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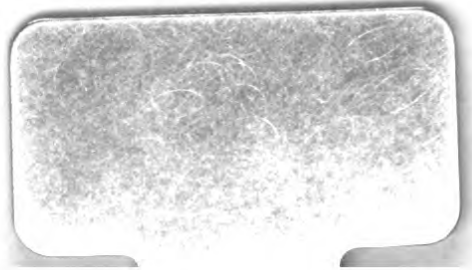
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PIOUS THOUGHTS

Concerning the

KNOWLEDGE

AND

LOVE of GOD,

And other HOLY EXERCISES:

By the late Archbishop of *CAMBRAY*.

Together with a

LETTER

OF

Christian Instruction

By a LADY.

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*Done out of French.*

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*Except ye be converted, and become as little Children,  
ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.  
Matt. xviii. 3.*

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L O N D O N :

Printed for *W. and J. Innys* at the *Prince's  
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# Advertisement.



*THE following Discourses are faithfully extracted from the spiritual Works of the late Archbishop of Cambray, published since his Decease. If the pure and spiritual Religion, equally remote from the two Extremes of Superstition and Enthusiasm, which is therein set forth and recommended, is not sufficient to make them acceptable to the Reader, the Translator could not hope to do it by any prefatory Encomium. He therefore contents himself with promising, that if this small Taste of our Author's Divine Thoughts shall be found*

ADVERTISEMENT.

*found agreeable, and be well accepted, he will soon oblige the Publick with a large Addition of more of 'em.*

*The Christian Instruction, which is here added, was written by an eminently pious Lady, an intimate Friend of the Archbishop's, and of the same Spirit with him.*

*'Tis so very just and solid, so easy and useful, that it wants no Words to illustrate or recommend it.*

*May our Divine Master bless it to all who have Ears to hear, and Hearts to receive it!*



PIOUS



# PIOUS THOUGHTS

Concerning the

## Knowledge and Love of G O D.

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*That G O D is little known at present.*



**T**HAT, which is the most wanting to Men, is the Knowledge of God. When they have read a great deal, they know a certain train of Miracles and Marks of Providence, by the Facts recorded in History; they have made serious Reflections on the Frailty and Corruption of the World; they are even convinc'd of certain Maxims, which are useful for the Reformation of their Manners with regard to future Happiness: But all this

B

Fabrick

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Fabrick wants a Foundation; this Body of Holiness and Christianity is without a Soul. That which should animate the true Believer is the Idea of God, who is all, who does all, and to whom all is due. He is infinite throughout, in Wisdom, in Power, in Love. We must not wonder then if every thing he does carries the mark of Infinity, and surpasses the Reason of Man. When he prepares and disposes any thing, his Counsels and Ways are, as the Scriptures speak \*, as far above our Counsels and Ways as the Heavens are above the Earth; his Power does not show itself by any Labour in the execution of what he has resolv'd, there being no effect how great soever more difficult to him than the most common. It cost him no more pains to draw the Heaven and the Earth, as we now see them, out of nothing, than to make a River run its natural Course, or to let a Stone fall downwards. His whole Power is in his Will: He needs but to will, and the things are immediately accomplish'd. Tho' the Scripture represents him speaking in the Creation, it is not that it was necessary for him to sound forth a Word, which might publish his Will to the whole World, he wou'd produce. That *Speaking* which

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\* *Isa.* lv. v. 9.

*Knowledge and Love of God.* 3

the Scripture represents to us, is all simple and internal; it is the Thought he had conceiv'd to make Things, the Resolution he had form'd within himself. This Thought became fruitful, and without being uttered by him, drew from him, as from the Fountain of all Beings, all those, which compose the Universe. Just so is his Mercy no other than his pure Will; he lov'd us before the Creation of the World; he saw us, he knew us, he prepar'd his good Things for us, he lov'd us and chose us from Eternity. What new Good soever befalls us, flows still from that ancient Source; God never has a new Will concerning us; he never changes; 'tis we who change. When we are just and good, then are we conformable and pleasing to him; when we forsake Righteousness and cease to be good, then we cease also to be conformable to him, and to please him. His Will is an immutable Rule, which the unstable Creature approaches to and wanders from successively. His Justice against the Wicked, and his Love for the Righteous, are but one and the same thing: 'tis the same Goodness which unites with all that's good, and is incompatible with all that's evil. As for Mercy, it is the Goodness of God, who finding us evil,

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would make us good. This Mercy, which we experience in time, is in its original an eternal Love of God for his Creature. He alone gives the true Goodness. Woe to the presumptuous Soul that hopes to find it in itself! It is the Love which God has for us which gives us all. But the greatest of all the Gifts that he can make us, is that Love which we ought to have for him. When God loves us so much as to make us love him, he then reigns in us, he there forms our Life, our Peace, our Happiness, and we already begin to live by his blessed Life. That Love which he has for us bears the Stamp of his Infinity; he loves not as we do, with a bounded and scanty Love: when he loves, all the motions of his Love are infinite. He comes down from Heaven to Earth to seek the Creature of Clay, whom he loves; he becomes Man and Clay with it; he gives it his Flesh to eat. 'Tis by such Prodigies of Love that the infinite Being transcends all the Affections whereof Men are capable. He loves like God; and this Love has nothing in it but what is incomprehensible. 'Tis the height of Folly to attempt by finite Wisdom to measure infinite Love. God, far from losing any thing of his Grandeur by those Excesses of Love,  
does

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does in them shew the Marks of his Greatness, discovering therein the Sallies and transports of an infinite Love. O how great and amiable is he in his Mysteries! but we have not Eyes to see them, nor Hearts dispos'd to discover God in all.



*Of the Necessity of Knowing and Loving*  
G O D.

**W**E must not wonder that Men do so little for God, and that the little they do costs them so dear; they know him not; scarce believe they that he is. The Belief they have of him is rather a blind deference to the Authority of a publick Opinion, than a lively and distinct Conviction of the Divinity: They suppose it, because they dare not examine it, and because, being drawn away by their Passions towards other Objects, they are indifferent upon the Matter; but they have no Notion of God, but as an unknown something, that's marvellous, obscure, and at a great distance from us; they look upon him as a powerful and severe Being, who makes great De-



## 6 *Pious Thoughts concerning the*

mands upon us, who thwarts our Inclinations, who threatens us with mighty Evils, and against whose terrible Judgment it is necessary to take some Precautions. These are the Thoughts of those who reflect seriously on Religion, who are yet but a very small number. Such a one, say they, fears God, and in effect he does but fear him without loving him; as Children fear the Master who corrects them; as a bad Servant fears the Blows of him whom he serves out of Fear, without having any regard to his Interest. Would we be treated by a Son, or even by a Servant, as we treat God? It is because we know him not; for if we knew him, we should love him. God is Love, saith St. *John* †, he that loves him not, knows him not: For how wou'd it be possible to know Love himself, without loving him? We must therefore conclude, that all those who do but fear, know not God.

