weight. And besides, even supposing that men had nothing to reproach you with, yet consider farther, what obligations you lie under from God, to shew that forbearance towards others for which you know you have such abundant occasion at his hands.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

Of the one thing necessary.

I. “Thou art troubled and careful about many things, but one thing is needful.” *Luke x. 41.* We think we have many important things to do, and yet we have but one. If that be performed, all others are included in it. If that miscarry, whatever success others may seem to have, they will all come to nothing. Why should we then divide our heart and our care? O my only concern, thou shalt henceforward have my only attention! In the ray of divine light, I will each moment peaceably perform, according to my abilities, what Providence puts in my way. I will be careful for nothing else, because nothing else is my business.

II. “I have finished the work, which thou, O Father,

gavest me to do.” *John* vii. 4.
Each of us should be able to say as much at the day of judgment. I ought to consider the business, which occurs in the daily order of Providence, as the work which God appoints me; and I should apply myself to it in a manner worthy of God, namely, with exactness, and with tranquillity. I ought not to neglect any thing, or be passionately vehement about any thing, for it is dangerous to do the work of the Lord negligently on the one hand, or on the other to appropriate it to ourselves by self-love and false zeal. In this last case, our actions arise from a principle of self-will; we are eager and anxious for the success, and that under the pretence of seeking the glory of God. Thus self-love distinguishes itself under the appearance of zeal; and grieves, and is afflicted, when it miscar-

ries in its designs. O God, grant me thy grace to enable me to be faithful in action, and resigned in success! My only business is to do *thy* will, and to do it *as thy will*, not forgetting thee in the performance of it. It is in thy pleasure to give my feeble endeavours success, or to frustrate my every effort.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

Of preparing for death.

I. "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" *Luke* xii. 20. Deplorable is the blindness of those who will not think of death, but divert their minds continually from an event that is inevitable, and which they might render happy by anticipation. Nothing is so dreadful as death, to those who are fond of life. It is strange,

that the experience of ages should not have caused us to judge soundly of the present and of the future, so as to have taken proper measures both for the one and for the other. We dote upon this world, as if it were never to have an end; and we neglect the next, as if it were never to have a beginning.

II. "Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh." *Matthew* xxiv. 44. These words are addressed to every individual; yet all men (for few even among persons of piety are to be excepted) reckon upon a long life, and form projects accordingly. And what is the reason of such an obstinate hope of life? It is because we love it passionately. And whence is it that we affect to remove death at such a distance from us? It is because we do not love

the kingdom of God and the grandeur of the world to come. O gross and stupid mortals, who cannot raise themselves above this earth, wherein, even by their own confession, they are miserable; The true manner of preparing for the last moment, is to spend all the preceding well, and to live in constant expectation of that event.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

Of our hopes in eternity.

I. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 *Cor.* ii. 9. What proportion is there betwixt what we do upon earth, and what we hope for in heaven? The primitive christians rejoiced through this hope incessantly: heaven seemed ever open before them. Neither troubles nor dis-

graces ; neither torments, nor cruel death, could divert them from the cheering prospect. They knew that infinite bounty would reward their sufferings ; and that therefore to suffer was their duty. They were transported with joy, when they were found worthy of some great humiliation ; and we luke-warm souls, we would suffer nothing ; and the reason is, because we want those hopes that should support us. We sink under the lightest crosses, even under those that spring from our pride, folly, or weakness.

II. “Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.” *Ps. cxxv. 5.* We must sow, that we may reap, and this life is the seed-time ; in the next we shall reap the fruit of our labours. The carnal man, idle and impatient, would reap without sowing. We would serve God at little cost. We

would have the ways to him made wide, and smooth, and easy. To hope much and suffer little, is what self-love aims at. Blind that we are, shall we never see that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and that only those who do themselves violence, are worthy to enter into it? Let us mourn, and grieve while here below, since "blessed are they that mourn:" and woe is pronounced to those who receive their consolation in this life. The time will come, when all vain joys will be confounded. The world shall weep in its turn, and God shall wipe all tears from our eyes.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

Of our daily bread.

