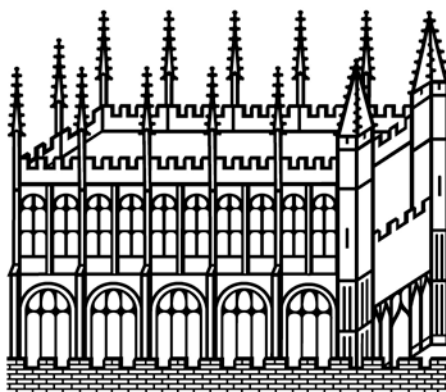




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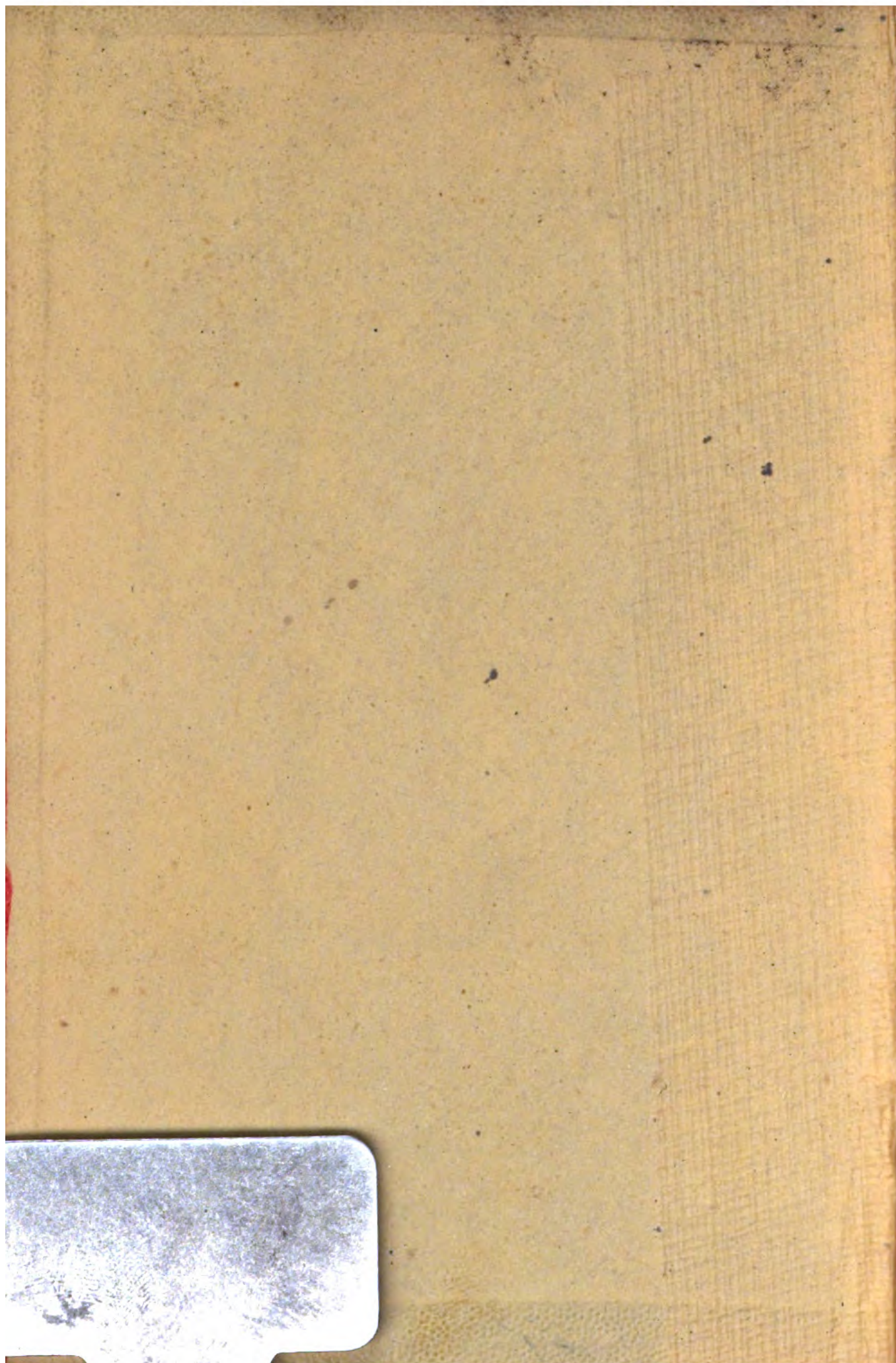


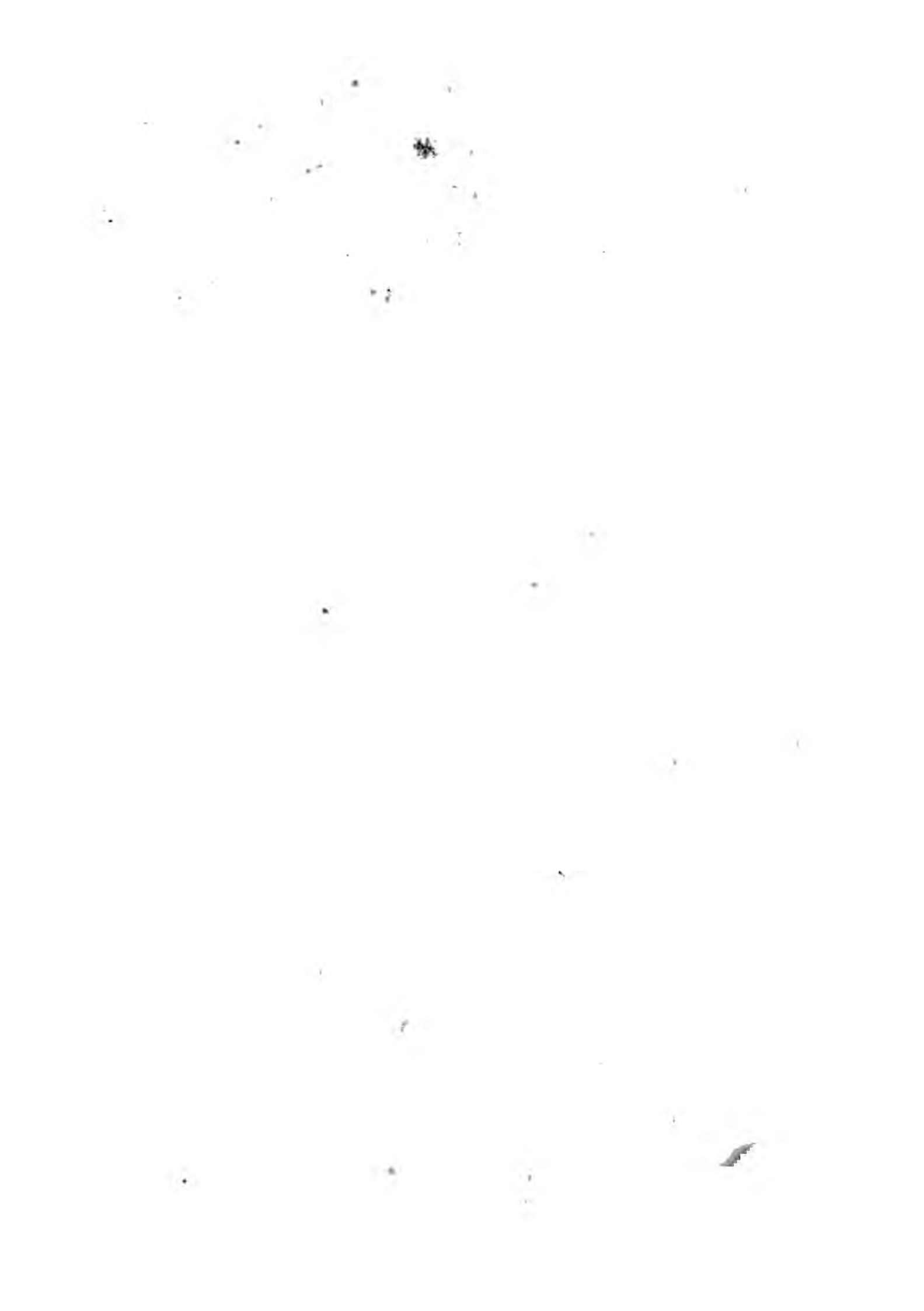
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HEART TO HEART



WITH JESUS.







HEART TO HEART WITH JESUS:

OR,

PIOUS AFFECTIONS OF A LOVING SOUL,

PLACING

HERSELF IN TENDER INTIMACY WITH HER GOD.

BY

HUBERT LEBON.

“For where thy treasure is, there also is thy heart.”

MATT. vi. 21.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

BY S. O.



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TO HIS GRACE,
THE MOST
REVEREND PATRICK LEAHY, D.D.,
LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CASHEL AND EMLY,
&c., &c., &c.,
THIS LITTLE BOOK OF
"HEART TO HEART WITH JESUS,"
IS
MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY THE TRANSLATOR,
SAMUEL COOKE.

Brownstown,
March 27th, 1872.

APPROBATION.

Vidi Gandæ, 24 Aprilis, 1852,

J. TOLLENAERE,

Can. Lib. Cen.

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PREFACE.

Pious persons, who may read this little work, will not learn from it anything, which they had not known before. Have they not, also, frequently conversed, Heart to Heart, with their beloved Jesus? Have they not complained to Him of their weakness? Have they not expressed to Him their anxious wish to love Him more and more? Have they not, a thousand times, protested that they would love but Him alone? Oh! they have known, full well, that in this Name of Jesus are found an infinite plenitude of mysteries, and of blissful secrets, which they understand, but are unable to describe.

But read, notwithstanding, pious friends of Jesus. Read the entire of this little Work. All it contains is comprised in

those words : *Jesus only, Jesus before all, Jesus above all, my God and my All.* You will feel happy, then, in repeating that, which the Author has reiterated in every page. Yes, Jesus only, a thousand times ! In it is the perfection of a Christian during his exile, in it is found his happiness while in this vale of tears ; and, even amongst angels, and for all eternity, will we not chant this hymn, so sweet to pious hearts : *Jesus only ! My God and my All !*

INVITATION TO REPOSE IN THE HEART
OF JESUS.

“Why are there so few, who seek to penetrate into the divine Heart of Jesus? It is because the passage to this Heart is through a Wound, and one, to enter it, must suffer. Come however. Come, I will tell you the secret of this sweet Retreat: If you love repose, *It* is the couch of the Spouse; if you want to mature your desire for happiness, and to bring forth good works, *It* is the nest of the Pigeon; if you love contemplation, *It* is the abode of the solitary Sparrow; if you be inclined to tears and sighs, *there* will the soft cooings of the plaintive Turtle-dove respond to you. If you be pressed by hunger, *there* will you find the Manna from heaven, which fell in the desert formerly.

and, if you be thirsty, you will *there* find the Fountain of Living Water, which flows from Paradise, and diffuses itself abundantly in faithful hearts. Come! be not afraid; our Saviour invites you to rest sweetly on His Heart, as did St. John; He shows to you His wounded Side, as He did to St. Thomas; He will cause you to drink Himself at this delicious source."

—*Extract from Lansperge.*

Happy the soul, which, amid earthly cares, can always say: "*My conversation is in heaven.*"

Près de Lui Jésus nous apelle ;
Cédons à son attrait vainqueur ;
Comme la colombe fidèle,
Allons reposer dans son cœur.

Translation.

To come to Him, Jesus invites us all ;
Let us obey this charming, potent call ;
Let us approach, and, like the faithful dove,
Go seek within His Heart repose and love.

HEART TO HEART WITH JESUS.

I.

ONE TO ONE WITH THEE, MY GOD.

“Do you desire to attain to an interior and spiritual life? Retire with Jesus from the crowd.”—
Imit. l. i. c. xx.

How happy are the solitary meditations of a sincere Christian! Who will reveal the secrets of the sweet effusions of his intimacy with God? Who will describe all the felicity of this ineffable, lonely, intercourse between him and his Beloved? Who can comprehend all that springs up in his heart, all the sweet, heavenly, aspirations, which overflow his soul?

Respect his solitude, disturb not his peace and his silence. Do not intrude upon him with profane thoughts and words, for he is in loving colloquy with the Jesus of his heart, that Jesus, his

only Friend, his Consoler, and his Father. It is at His feet he pours forth all his soul; it is in Him that he forgets his own existence. Oh! how often then, quite lost in admiration, he asks himself, what may be those sublime delights, which always cause ecstatic happiness, and boundless consolations? How he laments the small capacity of his heart! How bitterly he regrets his indigence and his frailty! How fervent his thanksgiving; with what confidence he prays; with what ardour he protests his love! "O my God," cries he, "be ever my only happiness, be ever my only treasure, and all the ambition of my soul. Yes, do with me as Thou shalt please, provided I be not ever separated from Thy love. I will cheerfully undergo, for Thee, sacrifices, abjections, and crosses. To suffer, since it is Thy pleasure, shall form my felicity. But guard, O my God! guard always, under Thy loving wing, every instant of my frail existence. Extend to Thy poor creature that support, he expects from Thy grace. Strengthen, enlighten, stimulate his poor heart, and maintain continually in it all the ardour of Faith, of Hope, and of the purest Charity."

But who will undertake to explain here all that is said, all that is treated of, between God and man in those mysterious moments, when the pious soul, in full familiarity with Him, Who is the only occupation of the angels, loses and forgets herself entirely in this ocean of goodness and of love ?

What ! Is there not an unfathomable abyss between God and man ? Has not the One supreme dominion, far above the heaven of heavens, while scarce has the other scope of an horizon, bounded by a few steps, almost imperceptible, on an earthly sphere, cast far from the inaccessible dwelling of the Great Being ? To the One, belongeth all light, all knowledge, all perfection, all eternity, all power ; to the other, but ignorance, misery, weakness, and the extremest poverty !

See, nevertheless, how man, so poor, by the greatness of his love, approaches to the God of all riches ! Behold how intimately he addresses Him, how closely he unites himself to Him by the simplicity of his prayer, and the fervour of his desires ! What signifies to a loving creature the infinite distance between her and her Beloved ? She calls, and Jesus is

already nigh her, and He finds pleasure and delight in conversing with her; and there, in this soul, which He calls His Spouse, this God, Who is all love, may see Himself, in turn, most admirably loved.

Oh! sweet loneliness with God, ineffable solitude, precious intercourse, delightful familiarity, how inexplicable are the mysteries of Love, which pious souls experience in thee!

O my God! Thou, Who art the Guest of a good conscience, and findest pleasure in reposing in a heart that loves Thee, as one friend in the dwelling of another; bestow on me an innocence and a charity, which may be pleasing to Thee—for, to possess Thee, to enjoy a sweet conversation alone with Thee, I would forget entirely all the tribulations of my exile, and all the vanities of this world. I would forget the entire universe, to love, to meditate on, and to comprehend but Thee alone!

II.

I WILL SPEAK TO THEE, HEART TO HEART.

“The best beloved of the Lord shall dwell confidently in Him.—Between His shoulders shall he rest.”—Deut. xxxiii. 12.

Heart to Heart—but with whom? Oh word unspeakable, which comprehends within it all the happiness of heaven! It is with Jesus, this Friend, Who is so sincere, Who is ever faithful, ever full of consolation, ever devoted, ever generous! So this “Heart to Heart with Jesus” can only be understood by the soul, which, herself, is filled with love.

What an infinity is there not in this very Name of Jesus! With what delight a loving heart pronounces It!

But see what this friend of his God has found particularly good. He has found, at length, in his pilgrimage, the place he sought, that place which only suited him! He rests there, he reposes in it. He desires to fix his tent there, and never more to leave it. He forgets the earth entirely, and no longer recollects that he has not reached as yet the termination of

his journey. His vows, his desires, his joys, his hopes, his entire heart is filled, for he is placed in perfect intimacy, and Heart to Heart, with his Beloved. It is a Father, of whose censures or severity he has no dread. It is a Friend, a friend of the heart, to Whom he is about to disclose all the most hidden secrets of his soul. He will communicate to Him his doubts, his inquietudes, his projects, his infirmities. From Him, it is he wishes to draw his counsels, all his consolations, all his strength. He takes, like the beloved Apostle, a sweet repose upon His breast, and there he lays his groans, his sighs, and his complaints. Agitated by vain affections here below, and burdened with the weight of exile, he there again finds peace, repose, and silence. He was hungry, and a burning thirst consumed him; there he has found a hidden Manna, and a fountain of living water.