But who is it, O my God, that shall know thee? He that shall know nothing but thee, that shall know himself no more, and to whom all things besides thee shall be as if they were not. The World wou'd be amaz'd to hear a Language like this, because the World is full of itself, of Vanity, of

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† *Chap. iv. v. 8. and 16.*

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Falshood, and void of God: But I hope there will ever be some Souls who will hunger after God, and who will relish the Truths that I am now going to declare.

O my God, before thou madest the Heaven and the Earth, there was nothing besides thee. Thou wast; for thou never beganst to be; but thou wast alone. Except thee there was yet nothing: thou enjoyedst thy self in that happy Solitude; thou wast sufficient to thy self, and hadst no need to find any thing out of thee, since 'tis thou, who far from receiving from any, givest to every thing, which is not thy self, by thy Almighty Word, that is, by thy simple Will, to which nothing is difficult, and which does whatsoever it pleases, without succession of Time, or any the least Labour. Thou madest this World, which was not, to begin to be. Thou didst not do like the Workmen here below, who find the Materials ready to their Hands, who do but join them together, and whose Art consists in putting into order, by little and little, and with a great deal of Pains, those Materials which they have not made. Thou foundest nothing ready made; thou thy self madest all the Materials of thy Work. It was upon *Nothing* that thou didst work.

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Thou saidst, Let the World be; and the World was. Thou hadst need but to speak, and all was made.

But for what didst thou make all these Things? They were all made for Man, and Man was made for thee. This is thy establish'd Order: Woe to the Soul that inverts it, that desires to appropriate all to itself, and that shuts itself up in its own Being! this is to violate the fundamental Law of the Creation.

No, my God, thou canst not give up thy essential Rights as Creator: this wou'd be for thee to degrade thy self. Thou canst pardon the guilty Soul, that has outrageously offended thee, because thou canst fill it with thy pure Love; but thou canst not cease to be against the Soul that appropriates all thy Gifts to itself, and that refuses to make an offering of itself by a sincere and disinterested Love to its Creator. To fear thee only, this not to offer *self* to thee; it is on the contrary not to think of thee but with regard to *self*. To love thee only for the Advantages to be found in thee; this is still to subordinate thee to *self*, instead of making a Sacrifice of *self* to thee. What then must be done in order to give our selves totally in Homage to the Creator?

We

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We must renounce, forget, lose our selves, espouse thy Interests, O my God, against our own; have no more either Will, or Glory, or Peace, but thine: in a word, it is to love thee without loving our selves.

O how many Souls who depart this Life, full fraught with Virtues and good Works, shall want this perfect Purity, without which none can see God; and who for want of being found in this State of pure and total Sacrifice of the Creature to its Creator, shall have need to be purified by that jealous Fire, which in the other Life consumes every thing that attaches the Soul to itself! Those Souls shall not enter into God till they have entirely quitted themselves. In this Tryal, by an inexorable Justice, all the Remains of Selfishness are the Fuel of that purifying Fire. Alas! how many Souls are there who rely upon their Virtues, and who will not understand what it is to make a perfect Renunciation of themselves! They think this to be a hard Saying, and they are offended at it; but how dear will it cost them to have neglected it! They shall pay a hundred Fold for their selfish Reflections, and the vain Consolations, which they shall not have had the Courage to relinquish.

To return. Such then is the greatness  
of

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of God, that he can do nothing but for himself and for his own Glory. 'Tis this incommunicable Glory of which he is so necessarily jealous, and which he cannot give, as he says himself †, to another. On the other hand, such is the meanness of the Creature, and its dependent Condition, that it cannot without making itself a false Divinity, and without violating the immutable Law of its Creation, do any thing, speak any thing, think any thing, will any thing for itself and for its own Glory.

O *Nothing*, thou wouldst glorify thy self! Thou art not, but upon condition that thou never be any thing in thine own Eyes: thou art not for any other end, but him, who makes thee to be. He owes himself all to himself; thou owest thy self all to him: he can abate nothing of it; whatsoever he should leave thee for thy self would be by Transgression of the inviolable Laws of his Wisdom and Goodness. A single Instant, a single Sigh, allow'd to thy proper Interest independent of the divine Will, would be essentially to oppose the Creator's End in the Creation. He has no need of any thing; but he will have all, because all is his due, and because all is not too much for him, such

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† *Isa. xlii. v. 8.*

*Knowledge and Love of God* 11

is his Greatness. This very Greatness is the reason why he can produce nothing without, but what is totally for himself: 'tis his own good Pleasure which he seeks in the Creature; he has made the Heaven and the Earth for me, but he cannot suffer, that willingly and by choice I make a single Step for any other End but the Accomplishment of his Will. Before he brought forth his Creatures, there was no other Will but his. Shall we think that he has made reasonable Creatures to will otherwise than he does? No, it is the soveraign Reason which should enlighten them and be their Reason: it is his Will, the measure of all good, which ought to will in us; all our Wills ought to make but one and the same with his: therefore it is that we say to him, *Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done.*

The better to comprehend all this, we must represent to our selves, that God, who made us of nothing, does in every instant, so to speak, create us a-new. It no way follows, that, because we were in being yesterday, we must continue to be to day also: we might cease to be; and we should really fall back into the Nothing from whence we came, if the same Almighty Hand which drew us thence did not prevent our sinking.

We

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We are nothing of our selves; we are but just what God makes us to be, and only for the time he pleases: he has but to withdraw his Hand which bears us, to plunge us back into the Abyfs of our Nothing, as a Stone suspended in the Air falls by its own Weight the Moment it ceases to be held. We have then neither Being nor Life but by the Gift of God.

Moreover, there are other Benefits, which being of a more pure and higher Nature, come yet more especially from him. A good Life is still more valuable than Life: Virtue is more precious than Health; Uprightness of Heart and the Love of God are farther above temporal Blessings than the Heavens are above the Earth. If then we are incapable without divine Assistance to enjoy for a single Moment those meaner and coarser Gifts, how much more evidently necessary is it, that those sublime Gifts of his Love, of Dis-engagement from *self*, and of all the Virtues, be entirely owing to his Bounty?

To regard thee then, O my God, as an Almighty Being without us, who gives Laws to all Nature, and who has made whatsoever we behold, this is not to know thee; it is but to know a part of what thou art; 'tis to be ignorant of what is the most marvellous

vellous in thee, and of what the most nearly concerns thy reasonable Creatures. That which transports me, that which softens me into Tenderness is, that thou art the God of my Heart, thou doest there whatsoever thou pleasest. When I am good, it is thou who makest me such: thou not only turnest my Heart according to thy Pleasure, but thou likewise givest me a Heart after thy own. 'Tis thou who lovest thy self in me; 'tis thou who animatest my Soul, as my Soul does my Body: thou art more intimately present to me than I am to my self: this *self* of which I am so tender, and which I have lov'd so much, ought to be in comparison of thee as a Stranger to me: 'tis thou who gavest it to me; without thee it would be nothing: this is the reason why thou wilt have me love thee more than it.