I. "Give us this day our daily bread." By this bread is meant not only the bodily food, which Providence supplies us with, but

also that nourishment of truth, which he daily provides for our souls; it is the bread "which nourisheth to eternal life;" which makes the soul increase, and grow strong in the trials of faith. This God allots us each day; appointing precisely those inward dispositions and outward circumstances, which are most proper to make us advance in faith and self-denial; and we receive our daily bread from him, in accepting, as from his hand, all his appointments.

II. Hunger gives a relish to food, and makes it digest. Why have we not an hunger and thirst for righteousness? Why are not our spiritual appetites as keen as those of the body? We think the man sick who has lost his appetite: and so it is with our souls; they languish and are in an evil state, as long as they are without spiritual hunger for that

food which cometh from God. The nourishment of the soul is truth and righteousness. To know what is truly *good*, to be filled with it, to be strengthened by it, *that* is the spiritual food, the bread of heaven we are to feed upon. Let us then appear before God with the earnestness of beggars who crave for some bread to subsist on. The worst kind of poverty is, not to be sensible of our wants. Let us, therefore, read and pray with this mental hunger for that which should feed our souls; with this vehement thirst for that water which springeth up into everlasting life. Nothing but an earnest and continual desire of instruction, can qualify us for the knowledge of the wondrous things of God's law. Every one receives this knowledge only in proportion as he desires it. A great degree of this desire is the

proper preparation for receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Of inward peace.

I. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you." *John xiv. 27.* Mankind seek for peace, but they seek it where it is not to be found; they seek it in the world, which is ever promising, but can never give us a solid peace: that is the gift of Christ alone, who reconciles man to himself, subdues the passions, sets bounds to his desires, inspires hopes of eternal bliss, and gives the joy of the Holy Ghost; a joy which glows in the midst of sufferings, and, flowing from an inexhaustible source, becomes a perpetual spring of delight, which the world can neither interrupt nor diminish.

II. True peace is not to be found, but in the possession of God; and the possession of God cannot be attained but by faith and obedience: remove all forbidden objects; renounce all unlawful desires: banish all earnest care and anxiety; desire only God; seek only God: and then you shall have peace, a peace which the world shall not be able to disturb. For what can trouble you? Can poverty, can disgrace, can disappointments, can outward or inward crosses? All these in the hand of God should be considered as real favours which he vouchsafes to give you a portion of. The world would then put on a new appearance, and your peace prove inviolable.

EIGHTEENTH DAY:

Of deceitful joys.

I. "I said of laughter, it is

mad : and of mirth, what doeth it?" *Eccles. ii. 2.* The joys of worldly minded men are like those of the delirious who have been deprived of their reason by distemper. Delusion is the only cause of their pleasures : they think themselves in abundance, when in reality they are quite destitute. Death will end this dream of folly, and, when they awake they shall be confounded at their poverty. Miserable, therefore, are those whom the false pleasures of the world render incapable of true consolation. Let us say continually of such vain " mirth, what doeth it?" Nothing is a solid subject of joy, but our hopes of God's favour ; all other delight is but a dream.

II. Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, " whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." *John iv. 13.* This may

be applied to all worldly satisfactions, the more of which we enjoy, the more we want. The possession of riches does but increase our thirst after them. Avarice and ambition eagerly seek for what they have not ; and are dissatisfied with what they have. The enjoyment of pleasure softens the soul, and renders it insatiable. The more we divert ourselves, the more we want diversion ; and it is easier to persevere in a state of fervor and penitence than to recover it again when we have given way to pleasure and relaxation. Let us, therefore, watch over ourselves, and abstain from those *waters* which will but increase our thirst. Let us keep our heart with care, that it be not seduced by the vain joys of the world, which will end only in despair.