Ah! how happy—how happy a thousand times—is he, who entertains but this insatiable desire, this only ambition, this only hunger, this loving thirst—to rest upon, and dwell for ever in the heart of Jesus! Oh! with what happiness this soul then sighs, in this delightful *Heart*

to Heart! How passionately she loves! Absorbed in God, engulfed, with deep humility, in her endearments, inflamed with all the fire of her chaste love, how ardently she promises, here below, a full and entire acceptance of the crosses of her Jesus, a perfect submission to His holy Will! With what courage she labours to pluck her entire heart from the perishable objects which, yet, tie it to life, to attach it wholly to the Heart of her Jesus! There, while ignoring all, she learns all. There, she forgets everything, to remember only her Beloved.

O delicious Heart to Heart, happy peace, immutable repose, precious and holy familiarity of God with His Creature, happy effusion of our souls in the infinity of the Creator, sweet union of the Soul of Jesus with the Soul of the faithful Christian, inexpressible love, what can I do but to accept, for His sake—oh not to accept—but to desire ardently, very ardently, all the slights, all the bitterness, all the trials, of this fleeting life?

O my God! grant me this life in Thee. Teach me this sweet language of Heart to Heart with Thyself. What then would signify to me all the wealth, all the plea-

asures of this world ! Art Thou not the only treasure I desire, the only object of my labours, the centre of my actions, the end of all my wishes ? Art Thou not my delight, my pure and unmingled joy, my sovereign and only good ?

III.

I WILL SPEAK FULLY UNTO THEE.

“I have acknowledged my sin to Thee, and my injustice I have not concealed.”—Psalm xxxi. 5.

I will tell all to Thee, my Jesus ! Permit me to lay open all my heart, to show to Thee all its wounds without disguise, and to pour into Thy bosom my groans and my petitions.

Art Thou not the Physician of those who suffer ; the Way, for those who seek the path of salvation ; the Guide of the weak ; the Teacher of the ignorant ; the Consoler of the afflicted ; and the Strength of those who combat ?

Hear me, O my God ! I have sinned grievously in all the days which Thou hast given me, and many of my offences, slightly wept for heretofore, have already faded from my recollection, without my

thinking to bewail them any longer ; and many of those, of which I am daily guilty, are not repented of at all !

My God, what frightful darkness pervades my mind, with regard to the sins of my youth, and as to my repentance for them, and even in the apparent calm of my soul !

My God ! my courage, likewise, often fails me. I feel myself, notwithstanding all Thy graces, ever subject to inconstancy, to sloth, and to deplorable misery. I advance in age, but I do not advance in Thy love. Thou dost exercise towards me a constant patience, and I abuse each day Thy great forbearance—and every day adds to my sins, but not to my compunction.

Oh ! when, my God, shall I grow better ? When shall I reform my life entirely ? When shall my soul be perfectly healed ? When shall I, in fine, obtain the victory over my perverse propensities ? Can I hope, O Lord, to revive, at length, to a new life ?

O my God ! Thou dost not wish me to be lost ; grant to me, then, the help of Thy special grace, and look on me in Thy great mercy. Give me, my God, the

spirit of fervour; for I feel that my prayers languish, and, at length, cease, powerless to resume the way to heaven. Oh! give to me, frequently, those happy tears, which may fructify the barren soil of my poor soul, and cause it to produce the fruits of benediction.

How unhappy, then, the evils of this exile! Oh! when shall I pass from darkness unto light, from death to life, and, from the risk of losing Thee, to the certainty of possessing Thee for ever?

Yes, I desire to tell Thee all, my God! Why is it, then, when I perceive Thee living within me, do I soon feel myself again in solitude, without even observing that Thou hast departed from me? Why dost Thou act thus, O my God! towards a servant so feeble, so devoid of strength, and one who has, as yet, only his offences to lay down at Thy feet?

My God! put an end to my troubles, by increasing my love. Take inconstancy from my heart, and attach it so closely to Thyself, that it may never more be separated from Thee. Yes, I hope, oh! I hope most confidently, my God; for Thou lovest to hear the complaints of Thy creature. Grant then, above all, that I may

love Thee, and that I may love Thee with my whole heart.

IV.

ART THOU NOT MY FATHER ?

“ Our Father, Who art in heaven.”

My God, how unhappy should I be, if I had not Thee for a Father ! The world is so frivolous in the consolations it affords ! It is so narrow in its friendships, so faithless in its promises, so niggardly in its gifts. How unfortunate is he, who places his hopes on the fallacious liberality it holds out !

Yes, my God, I will love but Thee alone. It is into Thy paternal bosom that I will cast all my solicitude, for Thou alone art rich enough to fill the immensity of my desires ; Thou alone canst know of what I stand in need, and art sufficiently powerful to bestow it on me. Thou only, O my God ! knowest how to love so much, as to leave me always in arrear of charity, and debtor to Thee for an immense amount of gratitude and love.

Thou art my Father ; from Thee I hold all I possess ; and, when I trace back the

past years of my life, I find, at every step, but the works of Thy mercy, and of Thy boundless liberality. No, my God, I was never hungry, that Thou didst not give me bread, even when I had not earned it. I was never thirsty, that Thou didst not give to my lips the pure and vivifying cup, so pleasant and so refreshing. Never hast Thou seen me, O my God ! sinking under the fatigues of life, that Thou hast not supported me. Never have I knocked at Thy gate, but Thou hast opened it to me. I shed tears, and Thou camest to dry them, and with tender words re-animated my dejected soul, while Thy Angel directed my thoughts to heaven, and then I smiled, on calling to mind the happy day, which would bring an end to all my misery.

Yes, my God, Thou art my Father, for Thou hast ever had compassion on my weakness and destitution ; Thou art truly my Father, for, even in the midst of my strayings, You invited my return, and promised to pardon me.

O my God ! continue to be my Father. Ah ! whither should I go, all laden with Thy benefits ? To whom else should I give my love ? Oh ! do not command me

to love Thee—it is unnecessary—for gratitude has already imposed it on me as a duty to love Thee. I am too happy that Thou dost deign to permit me to love Thee, and, besides, I have too great an interest in loving but Thee alone.

My God, remain then always my Father, and grant that I may ever remain Thy child. Defend me always by Thy paternal tenderness, and strengthen my fidelity in serving Thee. Grant, O my God, that I may never love but Thee alone, since I shall love but Thee alone during all eternity.

V.

MY TRUE FRIEND.

“If you drive Jesus away and lose Him, who will be your refuge, and what friend will you seek?”—
Imit. ii. 8.

How sordid, and how narrow, are all the friendships of creatures! How deceitful and how vain! How fleeting and inconstant! How often do we find but susceptibility and egotism in this heart, which calls itself our friend! Oh! what falsehood in the mouths of men! What

falsehood in their hearts! What falsehood in their acts! Thou alone, O my God, canst offer to a creature a love that is sincere, immense, infinite, and permanent; a love, filled with gentleness, and ready to pardon offences, ever disposed to compassion, and to grant courage and consolation.

Of what value are all the speechings of the world, compared to a single word of those, which Jesus permits to fall into a Heart He loves, and by which He is beloved?

Oh! what folly, what delusion, to attach one's heart to anything but Thee, O my God! How poor is he, who doth not place all his treasure in Thy friendship only! Ah! if we have not Thee for a friend, whither shall we go, fools as we are—where shall we go to fix our hearts, from whence we will not return with emptiness and disappointment? Ah! though, on the other hand, we should have the entire universe hostile to us, would we not still be happy, if Thou didst only remain to us, my God! Thou alone our friend and our support?

Yes, my God! no one's friendship is like to Thine. Thou art unrivalled in

beauty, in faith, in mercy, and in affording true consolation. Never, my God, have I retired from Thee with despair in my heart, or sadness in my soul. Never have I gone to place in Thy breast the heavy burdens which oppress me, that I did not feel comforted. Never have I disclosed to Thee my vexations, that Thou hast not changed them to unspeakable sweetness. How charming are the communications of Thy friendship! Oh! how felicitous, and how mysterious, are the endearments of Thy holy love!

Yes, my God, may I love Thee before all, may I love Thee above all! Deny to me all the goods of earth, but grant to me Thy friendship. Let all men abandon me, but do Thou remain my Friend. I will forfeit all, O my God, I will agree to sacrifice everything, and to submit to all the evils and misfortunes of this world, rather than lose this precious treasure of Thy friendship: for I have found with it, even here below, great portion of that supreme felicity, enjoyed by the elect in heaven.

VI.

MY CONSOLER.

“The fervent man bears about with him everywhere Jesus, his Consoler, and he says to Him: Be nigh to me, Lord Jesus, in every place, and at all times.”—Imitation.

O Man! Who will dry your tears on earth, if God, Himself, be not thy Consoler? Who will support you in bearing the burden that oppresses you, better than He, Who sustains with ease the weight of the entire universe? To whom can you confide, with more security, your miseries, than to Him, to Whom they are already known? No, nothing, O man, will satisfy you—nothing can fill the void in your heart and calm its sadness, but He, Who has created you for Himself, and, without Whom, you will always find but bitterness, inquietude, and agitation. Ah! what then are all the consolations of the earth, a valley of tears, which can produce only thorns and briars? What are they, without the consolations of our God? Is He not, alone, the Truth and the Life? Is He not the only source of happiness in

this world, and He, Whose ineffable joys are to fill up an endless eternity?

Oh! yes, my God, Thou consolest fully those who love Thee. How charming Thy voice! How harmonious! How it calms the tempests of the heart! What balm it sheds in the soul! What happiness attends it! What fragrance accompanies it! What light it brings to our weak minds! How it puts to flight the illusions and phantasies which try to seduce us! How happily it restores order and harmony, where, heretofore, there had been only trouble and confusion!

My God, how often hast Thou made me hear consoling words!—even in the hours of fretfulness and sadness, when, lone and solitary amid my trials, my sombre thoughts were quite absorbed in digging visionary pits and precipices! How mercifully hast Thou then cheered my dejected soul! How powerful was Thy hand in calming down my anguish! What deep tranquillity did not Thy presence bring into my heart! Oh! what felicity Thy smile bestowed!

How blind is he, then—oh! how blind—who, far from Thee, goes to beg from fragile creatures consolations, which they

have no power to give ! How blind is he, who doth not repose in Thee alone his cares and his solitudes !

Yes, my God, I will patiently undergo, for Thy sake, all the sufferings which it may please Thee to send me ; for Thou hast told me that, to suffer, while loving Thee, is only to suffer half ; and to suffer, through pure love, to please Thee, is happiness and delight. I will bless Thee in trials, O my God ! I will bless Thee in joy ; every hour will I bless Thee. Remain only my entire happiness, my treasure, and my all ; remain my God, my only portion, and I will be fully consoled for all the pains of this vale of tears and misery.

VII.

MY ONLY HAPPINESS.

“ What can he, who delights in Thee, find disagreeable ? And where shall one meet with sweetness, who findeth it not in Thee ? ”—Imit. III. Book, xxxiv. 2.

How sublime and how consoling is this reflection of the pious man ! God is all my happiness in this life. God is my portion for eternity. And, if God be my

happiness, to what greater felicity can I aspire? What can I desire better in heaven, or upon earth? Shall creatures be able to bestow on me a treasure, preferable to that, which I shall have found already in the Creator Himself?

Who is good, who is great, who is rich, who is magnificent and powerful, if he be not the Lord? Is not He alone the Most-high, the only immense, infinite, and eternal, Being, and doth not every good exist in Him in all their fulness and perfection?

Yes, my God, propose to me nothing which does not appertain to Thee; offer to me nothing unless Thyself, for all would not suffice me, unless I possess Thyself. It is only in Thee my heart can satisfy its aim, its wishes, its desires. To allay my hunger I require Thee; to fully quench my thirst, I want Thee without reserve.

Ah! why, my God, is it that our hearts are always agitated, always tormented by inquietude, which nothing can allay, if it is not because we seek our happiness in other sources besides Thee?

Oh! come then, Lord, come Thyself alone. Remain then with me to enrich me, to be my only consolation, to be the

only joy of my soul ; for, without Thee, I would find, on every side, but vanity and disappointment.

Nothing can please me in this life, if Thou be not my happiness ; and if, to obtain this happiness, I were obliged to pass through an arena of sacrifices and of combats, I would encounter all to please Thee, my God, provided that Thou support me, and remain the only treasure of my soul. Art Thou not, for an endless and unchangeable eternity, the immutable and assured lot of those, who, during time, shall have loved and desired but Thee alone ?

VIII.

IN THEE I HAVE FOUND THE WAY, THE
TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

“ I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”—John
xiv. 6.

Yes, my God, I have not found truth unless in Thee ; and, except in Thy ways, I have always met but lying, vanity, and error. What is man, that Thou shouldst visit him, O my God ? Yet, what could he do, if Thou wert not to visit him ?

Whither shall he go to linger out his life, if he does not live in Thee? Ever prone to vanity, always carried away by idle fancies, and seeming to set his heart but on deceits, frivolity, and lies, man, my God! will wander from the end, for which Thou hast destined him; he will live only for his senses, he will only feed on brutish pleasures, if Thou, Thyself, be not his Way, his Nourishment, and his Life. How the heart of the idiot vegetates, dries up, and perishes early, who will not follow Thy ways, my God! and prefers to the Life, which Thy love bestows, the profitless food of earthly affections!

My God, I conceive that, if Thou be not the Soul of my soul, if Thou be not the Heart of my heart, if I do not live entirely Thy Life, I cannot hope for any peace while here below. If Thou be not my Guide in everything, I cannot succeed; if my thoughts be not as Thine, if my desires do not coincide with Thine, if my affections and my will do not correspond with Thy affections and Thy Will, I stray from the Truth, and my soul, suffering and lifeless, upon an arid soil, devoid of water, perishes soon of lassitude and misery.

O immutable, supreme, and infallible Truth ! Thou alone art the source from which our understanding derives true light, our works true wisdom, our hearts true piety ; and in Thee, alone, do our souls discover the words of eternal life.

Speak then, Lord, speak always to Thy servant, and give him to understand Thy love. Speak, and incline my heart to Thy words. We have the greatest need of Thee, my God ! Make us, then, understand that, out of Thee, we can only know that we vainly tire ourselves in gloomy paths most difficult to tread, and strewn with briars. Grant us to comprehend that Thou art the only Way, which we can follow without going astray, and the only Truth, which we can believe in, without fear of being deceived. Draw us, my God, unto Thyself, disperse, by the light of Thy Truth, the darkness in which we are involved ; absorb our entire terrestrial life in Thy divine and spiritual life. It is to Thee we look for light and strength to walk, until we reach eternity, in the way of Thy commandments, and in the acceptance of the sacrifices, which Thy holy love demands.

IX.

IT IS NIGH TO THEE, UPON THY HEART,
THAT I WILL LAY THE PLACE OF MY
REPOSE.

“Put me as a seal upon Thy Heart.”—Cant. viii. 6.

How happy it is, O my God, for us to nourish the sweet confidence of possessing Thy friendship! How happy for me to address Thee, lovingly, as: ‘My Father!’ Oh! what happiness to call Thee the Spouse and the Beloved of my soul!

O my soul, fly then, with a sweet confidence, into the bosom of thy God. Repose thyself in Him, Who is the eternal repose of the saints. Place thyself nigh to Him, Who can alleviate, with a single look, the bitterness of thy pilgrimage. Lay thine heart, as the beloved Apostle did, upon the Heart of thy Jesus, and say to Him, a thousand times, that you desire no peace, no happiness, no consolation, but in Him. Is He not the only source of all joy, of all sweetness, of all peace, of all content? O most loving, and most sweet Jesus! receive me, then, into Thy adorable Heart, for no other place can

satisfy me. Without Thy sweet society, without Thy holy intercourse, without Thy loving intimacy, my days would have no charm. Oh! for Thy sake, I am ready to renounce everything but Thee; I will place upon Thy Heart, only a soul that is free, and disengaged from creatures; have pity, then, on my loving aspirations. Commiserate my weak love, and dispose, Thyself, my heart, that it may, with less unworthiness, repose itself on Thine. I do not live, my God!—Thou knowest it—no, I do not live, so long as I live not in Thee alone.