O incomprehensible Power of my Creator! O right of the Creator over the Creature, which the Creature will never sufficiently comprehend! O wonder of Love which God only can effect! God interposes, as I may say, betwixt me and *self*; he divides me from my self: he will be nearer to me by his pure Love than I am to my self: he will have me look upon this *self* as an utter Stranger, he will have me quit the  
narrow



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narrow Bounds of this *self*, he will have me sacrifice it to him without looking back, and return it all entire, and without reserve to the Creator, from whom I receive it. What I am ought to be far less dear to me than he by whom I am. He made me for himself, and not for me, that is, to love him, to will what he wills; and not to love my self in pursuing my own Will. If any one feels his Heart rise against this entire Sacrifice of *self* to him that made us, I deplore his Blindness, I pity to see him his own Slave, and I pray God to deliver him, in teaching him to love without regard to Self-Interest.

O, my God, I discover in those Persons who are offended at thy pure Love, the Darkness and Rebellion which original Sin has caus'd. Thou madest not the Heart of Man with this Inclination to such a monstrous Self-hood. That Uprightness in which the Scripture tells us he was created, consisted only in his not being his own, but in living to him who made us for himself. O Father, Father, thy Children are quite disfigur'd, and resemble thee no more! They are provok'd, they are discourag'd, when but mention is made to them of being thine as thou art thy own. In over-  
turning

turning this Order, which is so just, they foolishly seek to make Deities of themselves: they desire to be their own, to do all for themselves, or at least not to give themselves to thee, but with reserves on certain Conditions, and for their own Interest. O monstrous Selfishness! O Rights of God unknown! O Ingratitude and Insolence of the Creature! Wretched *Nothing*, what hast thou to keep for thy self? What hast thou of thy own? What hast thou that comes not from above, and that ought not to be return'd thither again? All (even to this *self* so injurious, that would divide with God his own Gifts) is a Gift of God made only for himself: every thing that is in thee cries out against thee for the Creator. Be silent then, O Creature, who robbest thy Creator of thee, and restore thee wholly to him.

But, O my God! what a Consolation is it to think, that every thing, whether within or without me, is the Work of thy Hand! Thou art continually with me. When I do evil, thou art within me reproaching me: the Evil I do, inspiring me with regret for the good which I forsake, and pointing me out Mercy, that reacheth forth its Arms to receive me. When I do what is good, 'tis  
thou

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thou who inspirest me with the Desire of it, and who doest it in me; 'tis thou who in my Heart lovest the Good, and hatest the Evil, who sufferest, who prayest, who edifiest my Neighbour, who givest Alms: I do all these Things, but it is by thee; thou makest me do them; thou puttest them in me. These good Works, which are thy Gifts, become my Works, but they are still thy Gifts, and they cease to be good Works, the moment that I look upon them as mine, and that thy Gift, from whence they derive all their Value, is forgotten by me.

Thou art then (and I am ravish'd with the Thought) continually at Work in the very Center of my Being: Invisibly thou workest there, as a Labourer digging Mines in the Bowels of the Earth; Thou do'st all, and the World perceives thee not; it attributes nothing to thee; I my self was once wandring astray in the vain Attempts to find thee at a great Distance from me: I was drawing together in my Mind all the Wonders of Nature, that I might thereby form to my self some Image of thy Greatness; I was going to enquire after thee of thy Creatures; and I never thought of finding thee in the Center of my Heart, where thou never ceasedst to dwell. No, my God,

*Knowledge and Love of God.* 17

we need not dig into the heart of the Earth, nor pass beyond the Seas; we need not, as thy holy Oracles tell us, \* fly up into the Heavens to find thee: thou art nearer to us than we are to our selves.

O God, who art at once so great and so familiar; so exalted above the Heavens, and so proportion'd to the lowness of the Creature; so immense, and so deeply lodg'd in the Center of my Heart; so terrible, and so amiable; so jealous, and so gentle to those who entertain thee with the Familiarity of pure Love; when shall it be that thy own Children shall cease to be unacquainted with thee? Who will give me a Voice loud enough to upbraid the whole World with its Blindness, and, with Authority, to proclaim to it all that thou art? To bid Men seek thee in their own Heart, is to propose to them to seek thee at a much greater distance than the most unknown Parts of the Earth. What is there more unknown, and more remote to the greatest part of Men, vain and thoughtless, than the bottom of their own Heart? Do they know what it is ever to enter into themselves? Have they ever try'd to find the way? Can they so much as imagine what that interior Sanctu-

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\* *Deut.* xxx. 11.

*Rom.* x. 6.

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ary is, that impenetrable Center of the Soul where thou desirest to be ador'd in Spirit and in Truth? They are continually out of themselves among the Objects of their Ambition or Amusement. Alas! how should they understand heavenly Truths, since even earthly ones, as *Jesus Christ* tells us \*, go beyond their Conception? They cannot conceive what it is to enter into themselves by serious Reflections; what would they say then, should we propose to them to come out from thence to lose themselves in God?

As for me, O my Creator, with my Eyes shut to all external Objects, which are but Vanity and Vexation of Spirit †, I will find in the most secret Recess of my Heart an intimate Familiarity with thee by *Jesus Christ* thy Son, who is thy Wisdom and thy eternal Reason, who became a Child, that by his Childhood and the Folly of the Cross he might depreciate our vain and false Wisdom. 'Tis there that I will, whatever it costs me, and in spite of all my Foresights and Reflections, become little, foolish, and still more despicable in my own Eyes, than in those of all the pretended wise. 'Tis there that I will become inebriated with the holy Spirit like the Apostles,

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\* *John* iii. 12.

† *Eccl.* i. 14.

and

and consent, as they, to be made the Laughing-stock of the World.

But who am I to think these things? It is no more I, a Creature mean and frail, a base and sinful Soul; 'tis thou, O *Jesu*, eternal Truth, who thinkest them in me; 'tis thou who wilt perform them, that thy Grace may triumph the more through the greater Unworthiness of the Instrument.

O God, thou art not known, there are none that know who thou art! *The Light shineth in the midst of Darkness, and the Darkness cannot comprehend it* \*. It is by thee we live, we think, we taste Pleasure; and we forget by whom we do them all! We see nothing but by thee the universal Light, the Sun of Souls, who shinest yet more bright than that of Bodies; and whilst we see nothing but by thee, we see not thee! 'Tis thou who givest all; to Stars their Light, to Fountains their Waters and their Course, to the Earth its Plants, to Fruits their Taste, to Flowers their Glory and their Perfume, to all Nature its Richness and its Beauty, Health, Reason, Virtue to Men: thou givest all; thou doest all, thou disposest all: I see nothing but thee;

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\* *John* i. v. 5.

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all the rest disappears as a Shadow before the Eyes of him who has once seen thee; and the World sees thee not! But, alas! he who sees thee not has never yet seen any thing: he has spent his Life in the Illusion of a Dream; he is as if he were not, only yet more wretched; for, as I learn from thy Word, it had been better for him that he had never been born.