NINETEENTH DAY.

Of holy tears.

I. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." *Matt.* v. 4. What new kind of tears are these? (saith St. Augustin) they make happy those who shed them. This happiness consists in being afflicted for the wickedness of the world; the many dangers which surround us, and the inexhaustible corruption of our own hearts. It is a great gift of God, to fear losing his love; to fear lest we should wander from the strait way. The saints shed tears for this. It is difficult to rejoice while one is in danger of losing what one values most, and of losing ones-self with it. It is impossible not to be afflicted, while one sees nothing but vanity, error, offences, forgetfulness, and contempt of the God we

love. So many sad occasions excite our grief, that such grief, cannot but be pleasing in the sight of God. Nay, he himself inspires it; his love causeth our tears to flow, and he shall himself wipe them from our eyes.

II. We hear Jesus Christ say, “Woe be unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation,” *Luke* vi. 24, 25— and yet we seek mirth and riches. He also saith, “Blessed are they that weep;” yet we fear nothing more than sorrow. We should grieve here, not only for the dangers of our own state, but for every thing that is vain and criminal. We should weep for ourselves, and for others; all deserve our tears. Happy the tears which spring from grace, which make us disrelish these transitory things, and

produce in us the desire of eternal happiness.

TWENTIETH DAY.

Of worldly wisdom.

I. The wisdom of worldly minded men must needs be great, since our Lord assures us, that it is greater than that of the children of God; yet with all its pretensions and fair appearances, it is fatal to those who follow it. This crooked and subtle wisdom is most opposite to that of God, which is ever plain and simple; and what does it avail its professors, seeing they are always taken in their own devices? The apostle St. James saith of this kind of wisdom, that it is *earthly, animal*, (or sensual) and *devilish*. *James iii. 15.* *Earthly*, because it confines its care to the acquisition and possession of earthly things. *Animal*, or sensual, because it

seeks only to make provision for gratifying the passions of sensual appetites. And *devilish*, because to the subtlety and penetration of a demon, it joins also his malice. Men so qualified, think to impose upon others, but in the event they deceive only themselves.

II. Blind, therefore, are all those who think themselves wise without the grace of Jesus Christ, which only can make us truly wise. They are like those who in a dream think themselves awake, and believe imaginary objects to be true and real: and while they are pursuing their vain projects of pleasure or ambition, (so great is the infatuation that possesses them) they see not that sometimes disgrace, always death, judgment and eternity, lie in the way before them. These great objects daily advance, and approach nearer

to profane men ; yet they see them not. Their political skill foresees every thing, but the inevitable fall and annihilation of all they set their hearts upon. O mad and infatuated, when will ye open your eyes to the light of Jesus Christ, which discovers the emptiness of all the grandeur which mortals possess.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

Of trust in God.

I. "It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man." *Psalm cxviii.* 8. We are ever trusting to one another, to weak friends, to unfaithful servants ; yet we fear to put our trust and confidence in God. We can rely upon the handwriting of some great man, but we have no assurance in the gospel. The world promises, and we believe ; God protests,

and we doubt whether we should believe. What a disrespect to him ! What a mischief to ourselves ! Let us restore the true order of things, and regulate our confidence by the laws of a true proportion. Let us perform what depends upon us with moderation ; and expect what depends upon God without any restriction. Let us suppress all hastiness of passion, and all solicitude disguised under the name of zeal ; so shall we establish ourselves in God, and become like mount Zion, which can never be moved.

II. Our trust in God, with regard to our salvation, should be still more exalted and firm. St. Paul says, “ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” *Phil.* iv. 13. When I thought I should be able to do every thing, I was incapable of doing any thing ; now that I de-

spair of myself, and have no hope left, but in God, I begin to be able to do every thing. A happy weakness, which makes me find in God, what is wanting in myself. I glory in my infirmities, and the misfortunes of my life, because they serve to cure my mistakes concerning the world and myself. I ought to think myself happy that his merciful afflictions have reduced me to extremities; since therein I shall receive of his strength, I shall be hid under his wings, and environed with that special protection which he extends to his devout children who have no dependance but upon him.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

Of the depth of God's mercy.