But why, my God, dost Thou render so delicious this repose which Thou permittest us sometimes to enjoy upon Thy breast? Demand, while with us, then, my God! exact from us strong resolutions of amendment for the future, during which it may be pleasing to Thee to prove us; but give us, Thyself, likewise the strength to keep our resolutions. For, notwithstanding all Thy mercies, we are still but slothful and ungrateful children.

As to myself, I make to Thee, now, my God, the humble avowal of my miseries. They are profound, they are innumerable. I have great need that Thou should look

down on me in Thy mercy, and should treat me as Thy paternal love shall dictate. Thou knowest that I abuse Thy generosity. That I am unmindful of all the graces which Thou dost lavish on me continually. Do not permit, my God, that I shall be always so niggardly in my love, so luke-warm in Thy service. Free my heart from the ties which bind it yet to earthly things. Grant, my God, that I may have no other happiness, than to fix in Thee my peace and my repose. It would be so sweet, my God, to have no other life than in Thee alone! Oh! when shall I be able to say with truth: "*I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me?*" Gal. ii. 20.

X.

I WISH, IN FINE, TO LOVE BUT THEE
ALONE.

“I would be much better pleased to live in poverty for Thy sake, than to possess, without Thee, unbounded riches. I would prefer to be a stranger upon the earth with Thee, to being in heaven without Thee. It is heaven, wherever Thou art; death and hell are everywhere that Thou art not.”—Imit. III. Book, lix. 1.

Who can describe, my God, what passes in a heart that burns with Thy love? What sweet odours ascend from it to heaven! What fervent prayers! What pious thanksgivings! What ardent promises! What holy attraction to all that tends towards Thee! Oh! what generous sacrifices are contemplated! While the allurements of a brilliant and bewitching world have been proved as lying and fallacious, the recompense by God has, on the contrary, so far surpassed our hopes and expectations, that the soul, in gratitude, vows to Him a fidelity, inviolable and eternal.

O my God! Thou truly givest to a heart, that loves Thee, all the peace, all the joy, all the delights of heaven. My

God and my All....This is sufficient for the truly loving and pious soul; it finds in these words all that which the world cannot comprehend, that which it cannot bestow, that which the entire earth cannot contain. She loves her Jesus before all, and above all. She loves Him, and blesses Him, even when abandoned, unfortunate, and in grief. These trials cannot abate her love, or arrest its transports. Jesus has promised her His friendship, she relies upon it, she is fully assured of it, even while He seems to neglect her. All appears, in her eyes, fleeting and deceitful, all seems vanity and nothingness. Jesus here below, Jesus after life, and always and eternally her Jesus! Behold what inflames her, what lives in her soul, that for which she hungers and thirsts; behold the end of her labours, of her desires—behold the secret of her heart. Ah! from whom should she ask for happiness, when her God, Himself, offers to bestow it? Shall she beg alms from a pauper, when the Rich—He who, alone, is truly rich—is pleased to load her with abundance?

O my Jesus! How I envy this happy peace of a holy soul, that is cherished by

Thee ; this holy liberty, this delightful union, this burning love, and all the happiness which this soul enjoys ! How happy should I be to love Thee thus, to love Thee very much, to live but in Thee, and for Thee ! Why, my God, doth my wicked heart always oppose Thy love ? Why is it so little generous in Thy service ? Why such murmuring under crosses, such coldness in Thy absence ? How imperfect yet my virtue ! How little I love Thee, O my God ! How little worthy am I of Thy favours ! Oh ! no, I do not love Thee as I ought—but grant that I may love Thee—not a little, my God, but very much. Grant that I may meet with only bitterness and disappointment in everything but Thee, that I may, happily, be obliged to give myself to Thee entirely and without reserve—to Thee alone, my God, to Thee in heart and soul, to Thee in all my actions, to Thee alone in time, and for eternity !

XI.

OH, HOW LATE HAVE I LOVED THEE.

“Beauty, always new, how late have I loved Thee!”
—St. Augustine.

It is, alas, too late, my God, that I have thought of returning to Thee! I was so wearied by the thorny paths of the world! My soul was so filled up with bitterness; for even solitude has seen me sometimes dissolved in tears! that I was obliged to submit myself to Thee, my God!—for I could hold out no longer against Thy reproaches; I had no longer strength to fight against Thee; and I must come, at length, to ask for pardon—but how late was it not, then, for me to begin to love Thee only! Why have I not known Thee sooner! And yet, my God, how little grateful have I been for all Thy benefits! How slow my progress in Thy service! What little fervour in my love! Whilst Thou, Thyself, hath shown such joy at my return, and hath, since then, loaded me with benefits! Every hour of my life has been marked

by Thy liberality, and, nevertheless, Thou knowest, O my God—I have taken but little pains, until now, to mortify my passions, to overcome all obstacles, and to enter into the path, traced out for me by Thee.

Yes, my God, I am quite unworthy of Thy friendship, so late have I begun to love Thee! Oh! grant then that, henceforward, I may love Thee more. I never have had peace, when far from Thee. What will become of me, O my God, if, wearied of always urging me forward, Thou wert to withdraw Thy helping hand, and suffer me to fall back again into my former errors? Oh! do not Thou abandon me....Limit all my desires to Thyself, subdue my passions by Thy love, strengthen my faith, give to my heart an ardent charity. Confirm me in that calm, in which Thy children live. Give me Thy peace, my God! this unalterable and entire peace, which only dwells in hearts, which are dead to creatures, and live but in the holy fire of Thy love.

Yes, give me, my God, Thy love; all Thy love, my God! for I have loved Thee much too late. All Thy love—for every love but Thine is only vanity and deceit;

because in Thee alone exists the sole and sovereign Truth : all Thy love—for Thou art the only Being, truly worthy of being loved ; He, Whom we should only love on earth, Whom only we shall love for all eternity.

XII.

BUT IT IS TO THEE ALONE THAT I ASPIRE
TO-DAY.

“Thy Beloved is of such a nature, that He will admit of no division in thy heart, but will have it entirely to Himself, and will sit there like a King upon his throne.”—Imit. II. Book, vii.

Yes, my God, the happiness of man must have its source only in Thee. Earthly pleasures may seduce us, for a moment, by the semblance of happiness ; but, when restored to ourselves, we experience only bitterness and disappointment. It will be always in vain that our souls will seek for happiness from creatures ; for creatures have no power to give it. Ah ! my God, it is because we are created for Thee alone, and only in Thee can we find rest.

But how Thy love encourages me, my

God ! No, Thou wilt never find again this heart, which Thou hast been pleased to move and bless, entangled in this world's crooked ways. I will seek the places where Thou dwellest, my only ambition will be to find Thee, and to possess Thee, O my God ! to hear Thy voice, to warm myself beneath Thy loving wing. I will call upon Thee in solitude, and will cry to Thee in the silence of my heart ; in tears will I complain ; I will bemoan Thy absence, and will unceasingly invoke my Beloved, the only Sovereign Good which my soul desires.

Let others seek to satisfy themselves by sensual objects ; let them devote this fleeting life to every gratification in their power. For me, nothing shall please me any more, unless Thyself ; for I know that, when attaching myself to Thee, Thou never wilt abandon me. Thy love is not false ; it is not inconstant, interested, and selfish, like that of worldlings ; but it is sincere, it is generous, and, it is eternal.

When then, my God ! shall I bid an everlasting farewell to all creatures ? When shall I disengage myself entirely from all things frivolous here below ?

When shall I see my soul so perfectly detached from creatures, as to be no more united but to Thee alone? Oh! when Thou shalt visit this soul, my God! how enraptured will it be with the blessings which attend Thee! But how rare are those visits! How often do I sigh, when oppressed by the weight of my miseries! How many evils afflict and distract me, and deprive me of Thy sweet caresses! If I loved Thee more, my God! If my poor heart were disentangled from the ties which bind it ever to creatures—oh! then, resigned in Thy absence, loving Thee, equally in poverty as in plenty, I would always rejoice in Thy love, I would not regard, I would not love, I would not desire, anything but Thyself. It would be no longer I who would live, it would be Thou, my God! Thou, in the house at Bethlehem; Thou, on the way to Calvary; Thou, nailed to the Cross; as well as in the glory of Mount Thabor.

Ah! what stops thee, then, my soul, from abandoning all for Jesus, and from loving Him alone in future?

Yes, my God, may it be so. My soul desires it. It demands Thee. Have pity, then, on its weakness, pardon its

sloth, and unite it so closely to Thee, that it may never more be separated from Thee.

XIII.

THOU ONLY ; TO CONFORM MYSELF ENTIRELY TO THY ADORABLE WILL.

“Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”—
The Lord’s Prayer.

How happy the man, who, feeling a love for a contemplative life, is permitted to bid an eternal farewell to worldly things, and to bury himself in the sweet peace of some unknown retreat ! A heart, possessing the peace of God, is not in dread of silence. The lengthened solitude of night is but a source of happiness to the soul, which only aspires to be detached from earthly things, and to be ever mindful, ever recollected, ever absorbed, in the sole contemplation of the realities of eternity.

At length, expand thy wings, my soul ! Leave to this place of pilgrimage the dust which you have valued there ; leave to it its inutility, its foolish attachments, barren desires, vain agitations, trifling ambi-

tions, fleeting loves. Take thy flight to a shore more tranquil, and there collect thy thoughts, in meditation on the infinite Good. Leave, then, unto worldly men, this life of anxiety and of care, and go, yourself, to repose entirely in the sweet possession of your Beloved.

Thus was it, O my God, that, in the pious desires of a fervent, but newly converted, heart, I have often dreamed of happiness! Oh! how I wished, then, to have been able to break through all that bound me to the thousand requirements of a position of labour, of care, and of business! And I was wearied—I was very wearied, my God, by those dreams of felicity; for they caused in my heart a very severe contest between Thy Will and mine, between my desires, which I thought so legitimate, and the views of Thy Providence, which always cast me back into the midst of struggles and distractions. How often, then, have I not surprised within my heart complaints and murmurs—for I fancied that I saw a fatal hand—which I dared not say, was Thine, my God!—but which, never relaxing the grasp upon its victim, pushed it always

back again into the billows, from which it strove continually to emerge.

Oh ! but when it pleased Thee to enlighten me, my God ! when, truly desirous for Thy glory and not my own, I have seen myself admitted to a clearer knowledge of the illusions of my heart and the mysteries of a more active charity ; oh ! then, my God, I have plainly seen that it was not entirely Thee alone, that I sought in my dreams. I fully acknowledge now that this God alone does not, and even cannot, exist, but where there is perfect conformity to Thy adorable Will, however repugnant the accomplishment of it may seem to us.

Yes, my God, all the ceaseless anxieties of business may continue, if it be Thy pleasure ; all the cares of a family, all the rough labours, all the many disquietudes of life, when such is Thy holy Will ; endless years of violent combat, which the seductions of this world cause us to undergo, if such be yet Thy Will—and then, always crosses and sacrifices, always repulses and privations, always combats and contradictions ; then, nothing still but a constant life of sufferings, a life of trials, a violence every day, and every hour, to

our desire for solitude and repose—behold the God, to Whom alone we should aspire ; God, whatever it may cost us : God, in spite of our hearts, in spite of ourselves ; God, and always, only God alone, to do nothing but His holy Will. Are not His friends in heaven from every state in life ? We, also, may sanctify ourselves in them. Let us, before all, then, do the Will of God ; and this Will of God manifests itself to us, when we ask it with humility, with sincerity, with perseverance, and with a true desire to conform ourselves to it fully, whatever it may cost us !

No, my God, not my will, but Thine. It is Thou alone, Whom I desire ; and, in opposition to self, Thy disciple will always follow Thee, even to Calvary ; and, if his frailty should murmur, listen only to his heart, which ever strives to combat the repugnances of his nature, and wishes always but to bless Thy mercies and Thy love.

XIV.

THOU ALONE, WITH THY ABANDONMENT
AND THY CROSS.

“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross.”—Matt. xvi. 24.

How few there are, my God, who love Thee for Thyself alone, and bless Thee equally in tribulation and in joy, in abandonment, as well as when filled with the delights of consolation! How strong, how ardent, and how generous, is the love of Jesus, when disengaged from all self-love and interested motives! Ah! why, my God, art Thou never loved, but for Thy gifts? Why is there so much repugnance to enter upon this way of poverty and affliction, the only one that Thou hast followed, and which is tinged with Thy adorable Blood? Do we forget that the Cross is the foundation of Christianity, that it is the distinctive mark of the Christian, the port of salvation, the shortest path to heaven; and that it is only from it we can recover the strength of the soul, the true peace of the heart, and the consummation of all virtue?

It is Thy Cross, O my God! which hath, in all times, been the delight of Thine Elect. How is it, then, that we refuse, always, to carry it with courage? It has triumphed over the world, over idols, and over the passions; how is it that it cannot triumph over our repugnance and our cowardice? Everything is possible, my God, to him, who takes his seat beneath Thy Cross! How is it, then, when environed with enemies and pressed by other impediments, we reject That, which only can give us victory? We wish very much for Charity, and yet we do not wish to be washed by the drops of Blood, which flow from the Heart of Jesus, this furnace of eternal Charity!

Oh! It is there—at the foot of the Cross—it is there, indeed, that the brilliant glory of the world appears in its true light: but nothingness and lies! It is there, that one discovers the emptiness of all that passes here.

How happy is he, who attaches himself to the Cross—he, who loves to follow Jesus in His humiliations, and to elevate himself, with Him, by this same Cross, above the perishable things of earth!

Remember, Christians, that our union

with Jesus Crucified, shall be the measure of our union with Jesus Glorified. Let us remember that, to immolate ourselves for Jesus is to love Jesus truly, and a certain proof that we do so. Ah ! for a loving soul, an hour upon the Cross is preferable to an age in heaven !

Let us not seek elsewhere, than in the Cross, for Faith, for Hope, and Love ; for There is found the source of all the wealth of heaven.

Oh ! without doubt, the Cross is folly, but a sublime folly—since it gives Wisdom, and, with it, every blessing.

O holy Cross, O sacred Wood, my strength, my joy, my life, and my salvation ! What a pleasure to live and die, each day, with thee—since, in living and dying with thee, one lives and dies with Jesus. Deeply impress, my God, within my heart, those saving Truths, and make me a lover of Thy Cross. Oh ! how strong, then, will I be, when I shall place all my love upon that Cross, on which Jesus reposes !

XV.

THOU ALONE, WHEN I AM DYING.

“How foolish and insensible is man! To think but on things present, and not to look forward to the future.”—Imit. l. i. c. xxiii. 3.

The life of man passes like a shadow. The river of Time, with a rapidity which nothing can arrest, hurries with it, without distinction, to the tomb, kings and subjects, children and old persons, rich and poor, the just and the wicked. A little sooner, or a little later, all human ambition terminates in the sepulchre. There, the career of every mortal, with all his anxious cares, and all his projects, closes! How happy, then, will he be, who has made his treasury in heaven, and amassed there riches of virtue and good works—the only riches one will find again beyond the tomb! Happy then he, who will have known how to establish peace within himself, and to die daily, that he might not be surprised by death! Happy he, who shall have employed his time in learning the language which is spoken in the other life, and who will not be a

stranger in that world, which he is about to enter ! Happy, oh ! a thousand times happy, my God ! is he, who then will feel Thee living within his heart !

I have a sweet confidence, my God, that, at this last and decisive hour, Thou wilt have forgotten all the errors of my youth, and wilt be only mindful of Thy infinite mercies. Yes, I will, then, hope, with a firm confidence, in Him, Whom I shall have invocated as my God and my All, my only Good, the only Spouse of my soul. I will hope in Him, Who will have so often admitted me, Heart to Heart, to His divine intimacy. Could He permit that this same heart should, at this last hour, be torn by the anguish and the tortures of the wicked ?

Ah ! if, nevertheless, the apprehension of Thy awful judgments should come then to surround me with their terrors, I will recall the mercies and the love I prove to-day ; I will recall some sacrifices, which I shall have made to Thee, and which Thou hast promised to recompense with infinite rewards ; exceeding far the merits of a trifling self-denial.

Yes, my God, I will hope in Thy goodness ; for I wish to remain united to Thee

at this last hour. I do not wish to enter the other life without Thee. It is, while protesting a thousand times my endless love to Thee, I wish to expire upon Thy bosom, O my God !