For me, my God, where-e'er I go, I find thee always within me. Whatsoever Good I do, 'tis thou who dost it. A thousand times have I experienc'd, that, of myself, I could neither subdue my Temper, nor destroy my Habits, nor moderate my Pride, nor follow my Reason, nor continue to will the Good that I had once will'd. 'Tis thou who givest that Will, who preservest it pure: without thee I am but as a Reed shaken by the smallest Blast. Thou hast given me the Courage, the Uprightness, and all the good Thoughts which I have: thou hast made me a new Heart, that desires thy Righteousness, and that thirsts after thy eternal Truth; in giving me this, thou hast even torn away the Heart of the old Man, made up of Dirt and Corruption, jealous, vain, ambitious, restless, unjust, thirsting after Pleasure. To what Misery was I abandon'd!

don'd! Alas! could I ever have thought; could I ever have hop'd to be thus converted to thee, and to shake off the Yoke of my tyrannical Passions?

But here is the Wonder which eclipses all the rest; who, but thou, could tear me from my self, turn all my Hatred and all my Contempt against my self? It is not I who have done this Work; for it is not by his own Strength that any one gets out of himself: there must have been then some foreign Stay without my own Heart, on which I might support my self, whilst I pronounc'd Sentence against its Wretchedness. This Succour must needs have been foreign, for I cou'd not find it in me, me, against whom I was oblig'd to fight: but it must have enter'd deep too, to tear away the *self* from the most secret lurking Places of my Heart. It is thou, my Lord, who bringing thy Light into the Center of my Soul impene- trable to all others, didst there shew me all my Deformity. I well know, that in seeing I have not chang'd it, and that I am still deform'd in thy Eyes: I well know that my own have not been able to discover all my Ugliness; but at least I have seen a part of it, and I wou'd willingly discover the whole. I see my self frightful, but the hope which



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I have in thee makes me live in Peace. For I will not either flatter my Vices, or let my Vices discourage me. I see them then, and I quietly bear the Reproach. I am for thee, O my God, against my self; none, but thou, cou'd thus make a Division between me and *self*. This is what thou hast done within me, and what thou daily continuest to do, in order to take from me all the Remains of my malignant Life of *Adam*, and to perfect the Formation of the new Man. 'Tis this second Creation of the new Man which is renewed day by day.

I leave my self, O my God, in thy Hands: turn about this Clay, turn it this way and that; give it a Form, then break it to pieces: it is thine; it has nothing to say; 'tis enough that it answers all thy Purposes, and that nothing resisteth thy good Pleasure, for which I am made. Demand, enjoin, forbid; what wilt thou have me to do? What wilt thou have me forbear? exalted, abased, comforted, suffering, employ'd in thy Work, useles in every thing; I shall ever adore thee equally, by sacrificing all self-will to thine; I have nothing left, but in all things to say with *Mary*\*, *Be it unto me according to thy word!*

But whilst thou dost every thing thus within, thou art not less active without. I every where discover, even in the smallest Atom, that mighty Hand which sustains the Heaven and the Earth, and which seems to sport itself in conducting the whole Universe. The only thing which has perplex'd me, is to comprehend how thou leavest so much Evil mingled with the Good. Thou canst not be the Author of Evil: all thy Works are good: whence comes it to pass then that the Face of the Earth is cover'd with Sins and Miseries? The Evil seems every where to prevail over the Good. It was only for thy Glory that thou madest the World, and we are tempted to think that it turns to thy Dishonour. The number of the Wicked exceeds infinitely that of the Good even within thy Church: almost all Flesh has corrupted its way: the good themselves are so but by Halves, and give me cause to sigh almost as much as the others. The whole Creation is in pain, 'tis all in an unnatural State: the Misery equals the Corruption. Why tarriest thou, O Lord, to separate the good from the evil? Hasten thee, give Glory to thy Name; let the Blasphemers learn how great it is. 'Tis a Debt thou owest to thy self to call all things

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back into order. I hear the Impious whisper, that thy Eyes are shut to every thing that passes here below\*. Arise, lift up thy self, tread all thy Enemies under thy Feet.

But, O my God, how profound are thy Judgments! thy Ways are higher above ours than the Heavens are above the Earth†. We are impatient because our Life is but as a Moment; on the contrary, thy Long-suffering is founded on thy Eternity, before whom a thousand Years are but as yesterday when it is past‡. Thou holdest the Times in thy Power, and Men have no Knowledge of them\*\*: they are impatient, they are offended, they look upon thee as sinking under the Violence of Iniquity; but thou laughest at their Blindness and at their mistaken Zeal.

Thou makest me understand that there are two sorts of Evils; one, which Men have done by the ill use they have made of their Liberty, contrary to thy Law, and in which thou hadst no Share; the other, of which thou art the Cause††, and which are truly Blessings, if consider'd with respect to the Punishment and Correction of the Wicked, for which thou appointest them.

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\* *Ezech. viii. 12.*

\*\* *Acts i. 7.*

† *Isa. lv. 9.*

‡ *2 Pet. iii. 8.*

†† *Amos iii. 6.*

Sin is the Evil which proceeds from Man: Death, Diseases, Pains, Shame, and all other Miseries, are the Evils which thou turnest into Blessings, making them a means of repairing the Mischiefs of Sin. As for Sin, O Lord, thou permittest it, that thou mayst leave Man free, and *in the hand of his own Counsel*, as thy Scriptures express it\*. But without being the Author of Sin, what Miracles dost thou not work with it to shew forth thy Glory? Thou makest use of the Wicked to correct the Good, and by humbling, to render them perfect: thou farther makest use of the Wicked against themselves, in punishing them mutually by one another; but, what is chiefly moving and lovely, thou makest the unjust Persecutions of some a means to the Conversion of others. How many Persons are there who were living in the forgetfulness of thy Favours, and in the contempt of thy Law, and whom thou hast brought back to thee, in weaning them from the World by the Injustices they have therein suffered?

But I perceive, O my God, another Wonder; namely, that thou sufferest a mixture of Good and Evil even in the Hearts of those who are the most united to thee: the Im-

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\* *Eccles. xv. 14.*

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perfections which still remain in those good Souls serve to humble them, to loosen them from themselves, to make them feel their own Impotence, to make them run the more ardently to thee, and to make them understand, that Prayer is the Source of all real Virtue. O what abundance of Good dost thou draw out of the Evils which thou hast permitted! Thy only end then in suffering the Evils, is to draw thence the greater Good, and to make thy Almighty Goodness shine forth by the Art with which thou managest those Evils. Thou disposest them according to thy Purposes. Thou art not the Author of Man's Iniquity; but being incapable to cause it, thou only turnest it one way rather than another, according to thy Pleasure, for the executing thy divine Purposes of Justice or of Mercy.