I. "How great is the loving kindness of the Lord our God, and his compassion unto such as turn unto him in holiness!" *Ec-*

clesiasticus xvii. 29. Why do we delay to cast ourselves into the depth of this abyss? The more we lose ourselves therein in faith and love, the safer we are. Let us give ourselves up to God without reserve or apprehension of danger. He will love us, and make us to love him; and that love increasing daily, shall produce in us all the other virtues. He alone shall fill our heart, which the world has agitated and intoxicated, but could never fill. He will take nothing from us, but what makes us unhappy. He will only make us despise the world, which perhaps we do already. He will alter little in our actions, and only correct the motive of them, by making them all be referred to himself. Then the most ordinary and seemingly indifferent actions shall become exercises of virtue, and sources

of consolation. We shall cheerfully behold death approach, as the beginning of life immortal; and as St. Paul saith, "we shall not be unclothed, but clothed upon, and mortality shall be swallowed up of life." *2 Cor. v. 4.* We shall then discover the depth of God's mercy which he has exercised towards us.

II. Consider in the presence of God the effects of that infinite mercy which you have already experienced, the lights which Christ has given you, the good thoughts he has inspired you with, the sins he has pardoned, the dangers he has preserved you from, and the extraordinary assistance he has afforded you. Endeavour to keep up your love towards him by these precious marks of his goodness: add to these, the remembrance of the crosses he has dispensed for your sanctifi-

cation; for those also are the riches of his mercy, which you ought to consider as signal testimonies of his love. Let a sense of past favours inspire you with a trust in him for future. Learn from these, that he has loved you too much not to love you still. Distrust him not, but distrust yourself. Remember that, as his apostle speaks, "He is the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation." 2 Cor. i. 3. He sometimes separates these two: his *consolations* are withdrawn, but his *mercies* still continue. He takes away what is sweet and sensible in grace, because it is necessary that you should be humbled and punished for having sought consolation elsewhere. Such chastisement is still a new depth of divine mercy.

. TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

Of the easiness of Christ's yoke.

I. "My yoke is easy, and my burden light." *Matthew xi. 30.* Let not the name of yoke terrify us, for it is the yoke of Christ, and he helps us to bear it; he causes us to love it; he endears it to us by the inward charms of righteousness and truth. He gives us a disgust for false pleasure, and renders the practice of virtue delightful. He supports man against himself, frees him from original corruption, and makes him strong notwithstanding his weakness. What fearest thou, O man of little faith? let God exert himself in thee. Abandon thyself to him. You shall suffer, but you shall suffer with love and inward tranquillity. You shall fight, but you shall gain the victory; the Lord himself shall fight for you, and

reward your success. You shall weep, but your tears shall be pleasing, and God shall himself wipe them from your eyes. You shall be restrained from following your passions, but after a free sacrifice of your liberty, you will find another kind of liberty, unknown to the world, and more valuable than universal empire.

II. What blindness is it to fear engaging too far with God! The more we love him, the more we shall love his commandments. That love will comfort us in losses, sweeten our crosses, set us free from all other dangerous affections, make us see even through a cloud of afflictions the mercy that dispenses them to us, and make us discover in death itself eternal glory and bliss. What then are we afraid of? Can we have too much of God? Is it a misfortune to be freed from the heavy yoke of the world, and to bear the

light burden of Jesus Christ? Do we fear to be happy, too much delivered from ourselves, from the caprices of our pride, the violence of our passions, and the tyranny of this deceitful world.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

Of false liberty.

I. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 *Cor.* iii. 17. The love of liberty is one of the most dangerous passions of the mind; and it happens with this, as with the rest of the passions, it deceives those who follow it; and instead of true liberty, it reduces them to the hardest and most infamous servitude; for what else can we call the life of worldly men? What do they endure to obtain and preserve the good opinion of those whom at the same time they despise? What trouble

have they to stifle those passions which they would control, and gratify those which they would indulge, to hide their inward vexations, and save appearances? Is this the liberty we are so fond of, and which we are so unwilling to sacrifice to God? Where is this liberty to be found? I perceive nothing but constraint, but base and unworthy subjection, but a wretched necessity of disguising ourselves; we refuse ourselves to God, who is willing to receive us that we may be saved, and we give ourselves up to the world, which can only enslave and ruin us.

II. It is thought the men of the world do nothing but what pleases them, because they have a relish for the passions they indulge; but those who think thus, do not consider the irksomeness, the loathings and disappointments, inseparable from a pur-

suit of pleasure ; and the many contradictions and mortifications which attend the greatest preferments. The outside appears pleasing, but within is vexation and disquiet. Men think freedom consists in depending on no one but one's self ; this is an extravagant mistake ; there is no such state, there is no condition wherein a man does not depend on many others, wherein he is not more obliged to follow their fancies than his own. All the commerce of life is a perpetual constraint to the laws of good-breeding and the necessity of humouring others ; and, besides, our own passions are the worst of tyrants, if you obey them but by halves ; a perpetual strife and contest exists within ; and if you entirely give up yourself to them it is horrid to think to what extremities they will lead. May God preserve us from that fatal

slavery, which the mad presumption of man calls liberty! Liberty is to be found only in him. "His truth shall set us free," and make us experience, that to serve him is to reign.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

Of the perfect devoting of ourselves to God.

I. "Lord what wouldest thou have me to do?" was St. Paul's enquiry when he was struck to the earth by a miracle, and converted by the grace of that Jesus whom he had persecuted. Alas! how often have we persecuted him by our infidelities, our humours, and our passions, which have withstood the works of his mercy in our hearts? At last he has struck us down by tribulation, he has crushed our pride; he has confounded our worldly wisdom; and put self-love into consternation. Let us now, therefore, say

to him with perfect resignation, "Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?" Hitherto my return to thee has been very defective. I have used many evasions, and endeavoured to save all I could from the total sacrifice which I ought to make to thee. But I am now better disposed, and desire that thou mayest become the absolute master of my life and actions.

II. Nor is it sufficient that the oblation we make to God be universal; it is of no service, while it continues wavering and uncertain; it must descend to particulars, and be ratified by practice. Good purposes avail nothing, and are worth nothing, if we do not put them in practice. We must desire perfection with greater earnestness than we ever sought a temporal good, and not do less for God than we have already done for the world. Let

us search our hearts. Am I determined to sacrifice to God my strictest friendships, my most confirmed habits, my most prevalent inclinations, and most agreeable amusements ?

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

Of the terms men would make with God.

I. “How long will ye halt between two opinions ?” 1 *Kings* xviii. 21. “No man can serve two masters.” *Matth.* vi. 24. We know, if we would be saved, we must love and serve God ; but we would fain separate from that love, and that service, whatever is burdensome ; and leave only what is pleasing to us. We would serve him on the terms of giving him only words and ceremonies, and of those ceremonies, only such as are not too long and tedious. We would love God on the terms of loving, with

him, and perhaps above him, things which he has forbidden and condemned. We would love him on the terms of diminishing nothing in that blind self-love, whereby, instead of referring ourselves to God, by whom and from whom we exist, we on the contrary, refer God to ourselves, and betake ourselves to him only as a source of comfort, when the creatures fail us. We would serve him and love him on the terms of being sometimes ashamed of him, and not venturing to give him any more than the world shall allow and approve of. What kind of love and service is this?