What value to me, after my decease, will be the pompous funeral, the tears of numerous friends, and the marble tomb, which can only give honour to a loathsome piece of clay? Oh ! no, let there be none of this vain equipage, which attends the coffins of the Great, let my tomb be simple and unadorned—but let the angels come to meet my soul, and to conduct it into heaven. This is the equipage of which I feel ambitious. Then, give me, if Thou wilt, my God ! a want of perishable goods, but make me rich in virtue. Let me die poor in the eyes of men ; but rich, in those of heaven. It is Thou I desire while in this life ; it is Thou, Whom I desire also at my death. What should I wish for, either in heaven or on earth, unless for Thee, my God ?

XVI.

TO POSSESS THEE ALONE FOR ALL
ETERNITY.

“Father, I will that where I am, they also, whom Thou hast given Me, may be with Me.”—John xvii. 24.

Unhappy the heart, which, feeling itself at enmity with God, dare not reflect on death, this passage from the days of mercy to the days of justice !

Ah ! Go, deceitful glory, riches heaped up for fleeting enjoyments, momentary pleasures, sad and poor chimeras, go, for ye cannot pass through the narrow path that leads to a sepulchre ; since wealth and pleasures come one day to die, beneath a cold and lonely tombstone !

What a frightful storm is life : unhappy is he, who knows not how to shelter himself from it in the love of his God, and in the sweet hope of reposing, one day, in the society of His children.

Meanwhile, life is so short !...and the hour may strike, to terminate it, at the moment it is least expected !...A heaven for an inheritance, and an eternity of

happiness!...and this, perhaps, may be decided, and without appeal, in a few days—perhaps this very day—perhaps ere we betake ourselves again to sleep—or while reposing in this sleep....Yet, notwithstanding those truths, which cannot pass for vain frivolities of life, we always retain the bandage on our eyes, and continue as much attached as ever to the changing follies of this terrestrial sphere; and we forget the sole and only matter, which is necessary in this world!

If Thy mercies, O my God! be so patient, so multiplied, so unwearied, in this life; so are Thy judgments equally frightful in the other! How terrible must appear Thy justice to him, who will think seriously upon it!

But, in those days of wrath, my God! Thou wilt not bruise those, who shall have observed Thy commandments, and lived in Thy love. Oh! those shall not go to hide in the bowels of the earth, to conceal themselves from Thee. They will hope in Thy promises, they will confide lovingly in Thy goodness. Exiled upon earth, having ever sighed but for their true country, they will exult with joy on reaching its wished-for harbour; valiant

champions, fatigued by their combats on earth, they will bound with delight on seeing the happy day of rest shine out.

Yes, Eternity is Thine, my God ! but Thou hast promised that Thy Elect shall ever love Thee there—and love Thee in it, without fear of ever losing Thee. This will be, for Thy children, the Day of the great Passover—the great passage from slavery to freedom. Then, the contempt of the wicked, the disdain of the voluptuary, and the thousand seductions of the world, and all the poignant tribulations of the exile, all shall be at an end, all shall have passed away....Their future will be only peace and love....

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, O beauteous city, Promised Land of the Elect, when shall I behold thy walls displayed upon the heavenly hills ! When shall thy ramparts of jasper and of gold appear—containing an entire creation of masterpieces and of wonders, all that the God of heaven could combine most worthy of His glorious Majesty, all that His Almighty Power and Love could invent, to crown the happiness of His Elect !

Oh ! how good will it be, then, to have suffered, to have combated, to have la-

boured ! Then we will have no more to fear, for the City of God is impregnable. No more uneasiness about the future. The future of the Elect is an immutable eternity ; it is the eternity of God Himself, the eternity of His joy, the eternity of His peace. Then, sing, O Israel ! Sing the canticles of Sion ; sing, with the angels, the glories of thy God. Mingle with theirs, for ever, thy hymns of love and of thanksgiving. Henceforth there will be but one cloudless union between your heart and That of thy God, of Him, Whom, O loving soul ! you call your Jesus, your Beloved, and your All.

Yes, my God, men will acknowledge, then, that Thou hast not deceived them, when Thou saidst to them formerly : “ Blessed are the persecuted, the afflicted, and the poor,” for, in eternity, they will partake of Thy felicity ; and Thy kingdom, and all its splendour, will become the recompense of him, who shall have borne with resignation the sufferings of this life. Oh ! how munificent will God be then ! How liberal and magnificent, in compensating His Elect for their hunger of justice and their thirst of love,

their persecutions, their trials, and their combats !

How happy, oh ! how happy then, a thousand times, those who will sleep in the peace of God, to awake as happy guests at the banquet of eternal bliss !

O my God ! grant, then, that I may pass through my purgatory in this life, but sustain me—sustain me until I reach eternity ; because I desire to see Thee in Thy glory, I wish Thee to be for ever my delight, my joy, my only riches and entire recompense.

Oh, happy eternity ! To-day, to-morrow, and, perhaps, for even a longer period, sufferings, pains, and tribulations, may be thy lot—but then succeeds eternity, where you will enjoy repose—only repose, felicity, and never-ending happiness !

XVII.

ACT OF LOVE.

“A loud cry in the ears of God is the ardent affection of the soul, which saith: ‘O my God, my Love, Thou art all mine, and I am all Thine.’”—Imit. iii. v. 5.

O my most sweet, and most loving Jesus! I offer to Thee the entire love of my heart. Yes, notwithstanding its great misery, which Thou well knowest, my Jesus! this heart assures me that it has neither life nor love, but for Thee alone. Thou art its immense and infinite Good, engrossing all its affections. All else is as nothing in its eyes; it prefers Thee alone, not only to all the perishable riches, which this world can give, but even to all the treasures of heaven, if Thou wert not there, Thyself, the sole and real treasure.

Ah! of what importance could the splendours of the eternal mansion be to me, if Thou, my God, did not reside there? And what, on the other hand, could signify to me the sufferings of a lengthened life of pain, privation, and of exile, if I possessed Thee there? Yes, ever Thee alone, Thee undivided, Thee

entirely, and always nothing else but Thee ; behold all that my soul desires, that which it seeks, that of which, beyond all other things, it is ambitious.

O Jesus, Who hast, from the first day of my life, loaded me with so many benefits !

O Jesus, Who hast so often raised me in my falls, and then so often consoled me !

O Jesus, Who hast so often given Thyself to me entirely by the Holy Communion !

O Jesus, Whose Heart hath so often interchanged with my heart such delicious words, and such mysterious and ineffable communings !

O most beloved Jesus ! I love Thee, I love Thee with all my heart. Yes, I feel that all the pulsations of this heart are ejaculations unto Thee.

Ah ! let me suffer all humiliations, all crosses, all misfortunes, all sorrows ; but, I conjure Thee to leave to me Thy love ; permit me ever to love Thee, as my only, unchangeable, immense Good ; and may nothing ever displace it in my heart ! No, nothing, my God ! nothing on earth,

nothing in heaven, nothing in time, and nothing in eternity....

Thou art my eternity. Thou art all my heaven, Thou art all my life; I have no other desire, no other aim, no other hope, but Thee. I ask nothing from creatures; I ask nothing from angels, from the elect, or from the saints, nothing but Thee alone—the Spouse of my soul, my beloved Jesus.

O God! if, for my past ingratitude, Thy dreadful justice was about to sentence me to hell, I would consent to it, my God! I would consent to it with all my heart, for I wish not for anything, but what may be perfectly pleasing to Thee, or in harmony with Thy infinite Attributes. But then, O my Jesus! Oh! grant me this last favour I demand—grant that, even in hell, I may love Thee still, that I may love Thee there eternally, and with every throb of my poor heart.

Yes, in this life and in the other, in fleeting days, and those which never end, I wish for nothing, but one only Good, my God! for nothing but Thyself entirely. With Thee I shall be rich indeed!

PIOUS THOUGHTS.

He, who has given his heart to the pure love of JESUS, does not serve God through fear of punishment, or through the hope of any benefit he might derive; he loves God for God's own sake, because God is Beauty itself—Goodness itself—because God is his Father—his only happiness is to please Him. Though there had been neither Paradise, nor hell, it would not in the least diminish the fervour of his love, nor the reverence he has for God; and, nevertheless, there is no one who has a greater dread of hell, or who desires Paradise more ardently; not on his own account, however, but for the love he bears to God. “I do not fear,” he says, “the justice of God, but I love it; and yet I tremble when I think on hell, because God is not loved there, because He is blasphemed there, because His image, man, is there defaced, and because His merits and His blood, alas! avail not there. This it is which causes me, both day and night, to sigh for heaven, while

waiting with impatience for the happy moment when I may say, God is satisfied with me; all His designs are accomplished, His work is finished and complete, and my heart now enjoys the happiness of loving Him eternally, without fear, or danger, of ever more offending Him." (P. N.)

"God is charity; and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him." (*John*, 1 *Ep.* iv. 16.)

The Christian soul, detached from the world, entertains but one desire, whether for time or for eternity, and that is to be united to Jesus in this ineffable union, of which the holy description charms us in the mysterious Canticle of Love: "My Beloved to me, and I to Him; who feedeth among the lilies till the day break and the shadows retire." (ii. 16, 17.) Alas! what do you seek elsewhere? Return, return to yourself, prepare for the celestial Spouse a dwelling worthy of Him, and He will come to it, and He will repose there; for His delight is to inhabit the heart that calls Him. Then, alone with Jesus, far from the noises of the earth, in the silence of creatures, He will speak to you as a friend speaks to a friend; and, en-

raptured with hearing Him, you will never wish to hearken again to any other.—
(*Lam. Reflections on the Imitation.*)

There is no doubt that all Christians are not called to that sublime state of perfection to which so many holy anchorets, living in the desert, have attained; but, in the noise and tumult of society, each one should form, in the recesses of his heart, a solitude, to which he might retire to converse with Jesus Christ, and, in His presence, to collect his scattered thoughts. Having gathered thus the thoughts of time, the thoughts of earth, and weighed them with the thoughts of things eternal, they will soon disrelish those which pass away; and, like so many saints who have lived unknown on earth, they can say with the apostle: “Your life is hid with Christ in God.” (*Coll. iii. 3.*)
L. T.

O Jesus, I desire, with John, to rest upon Thy sacred Breast, and to nourish myself with love when placing my heart on Thine! Like Thy beloved disciple, I wish to learn from Thy love. This disciple, after he had proved it, said: “His unction teacheth you all things.” (1 John, ii. 20.) This interior unction of your

soul instructs in silence. One loves, and knows all that is requisite for him to know ; he tastes, and needs not to enquire further. He has within him the substantial word, which nourishes his inmost soul, he finds in it all truth. O Jesus! O Love! I have no more any other book than Thy sweet, loving Heart. There I learn all, while ignoring all, and in profound annihilation of myself. There I live the same life which Thou livest in the bosom of Thy Father; I live on love, my every act proceeds from love. Be silent, inquisitive and sagacious world, I have found on the breast of Jesus *the holy ignorance and the sacred folly of the cross*, compared to which your lights are only darkness. I then know all, and I do not desire to know but the only one thing necessary, and that is love. “Deus charitas est!” “God is love.” (1 John, iv. 8.)—L. T.

“The Sacred Heart of Jesus,” said a great servant of God, “is the seat of all virtues, the source of benediction, the retreat of all holy souls; this adorable Heart is ever burning with love for men, ever open to shed every grace upon them; always affected by our evils, always ready to receive us, to be our asylum, habitation,

and paradise, in this life. Come to it, then, you particularly, who are burdened with the cross, with misery, with temptations, come to it."

The soul, that is filled with love, breathes only of heaven, aspires only to eternity, sighs only for her Saviour, Who is the centre of her repose and the paradise of her delights.

I find in Jesus a thousand and a thousand charms; He is my joy, my happiness, my treasure, and my life; He gives me to drink deep draughts of the delicious wine of His love, He inflames my heart with the fire of His divine charity.

Let all things pass away, let them depart, let all abandon me. It gives me no pain to say, "Adieu to everything," because I only seek my God; He is my only desire, the only good for which I feel affection:

Deus meus et omnia.

My God and my all.

JESUS ONLY.
BUT AFTER JESUS, MARY.
JESUS. MARY.
JOSEPH.

THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS.*

I can also say with a prophet, (Jonas, iv. 38), "I am tired of this world, I would rather die." How bitter seem to me the fruits of life! How sweet to me to leave this country! The ties of life enchain me to the earth. Why should I carry longer my painful burden? Nothing but anguish upon all sides. But I am wandering; my joy, my help, is in the name of Jesus.

In summer, the earth, parched by the heat, has not strength to nourish the corn; you see the flowers and shrubs droop, thirst is causing them to perish. But, if a gentle shower descends from heaven, they gain new life beneath the fructifying rain. My soul, drooping under

* (A Breton Canticle, published by Monsieur L'Abbé Le Joubieux, de Vannes.)

its burden, revives immediately on hearing any one pronounce the words, "My Jesus."

In that cold, gloomy month, the month of January, everything appears in mourning; the snow envelops the earth, as with a winding-sheet, the cawing of the rook alone is heard. When March arrives, the sun awakens nature; the earth is green, the trees put forth their blossoms. My poor, afflicted soul awakens when she hears the words, "My Jesus."

A song is pleasing to my ears; the honey-comb is grateful to my palate; the murmur of a rivulet is full of charms; when I am thirsty, the fruit seems to hang very high. But higher still is something more delicious and more excellent than all this wretched world can afford; my father pronounces not its Name, but on his knees, it is the Name of my Saviour, the holy Name of "My Jesus."

Like all men, I have experienced many troubles, and very little happiness. Alas! my friends, man's life in this world is composed of gloomy days, with some few bright ones. The Name of my Jesus has shed more serenity over my days of sorrow, it has rendered my life a happy one. This

holy Name has made more light my days of care, my days of anguish.

I will not attempt to describe the happiness, which my heart tastes in the world; I cannot say in what ocean of sorrow my soul has been drowned. But I will affirm, that I have never enjoyed a pleasure to be compared to that of receiving Jesus. Yes, in the ills I have had to endure, when invoking Him, I felt my strength redoubled.

When the hour shall sound, (oh, happy hour, why tarry thou so long!) which calls me from the earth to heaven, dear friends, repeat to me the name of Jesus; I will be deaf to every other name. In my failing hands, I beg you to place the crucifix; approach it to my lips that I may kiss it. In my distress, and even in the agony of death, how strong will I not be, repeating, "Jesus, Mary, Joseph."

CONFIDENCE IN JESUS.

“He that putteth his trust in Me, shall inherit the land, and shall possess my holy mount.”—Isaias, lvii. 13.

“Blessed be the man that trusteth in the Lord, and the Lord shall be his confidence. And he shall be as a tree that is planted by the waters, that spreadeth out its roots towards moisture; and it shall not fear when the heat cometh. And the leaf thereof shall be green, and in the time of drought it shall not be solicitous, neither shall it cease at any time to bring forth fruit.”—Jer. xvii. 7, 8.

REFLECTION.

Confidence in God is a powerful aid to our salvation, a strong weapon and defence against temptations.

1stly. *A powerful aid to our salvation.* The most criminal and corrupted man, who will desire to renounce his irregularities and do penance, will find in confidence in God an efficacious remedy for all his misery. Let him afflict himself, and let him hope he will be saved, for God has said it, and has promised it. This is the reason that hope is likened to a ship's anchor, and this comparison is consecrated by the use which the apostle

St. Paul has made of it in his Epistles. When a vessel has lost all its rigging in a tempest, if an anchor yet remain, it may preserve her from the fate which threatens her. So it is with confidence in God, and one may say it was from not having had recourse to it, that Cain and Judas perished in their guilt. The first had incensed God by envy and by murder; but that which sealed his reprobation was his despair, which he evinced by saying: "*My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon.*" (Gen. iv. 13.) The second regretted the shameful treason which he had committed against Jesus Christ. "Alas!" says St. Chrysostom, "if he had taken confidence in the goodness of his divine Master, if he returned to Him, to sue for mercy, the Son of God, Who pardoned the infidelity of St. Peter, and Who prayed for His executioners, would, doubtless, have received this traitor to do penance."

2ndly. Confidence in God is a strong weapon and defence against temptations. This, the Scriptures declare in precise terms: "*In hope shall your strength be.*" (Isaias xxx. 15.) And elsewhere: "*I have put my trust in the Lord, and shall*

not be weakened." (Ps. xxv. 1.) Really, what can be stronger than him, who places his confidence in God? To confide one's self to God, is to repose on Him, it is to avail himself of His goodness, His truth, His power. So armed, what can one fear from an enemy, who cannot prevail against God? "*The heart of the just man,*" saith the Prophet, "*is always inclined to hope; it is thus it is strengthened, and nothing can shake it.*" (Psalms.)