I hear human Reason demanding to enter into Judgment with thee, and to penetrate thy eternal Secrets. God had no need, it says, to draw Good out of Evil: he needed but at once to prevent all Evil, and to make all Men good: he could have done it: he needed but to do for all Men what he has done for some, whom he has ravish'd out of themselves by the Charm of his Grace; why has he not done it?

*Knowledge and Love of God.* 27

O my God! I know from thy holy Word\*, *Thou hatest nothing that thou hast made, thou desirest not the Destruction of any; thou art the Saviour of all*, but thou art so of some more than of others. When thou shalt judge the Earth, thou shalt be victorious in thy Judgment: the Creature condemned shall see nothing but Equity in its Condemnation: thou shalt clearly show it, that thou hast done all to cultivate thy Vineyard which thou oughtest to have done. It is not thou who art wanting to it, it is wanting to itself, it destroys itself. Man sees not now all these things in particular; for he's unacquainted with his own Heart; he discerns neither the Graces that are offer'd him, nor his own Dispositions, nor his internal Resistance. In thy Judgment thou wilt lay him all open to his own Eyes: he shall see himself, he shall be terrified at the Sight, he shall not be able to avoid seeing in an eternal Despair what thou shalt have done for him, and what he shall have done against himself.

This is what Man understands not in this Life: but, O my God, the Moment that he knows thee, he ought to believe this Truth, tho' he does not comprehend it;

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\* *Wisd.* xi. 25.    2 *Pet.* iii. 9.    1 *Tim.* iv. 10.

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he cannot doubt but that thou art, thou, by whom all things exist; he cannot doubt but that thou art the sovereign Goodness: it remains then only for him to conclude, in spite of all the Dark-ness that furrounds him, that, in being favourable to some, thou dost Justice to all; much more, thou bestowest Favour, even upon those who shall for ever feel the Rigour of thy Justice. True it is, the Graces thou givest to some are not always equally great with what thou givest to others; but, in fine, thou givest them Graces, and Graces that shall render them inexcusable, when thou shalt judge them, or rather when they shall judge themselves, and that the Truth imprinted in their Hearts shall pronounce their Condemnation. 'Tis true, thou mightest have done more for them; 'tis true, it has not been thy Will so to do; but thou hast will'd every thing that was necessary to avoid being charg'd with their Ruin; thou hast permitted it, thou hast not been the Cause of it; if they have been wicked, it is not for want of thy giving them wherewith to be good; they themselves have not been willing; thou hast left them in their Liberty; who can complain of thee for not giving them a more than abundant Grace? The  
Master

Master who offers to all his Servants the just Reward of their Labour, has he not a Right to be more liberal to some Particulars? What he gives above the measure to these, does it afford the least ground to the others to complain of him? Hereby, O Lord, thou shewest, that as the Scriptures speak\*, *All thy ways are verity and judgment.* Thou art good to all, but good in different Degrees; and the Mercies which with more uncommon Profusion thou sheddest abroad upon some, are not a rigid Law by which thou obligest thy self to bestow the same Bounty on all others.

Hold thy Peace then, O ungrateful and rebellious Creature! thou, who this moment thinkest on the Gifts of God, remember that this very Thought is a Gift of God: in the Instant that thou art murmuring at the want of his Grace, it is Grace itself that gives thee the Attention to consider his Gifts. Far from murmuring against the Author of all Blessings, hasten to make Advantage of those which in this moment he bestows upon thee: open thy Heart, humble thy feeble Mind, sacrifice thy vain and presumptuous Reason: Vessel of Clay, he who made thee has a right to dash thee in pieces;

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\* *Pf.* xxiv. 10. lxxxviii. 15.



30 *Pious Thoughts concerning the*

and far from doing it, behold he is afraid of being obliged to break thee : he threatens thee out of Mercy.

For ever then, O my God! will I stifle all Reasonings in my Heart which tempt me to call in question thy Goodness. I know that thou canst never be otherwise than good; I know that thou madest thy Work like thy self, righteous, just and good, as thou art; but thou woud'st not take from it the choice of Good and Evil: thou offerest it the good; that's sufficient. I am sure of this, tho' I know not by what means; but the immutable and infallible Idea which I have of thee not suffering me to doubt of it, I cannot have any reason so strong to think thee in fault with respect to any Man, whose Heart I know not, and whose Heart is not known to himself, as those are which I have without number to be assured, that that thou wilt never condemn any Man till thou hast render'd him inexcusable in his own Eyes. Here's enough to make me sit down in Peace: if after that I perish, 'tis because I shall destroy my self, and, like the *Jews*, shall resist the Holy Spirit, which is the internal Grace.

O Father of Mercy! I have no more any thought to philosophize upon Grace, but to  
abandon

abandon my self to it in Silence; 'tis Grace that does all in Man, but it does all with him and by him; 'tis then with it that I must act and must forbear, that I must suffer, must wait, must resist; that I must believe, must hope, must love: in following all its Impressions, it will do all in me, and I shall do all by it. 'Tis Grace which moves the Heart; but, in fine, the Heart is mov'd, and thou savest no Man without making him act. Thus then it is my Business to labour without losing a moment, that I may not stop that Grace which pushes me on continually: all the Good comes from it; all the Evil comes from me: when I do well, 'tis Grace which animates me: when I do ill, 'tis because I resist it. God forbid that I should desire to know more about it; all the rest wou'd but serve to nourish in me a presumptuous Curiosity. Keep me, O my God! for ever in the order of thy little ones, to whom thou revealest thy Mysteries, whilst thou hidest them from the wise and prudent of the World.

Now, O great God! I am no longer puzzled at this Difficulty which has often struck my Mind; whence comes it to pass that so good a God has made so many Men whom he suffers to perish? whence comes it  
that

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that he has made his own Son to be born and to die, so that his Birth and his Death are useful but to so small a number of Men? I comprehend, O Almighty Being, that whatsoever thou doest, it costs thee nothing: the Things which we admire, and which are the farthest above our reach, are as easy and common to thee as those are which we admire less, from our being more accustomed to them. Thou hast no need to proportion the Fruit of thy Labour to the Charges of the Work, because no Work whatsoever costs thee either Effort or Labour; and that the only Fruit, thou can't reap from thy Works, is the Accomplishment of thy own good Pleasure: thou hast no need of any thing; thou can't acquire nothing; thou hast all within thy self; what thou doest without thee, is no way necessary either for thy Happiness, or for thy Glory. Thy Glory then wou'd not be diminish'd, tho' not a Man receiv'd the Benefit of the Redeemer's Death. Thou could'st have made him come into the World for a single Soul whom thou hadst predestinated; one alone had been sufficient, if thou wou'd'st have had but one; for thou do'st all, that thou do'st, not for the need thou hast of the Things, or for their Merit at thy Hands,  
but

but to accomplish thy own free Will, which has no other Rule but it self. Finally, if so many Men perish, tho' wash'd in the Blood of thy Son, it is, once more, that thou leavest them in the use of their Liberty; thou art glorified in them by thy Justice, as thou art in the Good by thy Mercy; thou punishest not the Wicked, but because they are wicked in spite of thee, tho' they had the means to be good; and thou crownest not the Good, but because they are become such by thy Grace: Thus I see that in thee all is Justice and Mercy.