II. God will admit no other terms with us, but those which we covenanted in our baptism, wherein we promised to renounce the world for his sake. His first and great commandment requires that we should love him unre-

servedly with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. Can he be said truly to love God, who pays great deference to the world, his adversary, against which he has denounced so many judgments? Can he be said to love God, who is afraid of knowing him too much, lest he should be too far engaged in his service? Can he be said to love God who satisfies himself with not affronting him, and takes no pains to please him, nor is zealous for an opportunity to serve him? God sets no limits to his love towards us, and, therefore, our returns to him should be of the same nature.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

Of spending our time well.

I. "Let us do good while we have time." Gal. vi. 10. "The night cometh in which no man can work." John ix. 4. Time is

precious, but we know not its true value ; nor will we learn it till it is too late. Our friends ask it of us, and we bestow it as if it were nothing worth : nay, sometimes we consider it as a burden we want to get rid of ; yet the day will come when we shall think one quarter of an hour more valuable than all the treasures of the earth. God, most liberal and bounteous of all others things, teaches us by the frugal dispensation of his providence, how careful we ought to be to make a good use of time, because he never gives us two moments together, nor grants us a *second*, till he has withdrawn the *first*, still keeping the *third* in his own hand, so that we are in a perfect uncertainty whether we shall have it. Time is given us to prepare for eternity, and eternity will not be too long to regret our lost time,

if we have made a bad use of it.

II. Our whole life as well as our heart, is due to God: they are neither of them too much for him. He gave them only that we might love and serve him. Let us, therefore, rob him of nothing. It is not every moment in our power to do much for him, but we may always do what is proper for our station. To be silent, to suffer and to pray, when there is no room for outward action, is an acceptable offering to God. A disappointment, a contradiction, an injury received and endured for God's sake, is of as much value as a long prayer; and the time is not lost, which is spent in the practice of meekness and patience. But we must be cautious that such sufferings are not occasioned by our own fault. Thus we should regulate our life, and "redeem the time," as

St. Paul saith, flying from the world, its vain amusements, useless correspondencies, and unprofitable conversations, which serve only to dissipate our minds, and indulge our self-love. By these means we shall find time for the service of God: all that is spent otherwise is lost.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

Of the presence of God.

I. "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." *Genesis xvii. 1.* They are the words of God to Abraham, instructing us, that to live in the presence of God is the way to perfection. We never depart from that way, but by losing sight of God, and forgetting our dependence upon him. God is the light by which we see, and the end at which we should aim. In all the business and events of life, we should

consider only the order of his providence, and we shall maintain a sense of his presenee, in the midst of our avocations, as long as we have no other intention in performing them, but purely that of obeying him.

II. “I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help.” *Psalms* cxxi. 1. Looking only to our feet, will not be sufficient to deliver us from the many snares that surround us; the danger, indeed, is below, but the deliverance can come only from above; thither must we lift up our eyes to him, from whom our help cometh. Our enemies encompass us incessantly; nor are we in less danger from within, by reason of our infirmity: we have no hope but in Jesus Christ, who has overcome the world for himself and for us: his omnipotence will support our infirmities.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

On the love God hath for us.

I. "I have loved you with an eternal love." *Jer. xxxi. 3.* Before all ages, and even before we had being, God thought of us, and thought of us only to do us good. His meditations were in eternity; his performances in time. His bountiful hand has bestowed on us every kind of blessing. Our infidelities and ingritudes, numerous as they are, have not dried up the fountain of his gifts, nor stopped the course of his mercies. O love without beginning, which has loved us during infinite ages, even when we were neither sensible of it, nor could acknowledge it! O love without measure, which has made us what we are, and which promises us infinitely more! O love without interruption, and without incon-

stancy, which all the bitter waters of our iniquities could never extinguish ! O my God, is there a heart that is not pierced with gratitude, love and tenderness ?