SENTIMENTS.

I.

O Lord, my life, my sustenance, my health, my strength of body and of mind! Reason, judgment, memory, love of virtue, my Christian education, my position in society, all the means needful for my salvation, with which I am endowed, are gifts from Thy pure liberality. Thou hast placed me in this world only for my good; what other motive couldst Thou have, to draw from nothing a mean creature, who cannot, in anything, contribute to Thy happiness? But, if, in the decrees

of Thy infinite wisdom, the favours, with which Thou hast loaded me, were not destined to procure my eternal salvation, they would no more be benefits for me. It is not so, my God ; such an idea shall never enter my heart—for it would stifle my gratitude and my love for Thee—and these sentiments make all my happiness. Thou art the God of my heart, and my portion for eternity. My only happiness is to attach myself to Thee, and to place in Thee my entire confidence. Give me, O Jesus ! give me the Holy Spirit, which Thou hast promised to us in Thy Father's Name ; that I may look on everything that may, henceforth, occur to me, but as a favour from Thy hand, and as a means, which Thy infinite wisdom wills to conduce to my eternal happiness. On this will I found my rest, and the peace of my soul ; and it is Thyself, O Lord, Who givest me this Hope !

II.

“Keep me as the apple of Thy eye. Protect me under the shadow of Thy wings.” (Psalm xvi. 8.) To what man, O my God ! dare I thus address myself,

and to whom could I say, that I am as precious to him as the apple of his eye? But it is Thou, Thyself, Who inspirest me with, and even commandest me to cherish, this confidence. Nothing is more delicate, nor more tender, than the apple of the eye; in this it resembles me. Let it do so, my God, in every way; and multiply Thy cares for me, as Thou hast multiplied the guards for the eye, by protecting it with lids and eye-lashes. "*Keep me as the apple of Thy eye.*" My enemies encompass me like birds of prey, and I cannot escape them, if I do not take refuge in Thy bosom. Thou hast taught the young ones, even while weak, to run for shelter under their mother's wings, and Thou hast given to the mothers this solicitude for, and tenderness towards, their young ones, which excites our admiration. Thou hast portrayed Thyself in all Thy works, and Thou hast exhorted men to have recourse to Thee, by all the evidences of Thy goodness, which Thou hast shed throughout all nature. May I venture, O my God, to indulge as much confidence in Thee, as Thou hast shown goodness unto me! "*Protect me under the shadow of Thy wings.*"

III.

I hope in Thee, O my God, O holy God, good God, powerful God! and it is in Thee alone I hope; unless in Thee, in whom can I confide? No, I do not hope in merits of my own. Alas! what am I in Thine eyes but misery and sin? And my life, far from affording cause for confidence, what can it present to me, but subjects for fear and for despondency?

I do not place my reliance on the world: I have but too often proved how deceitful and perfidious it is; how many souls have reckoned on its support, and been the victims of their credulity. The world, far from giving happiness and making saints, what can it produce but reprobates and wretched creatures?

I will not rely on man's assistance. Ah! unhappy he, who depends on arms of flesh! Weak mortals, they can do nothing for themselves, what can they do for the happiness of others? They exist to-day, but to-morrow they will be no more. What help can one expect from dust and ashes?

IV.

It is but in Thee alone, my God ! Yes, it is only in Thee, that I can, and ought to, hope ; for I find in Thee solid motives and firm foundations for my confidence.

I hope in Thy infinite mercy ; I know that I have abused it ; but I also know that its treasures are inexhaustible. So many sinners, like myself, have abused it also, and yet were not rejected, when they came to cast themselves into its arms. A sinful Magdalen, a repentant Augustine, will be eternal monuments of this boundless mercy. Alas ! if it were not infinite, would not all of us be lost without resource ? God of goodness, grant that I may feel the effects of this unspeakable mercy ; it is only in this world that Thou canst exercise it ; after our death, Thy justice only will have sway. Have mercy, then, upon my soul, while I yet breathe on earth. Thy justice will have all eternity to punish ; pardon me while there yet is time, and show, in pardoning, that Thou art great in mercy, as Thou wilt show, when punishing for ever, that Thou art just and dreadful in Thy vengeance.

V.

I still hope, and I hope entirely in the merits of Jesus Christ. These are the sure foundation of my confidence. Adorable Saviour! when I think on all that Thou hast done, and suffered for me, how can I but hope in Thee? When I see Thee, descended from heaven to earth to save sinners—when I reflect that Thou hast only lived in this world to attract them all to Thyself—when I enter Thy holy Temple, and, casting the eyes of Faith upon Thy Altar, I find Thee there as a Victim, offered daily in sacrifice for us—when, above all, I ascend in spirit to Mount Calvary, and behold there Thy precious Blood flowing in abundance upon sinners to obtain pardon for them, Thy adorable Heart pierced, and open to receive them, Thy last sigh heaved unto heaven, to draw down on them the grace of penance and of reconciliation;—should not so many cries—cries so tender and affecting—should they not animate my confidence, and should they not offer to me a refuge against my fears and my alarms? God of goodness, save the souls which have cost Thee so dear, and do not

lose the fruit of Thy sufferings, of Thy Blood, and of Thy death !

VI.

I know, O my God ! that my Hope should not be vain or presumptuous ; I should animate it by my works, and sustain it by correspondence to Thy graces. Thou hast created me without my own co-operation, but Thou wilt not save me without it ; so I am resolved to labour for the salvation of my soul. Animated by my confidence in Thy mercy, I will revere Thy holy Law, I will observe Thy Commandments, I will detest my sins, I will try to expiate them by my tears. I will watch over myself, I will resist my passions, I will combat the corrupt inclinations of my heart, I will act towards my neighbour, as I would wish that he should act towards me.

In these holy dispositions, which Thy grace inspires, I hope in Thee, my God ! Thou art my Creator, my Saviour, and my Father ; I hope that Thou wilt grant to me pardon of my sins, grievous though they be : the very gravity of my sins—which I repent of—far from discouraging

me, shall be an additional motive to confirm me in my hope. I will say to Thee, with the penitent Prophet: Thou wilt have mercy on me, O holy God, because my sins are great; for the greater they are in Thy sight, the more they will cause Thy goodness to shine forth, and Thy grace to triumph.

I hope that Thou wilt sustain me in the miseries and the trials of this life, to enable me to bear with its pains, to endure its reverses, to submit with resignation to the disposal of Thy providence, however it may affect me; all, that shall come to me from Thy paternal hand, shall be accepted with a resigned spirit.

I hope, above all, that Thou wilt come to aid me at the hour of death, and that Thou wilt not abandon me in the agonies of this passage from time unto eternity. It is then, especially, that I shall need Thy help, that I shall invoke Thy succour, to finish my course in the paths of justice and of holiness.

I hope, in fine, that Thou wilt grant me Thy grace in this world, and Thy glory in the other.

VII.

O my God ! deign to give to my Confidence the qualities which may render it pleasing in Thy sight.

Grant that my Hope may be entwined with, and engraven in, the bottom of my heart, so that not only my lips, but every feeling of my soul, may say : “I hope in Thee.”

Grant that my Hope may be so firm, that nothing may be capable of moving it. No, let neither men, nor the world, nor all the powers of hell, combined against me, be able to shake that confidence, which I shall have placed in the God of my heart.

Grant that my Hope may be constant, that it may accompany me even to my last hour, that it may follow me to the tomb ; and, even when Thou wilt strike me with death, let my last sighs be consecrated by Confidence in Thee. Such are the sentiments, in which I desire to live, and in which I hope to die.

O my God ! How, in this sweet and firm hope, can I fail to support all the troubles of this mortal life, in considera-

tion of that immortal life, which is prepared for me?

How, in the expectation of the supreme happiness of heaven, shall I not detach myself from the perishable goods of earth?

How, at the sight of this heavenly country, can I look on the earth, but as a place of exile?

Shall I not offer myself a holy violence for a few days, to partake of the delights of a blissful eternity? Beautiful heaven! Aim of my wishes, sole desire of my heart, only occupation of my life, and of every moment of it, which remains for me to mourn and sigh for my deferred happiness!

VIII.

Lord Jesus, sweet Saviour of my soul! What is the source of my confidence in this life, and my sweetest consolation in all that I see under heaven? Is it not Thyself, my Lord and my God, Whose mercies are so infinite? Where have I been well, without Thee? And where have I been unhappy, when Thou wert with me? I would rather be poor for Thy sake, than be rich without Thee. I

would prefer to be a wanderer upon the earth with Thee, than to dwell in heaven without Thee : where Thou art is heaven ; death and hell are where Thou art not. Thou art all my heart desires ; and, therefore, I, when far from Thee, can only sigh, lament, and pray. I cannot have full confidence, but in Thee, nor hope, in my necessities, for succour, save from Thee alone, my God ! Thou art my hope, my confidence, my ever-faithful Comforter. Mine eyes are lifted up towards Thee ; in Thee, my God ! I place my entire confidence. Sanctify my soul, grant to it Thy heavenly benediction, that it may become Thy holy dwelling, the seat of Thy eternal glory, and that, in this Temple, which Thou disdainest not to reside in, there may be nothing to offend Thy sight. Look down on me, O Lord, in Thy great mercy, and, in the multitude of Thy mercies, graciously hear my prayer ; protect me, preserve me amid the dangers of this sinful life ; let Thy grace accompany and conduct me, in the way of peace, to the country of eternal light. O Jesus, my good Master ! I expect this Grace, through Thy great mercy.

IX.

O Jesus! How happy is one in serving a good Master, such as Thou art! What happiness to be permitted to repose, with confidence, upon Thy love, the care of all one's interests! I will, I will, henceforward, have a perfect reliance upon Thee—I will abandon myself to Thee without reserve. Thou art my Protector, and Thou watchest continually over me; who can terrify me, or, of what shall I be afraid? A Prince fears nothing, when surrounded by his guards; a mortal man is guarded by other mortals, like himself, and believes himself in safety! Shall I fear—how can I fear—when my God protects me? No, no, O Jesus! I will always confide in Thee. Though all hell were let loose against me, I should yet have confidence in Thee. With Thee, I need not dread its fury, and it cannot rob me of Thy gifts. I will, then, repose in peace upon Thy breast, and there sweetly rest, without fear of being disturbed.

X.

O my God! So certain am I that Thou watchest over all, who confide in

Thee, and that they cannot be in want of anything, when depending entirely on Thy care, I resolve to live, in future, without anxiety, and to cast on Thee everything that causes me disquietude. Men may despoil me of property and reputation ; sickness may take from me my strength and power of serving Thee ; I may, alas ! even lose Thy Grace by sin, (from which I beg Thee to preserve me)—but never shall I lose my confidence. I will preserve it even to the last moment of my life, and all the demons of hell will vainly strive to deprive me of it. Some may expect to attain happiness through their riches or their talents ; others may rely upon the innocence of their lives, the rigour of their penance, the number of their good works, or on the fervour of their prayers ; but, as for me, O Lord ! all my confidence is in Thee alone : no one is ever deceived by this confidence. I am, then, in a manner, certain that I shall be eternally happy, because I firmly hope to be so, and because it is through Thee, my God, I entertain this hope. I know, alas ! I only know too well, how weak I am, and how inconstant ; I know what power temptations have against the

strongest virtue : but all this cannot terrify me ; so great is my hope, I believe myself to be protected from every evil. And I say, in the face of heaven and earth, "*I hope in Thee, my God!*" I know that I cannot hope too much in Thee ; I know that I shall possess, one day, all that I shall have hoped for from Thee : I hope then, my sweet Jesus ! that Thou wilt pardon me my sins, that Thou wilt love me always, and that I, myself, will love Thee constantly in this life and for all eternity.

O how good it is to place one's confidence in the Lord : He is the refuge of the poor, and the consolation of the afflicted.

He calls Himself the good God, the merciful God ! What goodness of Him to anticipate our wishes ! What patience in awaiting our return ! With what indulgence does He not pardon us !

God of holiness ! Happy the man, who, disgusted with, and detached from, the world, places his entire trust in Thee alone ! I place it in Thee entirely, now and during my life ; accept the homage of it, and preserve me for ever.

CONFIDENCE IN MARY.

“Heaven and earth shall sooner perish than Mary shall cease to succour him, who has recourse to her protection, and confides in her.”—LOUIS DE BLOIS.

“There never was a sinner, however great, who, having recourse with confidence to Mary, was not converted and saved.”—ST. HILARY.

“Happy he, who confides in Mary; who never turns his eyes from this brilliant ‘Star of the sea!’ He will, one day, behold the heavens open for his admission, and, with his good Mother, he will there partake of the immutable felicity of the saints.”

“Who will not hope in thee O Mary? Thou art the hope and aid of even those, who have no hope!”

“How great, O Mary! is the abundance of the blessings, which you have prepared for those who love you, and who have confidence in you!”—ST. BONAVENTURE.

REFLECTIONS.

Mary is the Mother of God. Mary is also my Mother—the Mother of me, who am a poor sinner! Oh! what confidence should I not have in her? She is all-powerful with her Son; a single prayer

from her, is, as it were, a command for Jesus, Who can refuse her nothing. She is my Mother! She loves me. She desires my salvation! Oh! again I ask, what confidence ought I not to have in her!

“*Mary is our Mother!*” “*Mary is our Mother!*” Let us continually repeat those sweet and consoling words: “*Mary is our Mother!*” What happiness for those who live under the protection of a Mother so tender and so powerful! Who shall dare attempt to snatch from the arms of Mary the children, who have sought refuge there from the fury of their enemies? What passion, what temptation, be it ever so violent, will be able to vanquish them, if they place their confidence in the protection of such a Mother?

Rejoice then you, who are the children of Mary; know that she receives, as her children, all those who desire to become so. Rejoice, and be full of confidence; for he, who loves sweet Mary, and who places himself under her protection, should feel his courage raised, and say: “*Why fearest thou, my soul? The cause, regarding thy salvation, can only have a favourable issue, since the decision rests in the*

hands of Jesus, thy Brother, and of Mary, thy Mother." This thought, occurring to St. Anselm, delighted him. "*Oh happy confidence!*" cried he, "*oh certain refuge! The Mother of God is also my Mother! How firmly should we not hope, since our salvation depends on the best of Brothers, and the most tender of all Mothers!*"

AFFECTIONS.

1.

O Mary, Mother of holy love! Thou knowest that thy divine Son, not satisfied with having become our Advocate, Himself, with His Father, has made thee our Mediatrix with Him, and given such efficacy to thy prayers, that nothing can be denied to them. It is to thee, then, I have recourse, O hope of the wretched! My confidence in thee is such, that I depend far more on thy protection and thy tenderness, than upon the merits of all my works. Heaven and earth attest that he, who is under thy protection, cannot be lost. So, though all creatures should forget me, though all the world should abandon me, provided that thou

dost not forget me, or forsake me, I will feel happy. O Mary ! I confide in thee, it is in this hope I live, it is in this hope I wish to die, while saying with my heart, as with my lips : “ *Jesus is my only hope, and, after Him, it is in thee I hope, O Virgin Mary !* ”

2.

O Mary, our most holy Mother ! Ecclesiasticus tells us that thou art the Mother of hope ; the Church, that thou art hope itself. What other hope shall we then seek ?...After Jesus, thou art our sweet hope ; under this title St. Bernard invoked thee, and it is by the same title that we also invoke thee. We desire to address thee always, with St. Bonaventure : “ *O Mary, the salvation of those who invoke thee, graciously hear us !* ”

3.

O Mary ! thou wert standing at the foot of the Cross, when Jesus Christ, Who had loved His own, who were in this world, and Who loved them even unto the end, wished to give them a las

pledge of His tender affection by announcing thee as our Mother. Yes, thou art our Mother, and thou hast never declined the obligations, imposed on thee by a title, which is our consolation and our joy. Thou art my Mother; it is in thy maternal bosom, then, I will repose, with confidence, all my miseries. Thou art my Mother, and a Mother full of tenderness and compassion; I will respond, then, always to thy excessive goodness by a boundless confidence, preferring to all titles of honour or glory, the title of "thy beloved child."

4.