As for all external Evils, O eternal Wisdom, I have already remark'd what it is, that makes thee permit them. Thy Providence draws thence the greatest Blessings. Men, weak and unacquainted with thy ways, are offended at them; they sigh for thee, as if thy Cause was forsaken; they are ready to believe that thou art sinking, and that Impiety triumphs over thee; they are tempted to think either that thou seest not what passes, or that thou art not touch'd therewith. But let these blind and impatient Men yet wait a little while. The ungodly which triumph, shall not triumph long, they wither as the Grass in the  
D Field,

34 *Pious Thoughts concerning the*  
Field \*, which flourishes in the Morning,  
and in the Evening is trodden under Foot :  
Death reduces all to Order. Thou art in no  
haste to overwhelm thy Enemies ; thou art  
patient, as the holy *Austin* says, because thou  
art eternal ; thou art sure of the Stroke  
that shall crush them ; thou holdest thine  
Arm a long time lifted up, because thou  
art a Father, because thou never strikest  
but with Reluctance, in Extremity, and be-  
cause thou well knowest the Weight of thy  
Arm. Let then impatient Men be offend-  
ed ; as for me, I look upon whole Ages as  
a single Minute ; for I know that they are  
less than a Minute in thy Sight. That Suc-  
cession of Ages, which we call the Duration  
of the World, is no more than a Scene that's  
just going to disappear, a Figure that passes,  
and is ready to vanish away. Yet a little  
while, O ye that can see nothing, yet a lit-  
tle while, and ye shall see what God is pre-  
paring ; ye shall see him himself holding  
his Enemy's under his Feet. What ? Ye  
think this terrible looking for to be at too  
great a distance ! Alas, it is but too near  
for so great a Number of Wretches ! Then  
shall the Good and Evil be separated for

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\* *Psal.* xxxvi. 2.

ever, and then, as the Scripture saith, shall be the time for every thing\*.

In the mean while, whatsoever befalls us, it is thou, O my God, who dost it, and who dost it for our good. In Eternity we shall see by thy Light, that what we desir'd to have would have been fatal to us, and that what we wish'd to avoid was essential to our Happiness.

O deceitful Pleasures. I will never call you Pleasures, since you only serve to make us wicked and unhappy! O Crosses, laid upon me by God, and which cowardly Nature thinks too great a Load, you, that the blind World calls Evils; you shall never be so esteem'd by me! Rather had I never speak than talk this cursed Language of the Children of the World: You are my real Blessings; 'tis you that humble me, that set me free, that make me feel my Misery, and the Vanity of every thing that I was desirous of loving here below. For ever blessed be thou, O God of Truth, who hast nail'd me to the Cross with thy Son, that I might be made conformable to the eternal Object of thy Delights.

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\* *Eccl. iii. 17.*

### 36 *Pious Thoughts concerning the*

Let no one then tell me, that God observes not so narrowly what passes among Men: Ye blind, who thus talk, ye know not even what God is. Seeing every thing, that is, is only by the Communication of his infinite Being, seeing every thing that has Intelligence has it only by an Emanation from his sovereign Reason, and seeing every thing that acts, acts only by the Impression of his supreme Activity; it is he who does all in all; it is he who in every Moment of our Life is the Animation of our Heart, the Motion of our Limbs, the Light of our Eyes, the Understanding of our Mind, the Soul of our Soul: All that is in us, Life, Action, Thought, Will, is caus'd by the Impression of that eternal Power, and Life, and Thought, and Will.

How then, O my God, cou'dst thou be ignorant of that in us, which thou there dost thy self? How cou'dst thou be indifferent about the Evils, that are only committed by the internal Resistance, which is made to thee, and about the Good which we no longer do, but whilst thou takest pleasure to do it thy self in us? This Attention costs thee no pains: Shouldst thou cease to have it, all wou'd perish; there wou'd no more be any Creature able either to  
will,

will, to think, or to subsist. O how far are Men from knowing their own Impotence and *Nothing*, thy Power, and thy Action without bounds, when they imagine that to be attentive and at work in so many Places wou'd make thee weary? The Fire burns wheresoever it is, and of so active and devouring a Nature is it, that, to make it cease to burn, it must be extinguish'd and annihilated: So in God all is Action, Life, and Motion: He is a consuming Fire \*, as he says himself: Wherever he is, he does all, and as he is every where, he does every thing in all Places. He brings forth, as we have seen, a perpetual Creation of all Bodies, a Creation continually renewed: No less does he in every Instant create all free and intelligent Creatures; 'tis he who gives them Reason, Will, Good-will, the different Degrees of Conformity of Will to his own; for he gives, as *St. Paul* says, to will and to do †.

This is then, O my God, what thou art, or at least this is what thou dost in thy Works: For none can approach that Source of Glory which dazles our Eyes, to comprehend all that thou art in thy self.

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\* *Heb.* xii. 29.

† *Phil.* ii. 13.



38 *Pious Thoughts concerning the*

But, in fine, thou makest me comprehend and know clearly, that thou employest even the Evils and Imperfections of the Creatures to bring about the Good which thou hast determined. Thou hidest thy self under the unseasonable Visitor to molest the impatient Believer, jealous of his Liberty in following his Employments, and who therefore wants to be disturbed, that he may die to the pleasure of being free and methodical in his good Works. It is thou, my God, who makest use of flandering Tongues to wound the Reputation of the Innocent, who stand in need of adding to their Innocence the Sacrifice of their Reputation, which they too dearly love. It is thou, who by the evil Offices and malicious Contrivances of the Envious, overturnest the good Fortune and Prosperity of thy Servants, whose Affections are still engaged to that vain Prosperity. 'Tis thou, who hurriest to the Grave those Persons, to whom Life is a continual Danger, and Death a Grace which puts them in Security. 'Tis thou, who makest the Death of these Persons a Medicine, exceeding bitter indeed, but exceeding salutary for those, who were tied to them by too ardent and too tender a Friendship; thus the same Stroke which  
snatches

snatches away the one to save him, sets the other free, and prepares him for his own Death by the Death of those who were the dearest to him. Thus, O my God, dost thou mercifully sprinkle Bitterness upon every thing, that is not thy self, that so our Hearts, which are form'd to love thee, and to live upon thy Love, may be constrained, as it were, to return unto thee, whilst they experience that no Support is to be found elsewhere.