II. But what do we behold ? a God, who, after having given all, gave up himself ! A God, who comes to seek after us, even when we are lost ! He who condescended to take the form of a slave, to deliver us from the slavery of our enemies ! He who made himself poor to enrich us. He who calls us and pursues us, wherever we fly. He who expired in torments to save us from the arms of death, and gave us instead a happy life ! yet how often do we refuse both him and the life he offers. What should we take a man to be, who should love, another as God loves us ; and what afflictions do not those deserve, who, after this great sacrifice, will not love the Lord Jesus Christ ?

THIRTIETH DAY.

Of the love we ought to have for God.

I. “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee.” *Psalm lxxiii. 25.* When we say to God, that we love him with all our heart, it is often a mere form of words without truth or meaning. Men learn it when they are young, and continue to use it when they are grown up, without thinking of what they say. To love God is to have no other will but his; to keep faithfully his law, and have in abhorrence all violation of it. To love God, is to love what Christ loved, poverty, humiliations, and sufferings; it is to hate what he hated, the world and its vanities. Can we be said to love an object which we do not desire to resemble? To love God, is to desire to con-

verse with him, to wish to go to him, to sigh and languish after him. That is but a feigned love, which does not desire to see the beloved.

II. Our Lord "came to bring fire upon the earth," Luke xii. 49, and desired that fire might overspread it. Yet men live in a deadly coldness and indifference. They love money, buildings, titles, and a chimera which they call reputation : they love even the meanest and most contemptible things, but divine love rarely finds a place in their hearts. Do thou, O Lord, vindicate thy right in us, notwithstanding our infidelities : let the fire of thy love extinguish all other fires. What can we see lovely out of thee, which is not to be found in its full perfection in thee, O thou fountain of all good ! grant us but grace to love

thee, and we shall then love thee only, thee eternally.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

Sentiments of divine love.

I. “We love him, because he first loved us.” 1 *John* iv. 19. But when shall we return love for love? When shall we seek after him who seeks after us, and who bears us in his arms? It is within his tender and fatherly bosom that we forget him: it is through the sweetness of his gifts that we cease to think of him. What he gives us every moment, instead of tenderly affecting, does but serve to amuse us. He is the fountain of all pleasures; the creatures are but the channels, and the channel makes us count the source as nothing. His immense love pursues us every where, and we continually fly from its pursuits!

He is every where, and we see him no where! We think ourselves alone when we have none but him. He doeth all, and we rely not upon him in any thing! We think our affairs to be all desperate, when we have no resource left us but what his providence can supply, as if infinite and almighty love was able to do nothing; O monstrous folly! O subversion of the whole man!

II. Yet thou, O Love, bearest with us! thou waitest on us with patience without end, and even seemest by thy excess of patience to indulge our ingratitude: even they who desire to love thee, love thee only for themselves, for their comfort, or their security. Where are they that love thee for thy own sake? Where are they that love thee, because they were created for no other end but to love thee? They are unknown amongst men, and their names

are written only in thy book. But to what purpose doth the world subsist, if we love not thee, and if we love thee not so as to be made sensible that the love of thee is above every other blessing? This was thy intention in producing without thee what is not thyself; thy design was to create beings, who holding all from thee, should devote themselves to thee alone.