O Mary! most holy Virgin and my august Sovereign! I place myself under thy protection; I cast myself, with full confidence, into thy merciful bosom; I abandon to thee, for every instant of my life, particularly at the hour of my death, my body and soul, with all that belongs to me. I further confide to thee, O my tender Mother! my pains, my fears, my consolations, and my hopes, that, through thy merits and powerful intercession, thy divine Son may be the sole and only end of all my actions. Amen.

EXAMPLE OF ENTIRE CONFIDENCE IN MARY.

When St. John Nepomucen was born, his life was despaired of, and he only owed the preservation of it to the protection of the Holy Virgin, whom his pious parents went to the Church of a neighbouring Convent to invoke. This first favour from Mary was a happy presage for the future: piety, zeal, ability in the direction of souls, were its fruit. John, on his part, showed himself worthy of the goodness of his divine benefactress by his lively gratitude, and by the filial confidence, which he constantly displayed towards her, but particularly on that glorious occasion, which has rendered him for ever celebrated.

Pressed by the cruel Wenceslas to reveal to him the confession of the Empress, his Spouse, and being, on his refusal to disclose it, delivered to the executioner, he had recourse to Mary, and never ceased to invoke her holy Name, with that of her divine Son, while he was tortured. Triumphant in this first trial, he was permitted to depart—but, foreseeing that his

persecutor would not stop there, he redoubled his fervour towards the most holy Virgin, and made a pilgrimage to one of the most venerated Shrines in the country, to prepare himself for martyrdom, which he had, really, the happiness to suffer on the following night.—(*Life of St. John Nepomucen.*)

SUPPLICATION TO THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN,

To obtain, through her powerful intercession, the Propagation of the Faith throughout the Earth.

Star of the sea, salvation of all those for whom you intercede; powerful protectress of the zealous missionaries, who traverse the seas, and expose themselves to every privation and danger, to bear the light of Faith even to the extremities of the earth, and to gain souls to Jesus Christ: Mary, who hast so often preserved them from shipwreck, and saved them from the most imminent perils, thou art the anchor of safety, to which we attach them all; come ever to their as-

sistance, and pray continually for the success of their missions, and for the propagation of the Faith throughout the universe ; protect also the mariners, who sail over this dangerous and fearful element ; pray to Jesus to remove from them all dangers of soul and body, and to save them, through the infinite merits of His passion and death ; this grace we implore for each of them, and for all evangelical labourers, begging it also with confidence in thy Name, and through thy tender and compassionate Heart.

O Mary ! succour all Christian captives by thy prayers, sweeten their chains by the unction of grace, and clothe them with the strength of God, to render them invincible ; pray also, pray continually, for all idolatrous and infidel nations, that all may be re-united in the bosom of the Catholic Church ; open, likewise, thy compassionate heart to all the military, who are embodied upon earth, and ask for them Faith, and the works of Faith and Grace, that, by their patience, they may possess their souls ; in fine, speak to the Heart of Jesus, that He may recall to His fear and to His love all sinners, who wallow in the mire of crime ; aid the ship-

wrecked and travellers ; be their light and guide in the difficult and perilous ways they have to traverse, and deign to obtain for all the dying, and for poor culprits, about to be executed this day and launched into eternity, a lively and profound sorrow for all their sins, accompanied by confidence in, and love for, Jesus.

RULES FOR A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

On Prayer.

Prayer is necessary for all, because we all require the constant protection of the Lord ; but it is particularly necessary for young persons, who desire to lead a Christian life, and to preserve themselves pure amid the continual perils of the world.

Make, then, a firm resolution never to neglect prayer ; frequently render thanksgiving to God for the benefits, with which He loads us every day ; expose to Him with confidence your necessities, that He may come to your assistance ; beg Him to

strengthen your weakness, and to preserve you from temptations.

Above all, pray with the greatest recollection, that you may not incur this bitter reproach, which our divine Saviour made to the Pharisees: "*This people honour-eth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.*" (Matt. xv. 8.)

Never forget your morning and evening prayers; and fulfil this pious duty, not through custom, but with deep sentiments of piety and fervour.

During the day, raise, occasionally, your heart towards God by some ejaculatory prayer, or loving aspiration.

On Sundays and Festivals, assist regularly at the Offices of the Church, and there behave with a profound recollection and a sincere and humble piety.

You should also make it your duty to assist at the Rosary, and at every other exercise in honour of the Blessed Virgin. Can a young person hope to preserve the precious treasure of chastity, if she does not love and honour the purest of creatures?

On Labour.

Whatever may be your rank or your condition, love labour; accept it in a spirit of penance, and in submission to the sentence of God's justice, which condemned man to labour when he became a sinner.

Perform your labour in the presence of God, offer the beginning and the conclusion of it to the Lord, and sanctify it by meditation on the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and by pious affections.

Be always occupied in something useful and reasonable; you will feel happier, and be better able to defend yourself from the dangers which surround you. Idleness and want of serious occupation lead to many faults.

On Respect for Parents.

Carefully fulfil your duties towards every member of your family: honour your father and your mother, for it is God, Himself, Who commands you to do so. Be affectionate, and submissively anticipate their wishes. Redouble your attention and tender cares as they advance in

life, so as to lighten the infirmities and miseries of old age. Never speak to them with disrespect or anger, lest you should pour bitterness into their hearts, and bring down on you their malediction. Conceal nothing from your mother ; and, far from despising the counsels of her experience, beg of her not to withhold them from you. Never openly resist your father and mother, and do not murmur against them, even in your mind ; and if, in a thoughtless moment, they tell you to do anything contrary to the divine law, let them know, respectfully and mildly, that you cannot disobey your God.

Accustom yourself betimes to sacrifice your most innocent pleasures, your personal inclinations, to render yourself agreeable to your parents. Nothing pleases God so much as filial piety ; nothing will draw down upon you, more surely, the blessings of heaven.

What I tell you respecting your father and mother, applies also to your grandfather and grandmother.

Act as a true and generous friend towards your brothers and sisters ; watch, that the demon of envy and pride may never make you unjust in their regard.

Practise towards your neighbours the duties of charity, friendship, and gratitude.

On Meals.

Sanctify your meals, by referring them to the glory of God. You ought not to take food, merely to gratify your palate. Drink and eat to repair your strength, and to enable you to fulfil your duties better.

Never forget that the nourishment we take is always injurious, if God does not render it profitable; be faithful, then, in asking the Lord, before your meals, to bless them, and return thanks to Him for having given them.

The Grace of God, His holy Word, and the Blessed Eucharist, are the daily Bread which repairs the strength of the soul, and of which the corporal food, partaken by the Faithful every day, should keep them ever mindful. Act so, that you may be able to say with our Lord: "*My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent me.*" (John iv. 34.)

On Spiritual Reading.

Spiritual reading is a fruitful source of virtue; it enriches the spirit with holy and divine thoughts; it nourishes the heart with sentiments of confidence and of love; it consoles in trouble and afflictions; it excites a longing for the heavenly country; in fine, it produces in the soul a joy, sincere and heavenly, which has its source in God. The saints have recommended it with all the authority of personal experience: they, who have lived but in prayer and meditation on the law of God, have proved its power.

Reading should not be allowed to weary the spirit; one should read with calmness, dwelling as much as possible on such parts as apply more closely to your necessities, and you should not disquiet yourself if your memory should appear not to retain sufficiently the holy counsels, which are given to you. God will give you the grace to recollect them, when you need them.

It is not necessary to read long chapters; but you should meditate on, and apply to yourself, what you do read.

Take often, and constantly read, "*The Imitation of Jesus Christ*." This precious book will be for you a mirror, in which you will recognize your defects.

No book will teach your duties better, will give you wiser counsel to detach you from evil, or to incline you to persevere in goodness.

On Amusements.

Make use of them as remedies, which should be neither injurious nor dangerous, neither too frequent, nor continual. Eschew criminal pleasures, and use with moderation those which are innocent.

Take care that the recreation, permitted to unbend the mind, may not lead it to dissipation, or become an occupation to disturb it, to agitate it as much, or even more than, labour does.

Always fulfil your duties with exactness, before you turn to occupations simply pleasing, or to amusements even permitted.

When engaged in labour, you may find recreation by changing to a different employment.

On Mortification.

The life of a Christian should be a continual exercise of penance ; practise, then, with zeal the fasts and abstinences prescribed by the Church, unless you have been legitimately dispensed from doing so ; add to them some mortifications, permitted by your Confessor. But the essential penance—that which you ought to practise every day of your life—is the correction of your faults ; struggle against them without intermission, strive continually to root out one or other of them. Mortify yourself in the ordinary things of life : nothing conduces more to establish the empire of grace in the soul, and to annihilate that of nature.

The following are some very salutary practices of mortification :—Not to indulge the inclination you may have to do something even useful—to guard carefully your looks, to repress your curiosity to learn certain news—to forbear a joke, a bon-mot, which might annoy someone, or which might flatter self-love—not to seek that which gratifies sensuality—to regulate innocent pleasures, and to abstain

sometimes, through a spirit of penance, from those which are most allowable. To moderate the excessive love we have for ourselves. To speak little, and that without heat. To use courteous manners towards persons, from whom we feel estranged. To keep silence in trouble, and bear losses with resignation.

On Thoughts of God.

Be attentive, during the course of the day, to recall to your mind the presence of God, and say to yourself sometimes, "He beholds all my actions, He hears every word I speak, He knows all my thoughts: how unfortunate for me, then, to offend Him, since it is impossible that my sin should escape His knowledge!"

Be careful to refer all your occupations to the glory of God: consult Him, act but in accordance with His inspirations, and rely only on the assistance of His grace. Raise often your heart to God, particularly when about to perform any action: offer it to Him, and renew frequently your intention during the day. Make a holy and frequent use of the

prayers, which are called ejaculations, and which are but a rapid motion of the heart, a thought of prayer and love.

On Examination of Conscience.

Remember that the Examination of Conscience is not only a part of Evening Prayer, but it also is one of the most important duties of the Christian life. You have but few more efficacious means to preserve yourself in innocence, to know the wounds of your soul, to excite yourself to a regular life, and to dispose yourself to make your ordinary confessions without trouble and with profit. Judge yourself, before God shall judge you, and you will find mercy when God does judge you, at your death.

On the Predominant Passion.

Endeavour, with the divine assistance, to discover the chief failing or passion, to which you are subject. See whither your heart, your wishes, and your thoughts most naturally tend; what it is that you resist with most repugnance or most trou-

ble ; and what is the most frequent occasion of your offending God.

Watch carefully over yourself, particularly when assailed, and have recourse to God by prayer. Examine yourself with care on every day. Consider how often you have relapsed ; seek the cause ; ask pardon humbly from God ; impose a penance on yourself ; form new resolutions, and persevere with courage in this necessary warfare, certain that God will finally bless the violence you do yourself to please Him. By this exercise, continued for nearly twenty years, St. Francis de Sales, who was naturally hot and passionate, became one of the mildest of men.

On Temptations.

Do not be surprised to find yourself always a mark for the tempter's pursuit ; remember that, in losing innocence by sin, you have likewise lost your true felicity, and you must win it back by conquering yourself. Such a victory is difficult ; but have confidence in Jesus, your Saviour, Who has conquered for you on Calvary ; He has permitted Himself to be tempted ; He has combated, He has

taught us to subdue the enemy. Keep your eyes, then, fixed continually on your Saviour; strong, in His strength, you will have no longer cause to fear.

Be ever distrustful of yourself, and think not that you are secure from temptation because you happen to be, for some time, free from its attacks. When the enemy lies closest hidden, is often the time that he is best prepared to pounce upon us with his entire force. Take care, however, that this distrust may never lead you to despond.

On the World.

Seldom mingle in the world, if you can avoid it. Before you do so, examine if your intention be solely to fulfil a duty of your state. The world is full of rocks, most dangerous to piety; the manners they affect there, the purposes they pursue, the maxims they inculcate, all, even to the air they breathe, excite to negligence and tepidity. Be on your guard against the perils which are met with there; be modest in your looks, decent in your apparel, reserved in your discourse. Malevolence may, perhaps, at-

tempt to ridicule your principles ; let not that disquiet you : virtue will always ultimately succeed in gaining the esteem even of those who criticise it.

The world is full of flatterers. You will often hear, perhaps, your amiability, your wit, your beauty, eulogized ; the snare is palpable ; they eulogize you but to seduce your heart ; never give credit to the praises which they lavish on you ; recollect yourself, and say to God : " Come to the assistance of Thy child ! Those, who praise me, are far from having any idea of my miseries."

On human respect.

If vanity and vain-glory be blamable, human respect is no less so. Discharge your religious duties before strangers as you would in presence of your family, without troubling yourself as to their remarks. There are some young persons who seek to hide their religious practices ; who, making the sign of the Cross, or praying devoutly in a Church, become disturbed if seen, uneasy at what may be said of them, and anxious to conceal their blushes and confusion. Ah ! never forget

that a servant is not ashamed of wearing the livery of his master: and yet you would tremble at showing yourself to be pious, at calling yourself a child of God, a servant of Jesus Christ!

Whenever you shall be alarmed by the imaginary fear of human respect, call Faith to aid you, and say to yourself: "I must trample human respect beneath my feet, or prepare to partake, on the day of Judgment, the unhappy lot of those, who shall have blushed to be disciples of a Crucified God."

On Conversation.

Of all your daily actions you should guard most particularly your Conversation, because it is through it that you expose yourself most frequently to give offence to God. To avoid this common sin, practise the following counsels. 1st. Shun, as much as possible, the conversation of persons who speak but of vanity, dress, or trifles; and, when courtesy obliges you to take part in it, give it as little attention as you can. 2nd. Speak little of devotion, because, most commonly, self-love glides into conversations of this kind;

it is always safer to be silent auditors. 3rd. Never speak in your own favour, nor even to your own disadvantage; for it is often a false humility to disparage oneself before others, and we would be very sorry that they should really harbour that opinion of us which we express. 4th. Banish from your discourse all useless curiosity as to the conduct of others, all vanity, all bitterness; be gay, but be so without levity. Adopt a strict rule; never to censure or detract. Backbiting is the daughter of envy or of pride, and, while it offends God, it scatters along its footsteps quarrels, distrust, and hatred.

On Alms.

Love the poor, those living images of Jesus Christ on earth; always extend to them a helping hand, even when, by doing so, you should submit to some privation; for you will be most amply recompensed one day by Him, who pays for even a glass of cold water, given in His Name. Learn to give alms discreetly, and from supernatural motives.

Forget not, however, that justice should take place of charity. It would be, then,

mistaken piety to give much alms, while one did not discharge his debts, or pay the wages of his workmen and domestics. Guard against going in debt; and, if some untoward circumstances cause you to contract debts, retrench even your necessities, to enable you to discharge them as soon as possible.

Duties of our State.

Be attentive to fulfil the duties of your state with zeal, and with the intention of pleasing God, Who has called you to it. Bear, in a spirit of penance, with the painful and repugnant offices they impose. Instruct yourself fully in your obligations. Adopt, in all things, system and propriety; early accustom yourself to the employment, which is suitable for your sex; and always preserve, particularly towards your relations and domestics, an even temper, which nothing should disturb. A young girl should not attract notice, but by her mildness, and her amiability.

FREQUENTATION OF THE
SACRAMENTS.

The regular frequentation of the sacraments proves the good state of the soul. It is an almost infallible remedy for preservation of piety, when one receives them with suitable dispositions.

In exhorting you to frequent the sacraments, you know that I mean the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. The first purifies the conscience from all stains of sin, the second is the bread of the elect, "*the wine which strengthens virgins.*" (Zach. ix. 17.)

It is inconceivable how a young person, who desires to maintain herself, and even to advance, in virtue, should suffer, with indifference, many months to pass without approaching to the sacraments! Does she forget that human nature is weak, and that, if we do not often have recourse to the food which gives us life, we shall infallibly fall? Ah! what a multiplicity of daily faults do we not see committed, because one has not sought this succour, which would have caused him to shun sin, or would have raised him after a fall,

which, though perhaps a light one, paves the way to death.

It is not for you to determine, yourself, how often you should approach the sacraments; leave this to your director. But approach them with such pious dispositions, that they may be for you an exhaustless source of grace.

True Piety.