The reason of this, O my God, is, that thou art all Love, and by Consequence all Jealousy. O jealous God (for it is the Name thou givest thy self) a divided Heart provokes thee, but thou hast pity on a Heart astray. Thou art Infinite throughout, in Love, as in Wisdom, and in Power. When thou lovest, thou lovest like God; thou movest Heaven and Earth to save that which is dear to thee: thou becomest Man, a Child, the least of Men, fill'd with Reproaches, dying amidst the Ignominy and Pains of the Cross; all this is not too much for Love, for Love, that's infinite in loving. A finite Love, a limited Wisdom, can never comprehend it: But how shou'd finite comprehend what's infinite? It has neither Eyes to see it, nor a Heart proportion'd to conceive it. The base and nar-

40 *Pious Thoughts concerning the*

row Heart of Man, and his vain Wisdom, are offended at it, and they discern not God in this Excess of Love: For me, I know him by this Mark of Infinite: 'Tis this Love which is the Cause of all, even of the Evils which we suffer: By the Evils it is that it prepares the real Blessings for us.

But when shall we return Love for Love? When shall we seek after him, who seeks after us, and who bears us in his Arms? 'Tis within his tender and fatherly Bosom that we forget him: 'Tis through the Sweetness of his Gifts that we cease to think of him: What he gives us every Moment, instead of tenderly affecting, does but serve to amuse us. He is the Fountain of all Pleasures; the Creatures are but the rough cast Channels; and the Chanel makes us count the Source for nothing. His immense Love pursues us every where, and we continually get away from its Pursuits! He is every where, and we see him no where! We think our selves alone when we have none but him: He does all, and we rely not upon him in any thing! We think our Affairs to be all desperate, when we have no resource left us, but what his Providence can furnish, as if Infinite and  
Almighty

*Knowledge and Love of God* 41

Almighty Love was able to do nothing!  
O monstrous Folly, O Subversion of the  
whole Man! No, I will speak no more,  
the bewilder'd Creature provokes our Re-  
mains of Reason, it is not to be born with.

Yet thou, O Love, thou bearest with it,  
thou waitest upon it with a Patience with-  
out end, and even seemest by thy Excess of  
Patience to indulge our Ingratitudes! Even  
those who desire to love thee, love thee  
only for themselves, for their Comfort, or  
their Security. Where are those that love  
but thee alone? Where are those that love  
thee, because they were made for no other  
End but that? Where are they? I see not  
one. Are there any such upon Earth? O  
make some, if there be none. To what  
purpose does the whole World subsist, if we  
love not thee, and if we love thee not so  
as to lose our selves in thee? This was thy  
Intention in producing without thee what  
is not thy self; thy Design was to create Be-  
ings, who holding all from thee should de-  
vote themselves only to thee.

O my God, O Love, love thy self in me,  
so shalt thou be lov'd as thy Loveliness de-  
serves. I will not subsist, but to spend my  
self in thy Presence, as a Lamp continually  
burns before thy Altars. I am not for my  
self;

self: There is nothing for itself but thou alone: Nothing for me, all for thee; it is not too much. I am jealous of my self for thee against my self. May I rather perish than suffer that the Love which ought to tend to thee should ever be turn'd back upon my self. Love, O Love, love in thy feeble Creature, love thy own Sovereign Beauty. O Goodness infinite! O Love unbounded! burn, consume, transport, annihilate my Heart, make it a perfect Sacrifice.



*Advice concerning Prayer, &c.*

I. **T**HE most excellent Prayer is no other thing than the Love of God. The Excellency of this Prayer consists not in the Multitude of the Words which we pronounce; for without having any need of our Words, God is thoroughly acquainted with our Thoughts. The true Petition then is that of the Heart, and the Heart petitions not but by its Desires. *To pray* then, is to desire; but it is to desire what God would have us desire. He who *desires* not from the bottom of his Heart offers a  
deceitful

deceitful Prayer. Tho' he should pass whole Days in reciting of Prayers, or in meditating, or in stirring himself up to pious Thoughts, yet he does not truly pray, unless he desires what he asks for.

II. O how few People are there who pray! For where are those who desire the real Blessings? These Blessings are outward and inward Crosses, Humiliations, the renouncing of their own Will, Death to themselves, the Establishment of God's Kingdom upon the Ruins of Self-love; not to desire these things is not to pray: If we would pray, we must desire them seriously, in earnest, constantly, and with regard to every Circumstance of Life; Prayer is otherwise but an Illusion, like a fine Dream, wherein a miserable Wretch rejoices in the imagin'd Possession of a Felicity, that is very far from him. Alas, how many Souls are there full of themselves, and of an imaginary Desire of Perfection in the midst of all their voluntary Imperfections, who have never pray'd this true Prayer of the Heart! It was upon this Principle that St. *Austin* said, *He who loves little, prays little; he who loves much, prays much.*

III. On the other hand, we never cease to pray, so long as we continue to have the  
true

true Love, and the true Desire in the Heart. Love hidden in the inmost part of the Soul prays without respite, even in the time when the Mind cannot be in an actual Attention. God never ceases to look upon the Desire which he himself has form'd in this Soul, and which it does not always perceive itself. This Desire in the Disposition and Bent of the Soul touches the Heart of God: It is a secret Voice which continually draws down his Mercies; 'tis that Spirit which, as St. Paul says, *groaneth in us with Groanings that cannot be uttered, he helpeth our Infirmities* \*.

IV. This Love sollicit God to give us what we want, and to consider less our Frailty than the Sincerity of our Intentions. This Love even wipes out our lesser Failings, and purifies us as a consuming Fire; *it asks in us, and for us, that which is according to the Will of God* †. For not knowing what is fit to ask, we shou'd oftentimes ask what wou'd be hurtful to us; we should ask for certain Fervours, certain pleasing Sensations, and seeming Perfections, which would only serve to nourish in us the natural Life, and a Confidence in our own Strength;

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\* Rom. viii. 26.

† Rom. viii. 15,

whereas

whereas this Love, in blinding us, in delivering us up to all the Operations of Grace, and in putting us into a State of Resignation to every thing that God shall think fit to do in us, disposes us for all his secret Designs.

V. 'Tis then we consent to every thing, and we will nothing. What God shall think fit to give us is precisely what we have desir'd; for we will every thing that he wills, and nothing farther. Thus this State includes all Prayer. It is an Operation of the Heart which comprehends in it all Desire. *The Spirit asketh in us* that which the Spirit itself will give us. When we are busied about things without, and that we suffer an unavoidable Distraction by the Employments in which pure Providence engages us, even then we always carry within us a Fire, that never goes out, and that on the contrary nourisheth a secret Prayer, which is like a Lamp continually lighted before the Throne of God. *If we sleep, our Heart waketh* \*. *Blessed are those whom the Lord shall find watching* †.

VI. In order to preserve this Spirit of Prayer which must unite us to God, we

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\* Cant. v. 2.

† Luke xii. 37.



ought principally to observe two things; the one is to nourish it; the other to avoid what might make us lose it.

That which can nourish it, is, 1. A regular Method of reading. 2. Actual Prayer at certain Times. 3. Frequent Recollection during the Day. 4. Retirement from the World when we feel a want of it, or when it is advised us by experienced Persons, whom we consult. 5. And lastly, the frequenting the Sacraments proportionably to our State.