ON THE WORDS,

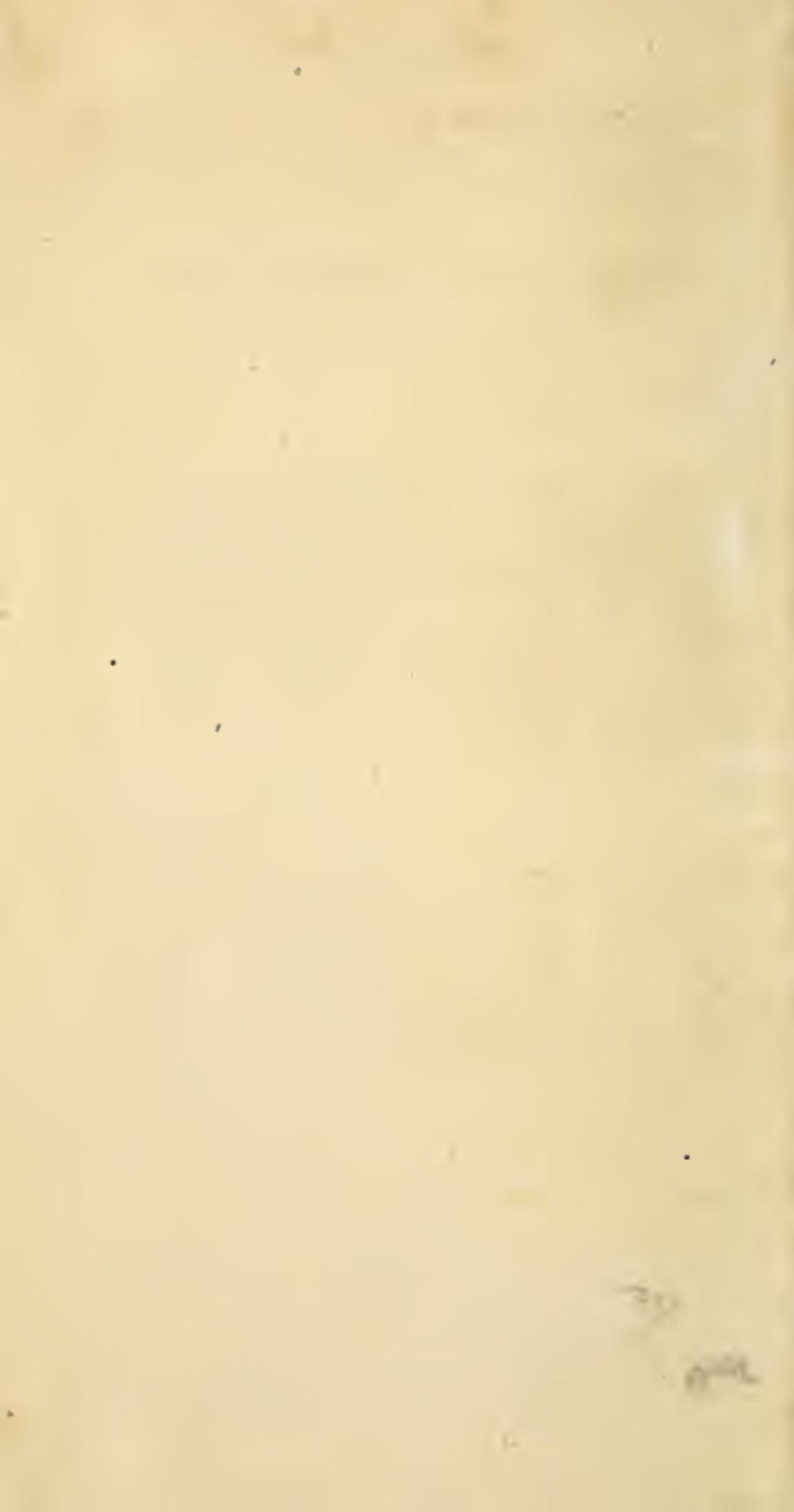
“ Lord teach us to pray.”

Luke xi. 1.

O Lord, I know not what I should ask of thee. Thou only knowest what I want: and thou lovest me better than I can love myself. O Lord, give to me, thy child, what is proper, whatsoever it may be. I dare not ask either crosses or comforts. I only present myself before thee; I open my heart to thee. Behold my wants, which I am ignorant of; but do thou behold, and do according to thy mercy. Smite, or heal; depress me, or raise me up; I adore all thy purposes, without knowing them. I am silent, I offer myself in sacrifice. I abandon myself to thee. I have no more any desire, but

to accomplish thy will. **T**each
me to pray. **P**ray thou thyself
in me.

THE END.



JAN 12 1956