Let your piety be full of sweetness and urbanity, devoid of trifling or frivolity, and without any of those fantastic grimaces and gestures which render devotion ridiculous and intolerable. Do not wear a gloomy and reserved air, as if God were a severe and cruel master. Nothing estranges people of the world from piety more than this false idea of God's service, which they too commonly entertain. Show, on the contrary, a cheerful serenity, which will attest the peace and happiness which is found in true piety. By this you will dissipate the false prejudices which exist against it, and you will sweetly attract all hearts to the side of virtue.

Avoid an unhappy defect, too common with pious persons; it is to be troubled

and vexed, when any one puts an obstacle to their projects of devotion. Remember that every time you relinquish anything good for the love of God, He will cause you to find a greater in the accomplishment of His will and the renunciation of your own wishes. Recall, then, especially to your mind the divine words of the Son of God : "*My Father, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*" (Matt. xxvi. 39.)

Thoughts of Salvation.

Neglect no means of leading a uniform, exemplary, and truly Christian life. Always regard the maxims of the world as obstacles to salvation. The affair of salvation is your great affair ; it is, properly, your only affair ; all others should be of no account ; for your affair is to save yourself ; what else can serve you at the hour of death ? Reflect on this. In vain will you have shone and prospered in the world, if, on the last day, you should hear from the Sovereign Judge this frightful anathema : "*Depart, I know ye not.*" All is comprised in those words of St. Paul : "*Use this world as though not using it ;*" that is to say, that creatures

should be to you only a means of serving God, and of attaining the end which He has laid out for you. (1 Cor. vii. 31.)

RULES OF PERFECTION.

Being reconciled to God, you should apply yourself to know the means which can aid you to persevere in righteousness. These means are presented to you in the following maxims, and in the sentiments which they suggest.

Live, as far as in your power, live upon the earth as the angel lives in heaven. Nourish your spirit with pure and holy thoughts; detach your heart from the love of a world which is but vanity, and aspire, without ceasing, to the crown which Jesus Christ prepares for you.

Undeceive yourself from the illusion of enjoying a long life here below; fear, on the contrary, to be taken suddenly in a state of sin, and in your fatal habits.

Penance opens to you an assured asylum, hasten to seek your refuge there, before the gate of mercy closes against you, never to reopen.

Weep in this life, that you may not weep ineffectually in the other. Here mercy reigns, there justice rules; here is pleasure, there are endless torments; here are foolish joys, there are weepings and gnashing of teeth; here are concupiscence and pride, there are poverty and shame.

The kingdom of heaven is only promised to the pure and chaste of heart; do you desire to blunt the dangerous sting of the flesh? Think upon death, think on the judgment which follows, and on the devouring flames of a fire which will burn for eternity.

Be humble and lowly in your own eyes, and you will be great before the Lord. Do not prefer yourself to any one; place yourself below all; the more you humble yourself in this world, the higher will you be exalted in the other.

Let the remembrance of your sins be continually before you, and seek your sweetest consolation in the sighs and tears of a contrite and humble heart.

Do not let the infirmities of the body cast you into melancholy or fretfulness. Render thanks to God who deigns to visit you with trials, and prefer the sufferings

which purify, to the repose and the health which too frequently corrupt.

If fortune favours you, do not be puffed up with vanity ; if adversity should strike you, do not lose courage ; be meek in prosperity, firm and patient in adversity ; affliction serves as a preservative from pride.

On all occasions keep an even mind, let neither joy nor sorrow change the disposition of your soul ; that humiliations may find you always prepared to meet them.

If anger should surprise you, suppress it speedily ; if it prevents, or disconcerts your projects, exert yourself to moderate its transports, to arrest its violence. Calm yourself as soon as possible. Submit to injustice, but never be guilty of inflicting it.

Be patient, mild, and temperate. Bear with calumnies and insults ; oppose to them only meekness, silence, and forgiveness, and the victory is yours.

When you have offended or afflicted any one, draw from his heart the arrow which has wounded it, by your expressions of regret, and by acts of kindness.

Be reconciled with him who has offended

you, and who asks you to forgive him ; and even with him who does not ask you ; remit, that it may be remitted unto you ; pardon, that you too may be pardoned.

Love concord, avoid contentions, quarrels, lawsuits ; seek for, purchase, welcome, peace.

Fly the company of the wicked, seek that of the good, and avail yourself of their society, their counsels, their example.

Give no just grounds for any one to censure you. Be, in reality, what you desire to be esteemed.

Let your prudence appear by your speech, and also by your silence. A wise person says a great deal when speaking little, and sometimes even more when not speaking at all.

Take an interest in your neighbour, spare his reputation, compassionate his misfortunes, lament his faults, and fear lest you should commit the same yourself.

Walk in the presence of God ; always implore His succour ; refer to Him everything you do ; ascribe no merit to yourself for any action, and confess your frailty.

If you shall find a place where God is not, you may sin freely there. But what will it serve you to seem pure in the eyes of men, when a secret witness of your guilt will judge and sentence you?

Disclose, without disguise, to an enlightened director, the infirmities of your soul. A grievous vice *confessed* is of little consequence, but a slight fault *concealed*, may lead to sorrowful results.

In a doubtful matter, deliberate before you act; in a matter evidently useful, act at once; delay takes from the merit of a pious action.

Speak by example, rather than by precept; be prudent in directing and reproofing; take care lest, when raising others, you might fall yourself.

Explain your reasons when giving an opinion, without attaching undue weight to your own sense; be the first to listen to advice, and the last to intrude yours upon others.

Show yourself to be just and equitable, but indulgent; and be such to others as you desire that they should be to you.

Shun firmly, but without anxiety, the occasions of sin, do not judge yourself with scrupulosity or inquietude; and do not

judge another more severely than you do yourself.

Happiness, honours, all the goods of this world, are of short duration. What has become of so many powerful, so many rich, and so many happy men of this age? All have passed away like a fleeting shadow, they are no more, they have existed, but do so no longer.

Concupiscence and the love of perishable things can never make you happy. Do you desire to be so? Detach yourself from creatures, give all your heart to the Creator, He alone is worthy of you.

Be dead to the world, as if death had, in reality, separated you from it, and despise, from henceforward, all that will be of no service to you at your dying hour.

Do nothing for vain-glory; do all for God, since all is made for Him, and because He wills Himself to be your only end and everlasting recompense.

Recall continually the blessings which our Lord has granted to you, meditate on their excellence, love alone can understand their value.

Love Him, who contemplates and loves, in His eternity, His own divine perfec-

tions ; do what He does always ; be occupied by Him alone, refer all things to Him ; you exist but for His service.

If He be the only object of your love, He will be, Himself, the recompense of your labours, Himself will be your consolation in affliction ; in fine, He will be your inheritance, Himself, for all eternity.



PRAYER.

O Thou, Who hast loved me when I did not love Thee, come to a heart which seeks Thee and returns to Thee ! Permit me to love Thee, in gratitude for Thy love. Grant that I may ever love Thee more and more.

What has been my conduct hitherto ? I have offended, I have outraged, my Creator, my Benefactor, and my Father. Oh, that my heart would break, and, by its sorrow now, save me from anguish in eternity.

Alas ! what is my life but a continued round of iniquity, of weakness, and of vanity ? What do I merit, then, great

God ! if Thou shouldst judge me without mercy ?

But I have the sufferings, the death, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to aid me ; I have the example of a multitude of sinners, justified by Thy grace, and I rely with confidence upon the merits of my Saviour.

O God, who created me when I had no existence ; who, when I was lost, redeemed me ; who hath sought me when I strayed ; how sweet, how profitable to me to give Thee thanks, and to consecrate to Thy honour all that Thy love has done for me !

Good Shepherd, preserve the sheep which Thou hast saved ; give it to bewail the past, to sanctify the present, to guard against the future ; give it to know what it should do, and to obey Thy inspirations.

Have mercy, O Jesus, on a soul, for which Thou deigned to be born of a Virgin, and to die upon the cross. Wash out its sins in Thy precious blood ; preserve it from committing new ones, and prepare it to appear, with confidence and joy, before Thy holy Majesty, to contem-

plate for ever there Thy infinite perfections.

And thou, O Mary, Mother of Mercy ! obtain for me by thy intercession, obtain for all of us, the pardon of our iniquities. There can be nothing in us so criminal, as that it may not be effaced, if you speak in our favour. Holy Virgin, grant that we may feel the efficacy of thy maternal succour ; we, who believe, and who confess, that thou art truly the Mother of God, and that grace hath raised thee, both in merit and in glory, above all creatures. He, who is protected by thee, can never perish ; present thyself, then, august mediatrix, at the throne of grace and mercy, offer there for us the incense of thy prayers, and obtain for us fortitude to triumph over our vices, to imitate thy virtues, and to arrive, by a holy death, at the felicity attained by all thy good and faithful servants. Amen.

MASS FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

BY HUBERT LEBON.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY S. COOKE.

On the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Mass is the collection of prayers and ceremonies, which the Catholic Church makes use of for Consecration of the Eucharist.

It is the Sacrifice of the New Law, in which the Church offers to God, by the hands of the priests, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine. Jesus Christ offers Himself to His Father in this Sacrifice, which differs, only, from that of the Cross, in being offered in an unbloody manner. The Man-God is, therefore, at the same time, both priest and victim.

The word '*Mass*' is derived from '*Missio*,' a Latin term, which signifies '*Sending*,' because, after the prayers and instructions which precede the oblation of the sacred gifts, the catechumens and the penitents were sent out. The faithful, only, who were supposed to be worthy of

participating in the Holy Sacrifice, had the right to witness its celebration.

They have also named these prayers and ceremonies: '*the Liturgy and divine Mysteries.*' '*Liturgy*' is a word derived from the Greek, which signifies *Work, Service, public Ministry.* The expression, '*divine Mysteries,*' has been employed to designate the prayers and ceremonies of the Mass in the first ages of the Church, from the necessity, under which the early Christians were, of concealing them from the Pagans, whose persecution they had reason to dread. This name of '*Mystery*' has been, likewise, given by the fathers, in the second age of the Church, not only to the Eucharist, but also to other sacraments, because, acting on the soul, their effect is invisible.

*On the Spirit of the Holy Sacrifice of
the Mass.*

In all religions there have been sacrifices: the religion of the true God should, likewise, have its own; but those of the Old Law were, like itself, imperfect, and inadequate for the justification of man.

It was on Calvary the true Sacrifice was consummated, by excellence the only one, and of which those of Abel, of Melchisedech, and of Abraham, of Moses, of Aaron, and of Levi, were but the shadow and the figure. It was on Calvary there has been given to us, in Jesus Christ, the true Victim and the true Priest: an august Victim, the only one worthy of being offered to God, the only one capable of appeasing His wrath, and of expiating the iniquities of men: "*A priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.*" (Heb. vii. 26.)

But this Priest should be eternal; for God had declared to Him, with a solemn and immutable oath: "*Thou art a Priest for ever*"—not according to the successive priesthood of the mortal children of Aaron, but—"according to the order of Melchisedech." "*Juravit Dominus, et non pœnitabit eum; tu es sacerdos in æternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.*" (Psalm cix. 4.) Melchisedech, whose name signifies, King of Justice, was a mysterious priest, the beginning and end of whose life are not known; he was "*Priest of the Most High God,*" (Heb. vii. 1,) and appeared superior to Abraham himself, since

he blessed him, and received from him tithe of the spoils taken by Abraham from his enemies.

Such was the Type of Jesus Christ, a high Priest, a King of justice and of peace, whose descent no one could trace, and whose priesthood was exercised on the same symbols, bread and wine, which formed the substance of the Sacrifice of Melchisedech. (Gen. xiv. 18, 19, 20.) But the reality is far above the figure, and the Priesthood of Jesus Christ exceeds that of the ancient King of Salem, as much as the Body and Blood of a God surpasses a simple offering of bread and wine.

Jesus Christ, as the eternal Priest, will offer, then, eternally the Sacrifice of His Body and of His Blood. He will be always on our altars both Priest and Offering, the Sacrificer and the Victim. The priests here below, will act as His ministers, His delegates; but in Him alone, Who has succeeded to no one, and to Whom no one will succeed, will ever remain the Sovereign Priesthood; and thus it is that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is constantly offered up in heaven, because this Eternal Priest never ceases to present

to God the Blood, which He shed once on Calvary ; so also is this sacrifice continued on our altars, where every day, and with the same acts of oblation, used in the celebration of the Sacrifice, the same Priest of Calvary offers, by the hands of His ministers, the same Victim, the same Host, which He offered once, and which, according to the prophets, *should be offered in every place to the glory of the Eternal.* (Mal. i. 11.)

The holy Sacrifice of the Mass is really, then, the continued Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, such as He offered it once for us upon the Cross, and differs only in His offering Himself in an unbloody manner in the Mass—since “ *Christ, rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over Him*”—(Rom. vi. 9,)—but here is the same Priest, the same Host, the same Merits, as on the Cross, and the Blood of the Redemption is as precious in It, and as fruitful, as it was on Calvary.

The holy Sacrifice of the Mass is a sacrifice of propitiation, of thanksgiving, and of prayer ; that is to say, that by it Jesus Christ obtains mercy for us, and effaces the sins of the living and of the

dead ; that by it we give to God a proof of gratitude, worthy of the benefits which He has conferred upon us, in offering to Him the most precious of His gifts, His only Son ; and, in fine, because, in virtue of this oblation, and through its infinite merits, we may hope to obtain from the divine mercy the graces we are in need of in this life, and to attain to that which is eternal.

It is thus that Jesus loved His own. It was thus that the Word was pleased to immolate Himself once upon the Cross, to satisfy the justice of His Father, and to apply to all mankind, His brothers according to the flesh, the merits of His first immolation.

How great, then, is this Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, offered up on Calvary, in heaven, and at the Mass ! A sacrifice, which is infinite in all its parts ! The Priest, by Whom it is offered, is a Man-God ; the Victim offered, is a Man-God—the Victim, God, offered by a Priest, Who is also God, to the glory of God, for our sins ! Behold what is represented at the Mass, what It contains, what It renews, what It perpetuates. What confidence

should we not have in such a Priest, in such a Victim, in such a Sacrifice !

Behold, then, the act, which honours and glorifies God most on earth—the act, which brings most joy to the saints, most succour and consolation to the souls in purgatory, and, finally, most blessings and graces to the faithful on earth. A Christian cannot, then, in his entire life, perform any action more holy, more pious, more meritorious, than that of assisting at the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This is the reason that the faithful are commanded to assist at it, at least, on Sundays and Holydays.

Children of Christ, throng to the Church, where such great mysteries take place. Esteem yourselves most happy, and most highly privileged, in being able to assist there as often as your occupations will permit.

What a mystery of love ! There, a new incarnation is effected. The God of goodness and of mercy, the Lamb of God, the sweetness of the Incarnate God, the God of all love, Who makes the love for man to be a necessity of His own Heart, comes to descend anew in the hands of the priest, as He descended formerly into the

chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

O ye people ! come here to refresh your souls, and to give them an abundance of heavenly joys, with the courage and strength they require in this painful journey of life ; come drink, at the sacred fountains of the Saviour, the wine which produces in the soul a holy intoxication and felicity, which is never followed by remorse or bitterness. “ *Quotiescumque enim manducabitis panem hunc, et calicem liberis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis donec veniat.*” “ *For as often as you shall eat this Bread, and drink the Chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord, until He come.*” (1 Cor. xi. 26.)

*On preparation for assisting at the Holy
Sacrifice of the Mass.*

One should prepare himself for the holy Sacrifice by recollection, by sentiments of charity, and should never approach the altar but with the most profound respect, and the humility, which is befitting sinful man in presence of the majesty of the thrice-holy God.

Oh ! above all, when we should have the happiness of being incorporated, by

the Holy Communion, with the Victim of the august Sacrifice, and of being, ourselves, identified with the very Mystery of the Redemption, oh ! what sentiments of faith, of desire, of love, of profound humility, should then overflow our hearts ! To eat the bread of angels, ought not one to live the life of the angels ? To make of Jesus his most intimate friend, ought not one to bear within himself, if it were possible, a divine soul, like that of Jesus Himself—a soul, at least, inflamed with the fire of this pure charity, which consumes the hearts of the elect and of the saints ?

For the immediate preparation for reception of the Holy Eucharist, there is no special rule. It is love which should inspire our hearts with raptures of faith, of annihilation, and of holy desires, with which they should be filled.

We may reflect on the sentiments which occupied the souls of the saints, and, particularly, that of Mary, when approaching this great mystery.

Christians, when we have the happiness of assisting at the divine Sacrifice, when to this happiness is superadded that of Holy Communion, let us remember that these are benefits so immense,

that God, all rich and powerful as He is, cannot do more for us, and cannot grant us more. Let us render to Him the fullness of our hearts—that is to say, all the love that we can excite in them for this God, Who, in His great mercy, gratifies us with blessings so splendid and so infinite! Let us not remain, then, upon earth, for we appertain to heaven by our faith and by our hope; let us ascend to heaven with the angels, who carry before God the Body and Blood of His divine Son.

On the Intentions, proper for the Faithful, when attending at the Ceremony of the Holy Sacrifice.

During the first part, which is *the preparation*, let us figure to ourselves the sacrifice as one of *expiation*, presenting ourselves before God as sinners, to implore His divine mercy, and to obtain, through the prayers of the priest, the pardon of our sins, of our negligences, and of so many other faults, of which we know not either the gravity, or the number. “*Ab occultis meis munda me.*”

"From my secret faults cleanse me."
(Psalm xviii. 13.)

At the second part, which is *the Offertory*, let us represent to ourselves Jesus Christ about to be immolated on the Cross, as a Victim, which the priest prepares by the benediction and offering he makes of the bread and wine, which are to be changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ; and let us learn, by the washing of the priest's hands, how necessary is purity of heart for assisting at this divine Sacrifice.

At the third part, in which is *the Communion*, let us thank God for His ineffable goodness, in giving to us His own Son; let us beseech Him to grant us consolation in all our necessities, and to give us, in this Sacrament of peace and union, this sovereign peace which is only found in His pure love. Let us prepare ourselves for sacramental or spiritual communion, by this act of faith: *that Jesus Christ is truly on the altar*; by this act of confidence: *that we hope He will make us participate in the effects of this adorable sacrament*; by this act of love: *that we desire ardently to be united to Him*; and, finally, by this act of humility: *that*

we feel ourselves unworthy of receiving Him corporally.

To offer worthily these four acts, let us unite our intention to that of Jesus Christ, when giving to God the honour and homage worthy of His infinite Majesty.

PRAYER BEFORE MASS TO OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST.

My God, Thou art in heaven, but Thou art also upon earth. Thou art pleased to dwell amongst us, and to reside in our holy tabernacles. Thy inconceivable condescension goes much farther yet, my God, for Thou, in Thy excessive love for Thy creatures, doth desire to unite Thyself to us by the Holy Communion. Thou art about to come, then, O my Jesus! Thou art going to espouse my soul, and I will feel for a moment, Thy Sacred Heart reposing upon mine, which is so sinful. Oh, may it please Thee, then, to impart to it some of Thy wisdom, of Thy sanctity, of Thy humility, of Thy love for crosses, and of Thy holy submission to the will of Thy Father. I thirst for Thee, my God,

permit me to quench it in Thy love. Cleanse my heart from earthly affections: cause me to forget all creatures, that I may think, while here, of Thee alone. How, my God, in this union of *Heart to Heart*, so delicious in the Holy Communion, how can I fail, when so near to the flame of eternal charity, to draw from it some little spark of love?

But, if my tepidity does not deprive me of Thy grace, let not my misery cause Thee to abandon me; let not my coldness chill Thy love. Rather, have mercy on me, and prepare my soul Thyself; then come, O my God! come to console me and to heal me. Oh, how much do I need, my God, that Thou shouldst ever extend to me Thy excessive goodness, and Thy greatest mercy!

PRAYERS AT MASS.

From the commencement of Mass to the Gospel.

My God, I here unite my intentions to those of the minister of Thy altar, and, to supply my weak dispositions, I offer to

Thee, at this holy sacrifice, all the profound humiliation of the angels who surround this altar, all the prayers of the priest, all the holy desires and acts of love made by my fellow-Christians; that their charity may supply my tepidity, I unite my intentions unto theirs.

I conjure Thee, my God, to look down on me in Thy mercy, and to make me participate, notwithstanding my unworthiness, in the infinite merits of Thy Passion. Vouchsafe to give me, O my God, an entirely new life in the Holy Communion, for which I am making preparation; and, to make it more acceptable to Thee, I unite it to that of Thy holy Mother, and the apostles, and of all the saints, desiring, with them, to honour, to glorify, and to love Thee, as far as the capacity of a creature will permit.

I beg of Thee here, my God, to pardon my daily omissions in Thy service, caused by the carelessness of which I am guilty every moment; I humbly confess them to Thee, and pray Thee, O God of mercy, to purify me more and more; I wish, in fine, to live but for Thee alone, and never to offend Thee more.

But, how is it, Lord, that, notwithstand-

ing the poverty in which I feel myself in Thy presence, Thou art pleased to abase Thyself even to my lowliness, not only to wash my feet, but also to enter into my soul ! Oh, enter it, my God, for I desire it ardently : and, therefore, I beg of Thee to come at once, to purify my entire being with the fire of Thy love ; wash my poor soul in my repentance and my tears ; my God, my Father, look on me only in Thy mercy, in Thy greatest mercy, for I am but a sinner.

Glory be to Thee, glory be unto Thee, my God ! for Thou art ever patient, notwithstanding our continual offences. Glory be to Thee, Who art the Most Holy, the Most High, the only Good, the only Almighty, the only Lord. Glory to Thee in the highest heavens. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, and we give Thee thanks. O Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, accept our humble prayers, and let the acknowledgment of our dependance and our misery ever merit for us Thy mercy and our pardon.

From the Gospel to the Sanctus.

Thy holy Gospel, O my God, contains truths very consoling to the Christian soul; Thou sayest to us, "*Come to Me, all you that labour, and I will refresh you.*" (Matt. xi. 28.) We have need, O my God, of such an engaging invitation, which came from Thy Heart at sight of so much misery, by which men are afflicted.

Oh! thanks be to Thee for all this unaccountable love, which Thou hast evinced for us. I will avail myself, my God, of Thy merciful invitation, and will often come to refresh myself at Thy feet, after all the fatigues of the day. It is true, my God, that to follow Thee, one must "*deny himself, and take up his cross;*" (Matt. xvi. 24.) But even those ooings from the cross, it is Thy desire to wipe up; it is the infirmities, the difficulties, the trials; all the troubles of life that Thou art anxious to relieve; and it is in Thy sacrament of love we find the courage of the strong, in this food, which sustains the Christian on the path of Calvary. Ah, my God! Who is it I am going to receive? The same Jesus of Galilee, of Judea, and of

Samaria, Who healed the sick, comforted sinners, gave sight to the blind, and fed in the desert the hungry people, who followed Thee thither ! The touch of Thy robe sufficed to restore health ; oh, what should I not then hope for, I who am about to receive Thyself ! More happy than John, who reposed upon Thy breast, I go to feel my heart reposing upon Thine ! And I shall have within me this same Jesus ; this Jesus Who descended into Mary, Him Whom she carried in her arms ! Sweet Mary, teach me how you addressed your Jesus when a child, what the endearments and the cares you lavished on Him, what the respect and love you bore Him, when He was hidden under the humble roof of Nazareth, growing up under your motherly care, submissive to you, His creature, but His Mother ; He, the Creator of all, but still your Son : instruct me in those mysterious conversations, which you held for hours with your dear Jesus, for I am also about to press Him in my arms and to hold Him to my heart.

But, O Mary, your dear Son is not only the Divine Child of Bethlehem, and of the humble dwelling at Nazareth, He is also the God of Calvary. O, holy Virgin,

teach me, then, to suffer with Him, make me to understand the value of the cross; this treasure, which Jesus prefers to every other good, and which was the only inheritance He left to the apostles, His dearest friends.

Holy Host, Victim without blemish, O my Jesus, I offer Thee now to Thy Father, as Thou didst offer Thyself to Him, loaded with all the sins of men, but wholly resigned to His adorable will. Thou art about to renew again, upon this altar, the same oblation; with Thee, and by Thee, I also offer myself, with all my indigence and misery, beseeching Thee to unite me indissolubly to Thyself, that nothing may be ever capable of weakening in me the fire of Thy love, or of breaking the bonds of Thy eternal charity.

O, my soul, lift up thyself for a moment amongst the heavenly intelligences, and, united with the choirs of angels and of blessed spirits, sing with them that hymn of thanksgiving, that eternal canticle of the elect: "*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, the God of Hosts, Hosanna in the highest heavens. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.*" (Mark. xi. 9.)

From the Sanctus to the Elevation.

We conjure Thee, O most merciful Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, to accept the Sacrifice, which we offer to Thee for Thy Holy Church, and for its head our holy Father the Pope, for our Queen, and all in authority over us, for our Archbishop, and his clergy, and for all the faithful of his diocese. My God, I beg Thy special graces, also for myself, my parents, and other relatives, my family, my friends, and for my enemies. And that these prayers may be more pleasing to Thee, we unite them to those of the glorious Mary, to those of all Thy apostles, and of all Thy holy martyrs.

Hear, O God, those prayers, which I offer to Thee from the bottom of my heart, ...for I will speak to Thee, my Jesus, in loving intimacy, and Heart to Heart. Oh, how many favours have I not to ask from Thee, my God! How many complaints have I not to press upon Thee! How many regrets to utter! How many thanksgivings to render! How many promises do I not desire to make Thee! In a few minutes more, I shall press Thee to my heart, and Thou wilt be,

through love for me, my Captive. Thou wilt be my treasure, my riches, the only riches I desire. Yes, my God, Thou knowest that I love Thee. My soul prefers Thee to all earthly blessings, but grant that I may love Thee even more; augment my ardour in Thy service, and consume my heart in the fire of Thy love.

From the Elevation to the Communion.

Yes, my God, it is really Thyself, Who hast truly descended upon this altar; I submit to Thee my faith, I acknowledge Thee as my Lord and my God, and I adore Thee with all my soul, O Sovereign Majesty! O, hidden God, my faith reveals Thee, though concealed beneath these humble species; my entire being annihilates itself before Thee, for I am Thy creature, and Thou art my God and my Creator. God of Calvary, how excessive then must be this love which led Thee thus to shed Thy Blood for my salvation! What incomprehensible goodness unto men has made Thee submit to renew, a thousand times a day, this act of immolation on our altars! Oh, that Thy Blood, my God, may not flow in vain, may

It fertilize Thy Church, and comfort the souls which still suffer in their place of expiation; may it profit all those in whom I am interested, may it cleanse the sinner, and procure for the just a greater abundance of charity. May this Blood, my God, be for men a voice of mercy, which may, at all times, turn from them the anger of eternal justice.

Holy Mary, supply our helplessness, and adore, thyself, this Saviour-God in His humiliations and His sacrifice, and obtain for us, through the merits of this adorable Victim, the requisite purity for approaching the holy Table.

Bless, then, O my soul, the Lord thy God, Who has descended from heaven to visit also thy lowly dwelling. How magnificent, then, in His gifts, is the God Who delights to abide with men! The God, Who seems to have had no other purpose in their creation than to render them objects of His infinite charity.

In a few moments more, this God of tenderness comes to constitute my food and drink. O, my Father, give us this Bread which nourishes our souls, and for which they are so eager; come, my God, the guests, invited to Thy feast, expect

Thee and desire Thy presence, they hunger for Thee, and Thy holy Mother, herself, exclaims: "*My Son, they have no wine.*" (John, ii. 3.) They have no bread. Yes, my God, we are oppressed by weakness, a burning thirst consumes our souls, and it is for Thee we thirst,—for Thee, Who art the Truth and the Life; for Thee, Who art the Milk and Honey, which flow from the heart of uncreated charity; for Thee, Who art the salutary Fountain, which springs up even to eternal life.

Chalice of salvation, glorious food, come to our hearts, and plant therein a germ of life, which may produce for us a glorious immortality. Support of angels, Bread of life, Bread of love, Bread of eternal charity, Lamb of God, wheat of the elect, mysterious beverage of the city of God, come to strengthen us, come to infuse into our veins all the faith of the first Christians, all the generous courage of the confessors, all the self-denial of the anchorets, all the heroism of the martyrs, all the purity of the virgins, all the virtues of the saints.

Come, O most faithful, most tender, most generous, sincerest of friends; O life of my heart, all that heart desires

Thee! O, my only good, my entire being throbs with joy, for I am about to lose myself, just now, in the abyss of the charity of my God.

O Mary, lead me, thyself, to the table of my God, and present me to thy Jesus. Ah! if it were thy pleasure to introduce me to the banquet-hall thyself, how full of confidence and love would I not feel!

Sweet Virgin! yes, it is with thee I go to cast myself entirely into the arms of thy Jesus; I will open to Him my breast, and breathe within me the essence of Him, Who is the only object of my love. I will unite my heart, with all its affections, to His Divine Heart, and I will tell Him, a thousand times, that He is my only treasure, my blood, my soul, my entire existence, my life, and that I wish for no other life than in Him alone.

But, O my Jesus, I hear Thee, Thyself, invite me to Thy delicious banquet. Oh! do not repeat Thy invitation, for Mary, herself, conducts me to Thy feet. Look graciously on me; penetrate, then, and enter, my poor heart, since such is Thy good pleasure, and plunge it entirely in the ocean of Thy infinite love for me.

Aspirations and Thanksgivings immediately after Communion.

How precious is this moment, when one possesses in his bosom Him, Who forms the happiness of angels, the God of all riches, of all purity, of all light, of all peace, of all goodness, of all strength, of all charity.

We are at the source of all those blessings, let us hasten to participate in them.

Oh, what holy joys, what delightful endearments, what pleasing tears, what ineffable intercourse, are there not in this happy moment !

Sublime and precious interview between God and man.

Mysterious and solemn communication of the Creator with His creature ! Incomprehensible union of our heart with the Heart even of the Almighty !

One loving sentence, if we be unable to speak another. One single sentence, and let us repeat it to Him a thousand times. My Lord and my all ! But Thee alone, O my God. Remain in my soul to receive there its adoration, its homage, its humiliation, its prayers, and its tears.

Remain, my God, remain until the aurora of the final day, even to the close of this life of misery.

Give thanks, my soul, give a thousand thanks to Jesus entombed in thy heart. For a moment He is thy captive. Hasten to profit of it, to importune His love, to urge Him by thy prayers, and attend humbly to all that He wishes from thee, to all that He requires.

O man, reflect that you possess within you the flesh and blood of a God, the flesh and blood of the Lamb without blemish. Give Him thanks for the unlimited blessings He has bestowed on thee. Listen, listen in silence, to what He will say to thee. He is about to give you a new life; He has wonderful, heavenly, revelations to communicate; He wishes to renovate your soul, and to form it over again. He desires to shed in it all the peace of His heaven, all the felicity of His angels, all the charity of His elect. Listen to all He says to you, even to His reproaches and complaints.

O, my soul, speak, then, sincerely to your Jesus, expose to Him your very many frailties; show to Him your poverty, devoid of good, and destitute of virtue.

He is a true, an intimate, and devoted friend, conceal nothing from Him ; He it is Who decks the heavens with splendour, and gives to the earth its charming verdure ; beg of Him to clothe your soul with the robe of innocence and garment of charity.

How touching is Thy tenderness, my God ! How unutterable Thy favours ! how marvellous Thy condescension ! how inexplicable is Thy love ! O, only beloved of my heart ! O, Spouse and desired of my soul ! Ah ! what is it I seek ? But Thee alone.....for with Thee I shall be rich enough. Always, eternally, remain in this sanctuary, which Thou, Thyself, hast chosen, O my God !

We do not give any formula for acts of thanksgiving : let us lay aside our books, O Christians, when we possess Jesus in our hearts. Of what value are sentiments borrowed from others ? Let us express our own to Him. Let us love, and then we may say to Him what we please. Let us love, and we shall know how to thank Him, how we should hear Him, how adore Him,

and how to pray. Let us love.....We have within us the fire of eternal love, and all that flame which consumes, and will consume for ever with its celestial ardour, the seraphim and the angels. Oh, would that we knew how to love.....Poor children that we are, let us expose to God our nakedness and wounds. Let us detail to Him our thousand wants. Let us implore Him for our brethren. Let us weep, bewail, and pray. Let us be prodigal to the God of all love of our thousand resolutions of amendment, of our thousand protestations of affection from a heart entirely filled, entirely penetrated, by His mercies.

One sentence, one single sentence, that cometh from our heart, we may repeat to Him a thousand times over.

FINIS.

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