VII. That which may make us lose the Spirit of Prayer, ought to fill us with Fear, and to keep us very cautiously upon our Guard. Thus we must avoid, 1. Prophane Company which distracts too much. 2. The Pleasures which raise the Passions. 3. Every thing which awakens our Relish of the World, and the old Inclinations that have been fatal to us.

The Particulars of these two things are numberless, and we can only touch upon them in general, because each Person has his peculiar Wants.

VIII. To nourish this Spirit of Prayer, we must chuse such Books as instruct us in our Duties, and in our Defects; which in shewing us the Greatness of God, at the same time

time teach us what we owe to him, and discover to us how far we are from satisfying the Obligation: For we have no business with a barren sort of reading by which our Heart may be melted and overflow as at some moving Spectacle; *the Tree must bring forth Fruits* \*, and we can never believe the Root to be alive, but as far as it shews itself so to be by its Fruitfulness.

IX. The first Effect of sincere Love is a desire to know every thing we ought to do to content the belov'd of our Heart: To do otherwise, is to love our selves under the Pretence of loving God; 'tis to seek in him a vain and deceitful Consolation; 'tis to desire to make God a means to our own Pleasure, and not to sacrifice our selves to his Glory. God forbid that his Children should love him after this manner. We must know and practise every thing, without reserve, that he demands of us, whatever it may cost us.

X. For the time of Prayer, it must be regulated by the Leisure, State, Disposition, and attractive Grace of each Person.

Meditation is not Prayer, but it is the essential Foundation of it. It is of use to

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\* *Matt. vii. 17.*

fill our Minds with the Truths, that God has revealed. We must therefore be thoroughly acquainted not only with all the Mysteries of *Jesus Christ*, and the Truths of his Gospel, but likewise with every thing that those Truths ought personally to imprint in us for our Regeneration: These Truths must penetrate us for a long time, as the Colour by little and little sinks into the Wool, that is to be dyed.

XI. These Truths must become familiar to us, infomuch that by seeing them near and at all times, we may be accustomed to judge no more of any thing, but by them: They must be our only Light for judging in what concerns our Practice, as the Rays of the Sun are our only Light for perceiving the Figure and Colour of all Bodies.

When these Truths have, so to speak, thus incorporated themselves into us, 'tis then that our Prayer becomes real and fruitful: 'Till then it was but the Shadow of Prayer: We thought that we thoroughly understood these Truths, and we saw no farther than the outward Shell. All our most tender and lively Sentiments, all our firmest Resolutions, all our clearest and most distinct Notions were but a poor and unform'd Bud of what God discloses in us.

XII. When

XII. When his divine Light begins to enlighten us, we then see in the true Light; there is then no Truth but what we acquiesce in, the Moment it is discovered to us; as we have no need of reasoning to acknowledge the Brightness of the Sun from the very Instant that it rises and strikes our Eyes. Our Union then with God in Prayer must be the Fruit of Fidelity in following all his Will. It is thence that we may judge of our Love for him.

XIII. Our Meditation must become every Day more profound and intimate; I say *profound*, because when we meditate humbly upon these Truths, we dive deeper and deeper therein for the discovering of new Treasures: I add *intimate*, because, as we dig farther and farther to enter into these Truths, so these Truths likewise still penetrate more and more into us, that they may enter into the very Substance of our Soul. 'Tis then that a single word quite simple enters farther than entire Discourses.

XIV. The same things which a hundred times we had heard coldly, and without any Fruit, nourish the Soul with a hidden Manna, in which we taste infinite Pleasures for several Days together. In fine, we must take great care that we don't discontinue

to feed our selves with certain Truths by which we have been touch'd, so long as there remains in them any Nourishment for us: While they have any thing farther to give us, 'tis a certain Sign that we have need to receive from them; they nourish us oftentimes even without any particular and distinct Instruction: It is an unknown something, that operates more than all reasoning: We see a Truth, we love it, we repose in it, it fortifies the Heart, it disengages us from our selves; we must dwell upon it in Peace, as long as we are able.

XV. For the manner of meditating, it ought neither to be too refin'd, nor full of great Reasonings. Reflections that are simple, natural, and immediately flowing from the Subject on which we meditate, are what we should make use of.

We must meditate but few Truths, and consider them at leisure, without Labour, without seeking for extraordinary Thoughts.

We should consider no Truth, but with respect to the Practice: To fill our Minds with a Truth, without taking all necessary Measures to follow it faithfully, whatever it may cost us, is to desire \* *to hold the*

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\* Rom. i. 18.

*Truth in Unrighteousness*, as *St. Paul* expresses it; 'tis to resist that Truth imprinted in us, and by Consequence the Holy Ghost \*, which is the most dreadful of all Infidelities.

XVI. For the Method of praying, it shou'd depend on the Experience we have therein. Those who find themselves well in the Use of an exact Method, ought not to quit it: Those who cannot subject themselves to it, ought yet to respect what is useful to others, and what has been so much recommended by so many pious and experienced Persons. But, in fine, as Methods are made to assist, and not to embarrass, when they happen to be rather a Hindrance than an Aid, we must leave them off.

XVII. The most natural Method in the beginning, is to take a Book, which we must quit as soon as we find our selves recollected by the Passage we have read, and to take it up again when that Passage furnishes no more for our spiritual Nourishment. In general it is certain, that though Truths which we relish most, and which afford us a certain practical Light for the things we have to sacrifice to God, are

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\* *Acts* vii. 5.

those, in which God discovers to us an Attraction of Grace, which we must follow without Hesitation. *The Spirit bloweth where he listeth* \*. *Where the Spirit is, there is Liberty* †.

Our Reflections and Reasonings afterwards diminish by little and little. Affectionate Sentiments, moving Considerations, fervent Desires augment: The reason is, we are sufficiently instructed and convinc'd by the Operations of the Mind: The Heart relishes Truth, is nourish'd, warm'd, inflam'd, one word is enough to employ us a long time.

XVIII. In fine, Prayer goes always on increasing by Views more simple and fix'd; so that we have no longer any need of such a Multitude of Objects and Considerations. We are with God as with a Friend. At first we have a thousand things to say to our Friend, and a thousand to ask of him: But in time all this Matter of Conversation is drain'd, and yet the pleasure of the Intercourse cannot cease. We have said all; but without speaking we take pleasure to be together, to see each other, to find that we are near each other, to repose our selves

\* *John* iii. 8.† *2 Cor.* iii. 17.

in the Satisfaction of a sweet and pure Friendship: We are silent, but in this Silence we hear and understand each other. We know our selves to be agreed in every thing, and that our two Hearts make but one; the one pours itself forth continually into the other.

XIX. 'Tis thus that the Intercourse with God in Prayer comes at length to a simple and familiar Union, which is beyond all Discourse. But it is God, who by himself alone must make this sort of Prayer in us: And nothing wou'd be more rash and dangerous, than to attempt to intrude our selves into it. We must let our selves be conducted step by step by some Person who is acquainted with the ways of God, and who settles for a long time the immoveable Foundations of an exact Instruction, and of an entire Death to *self* in every thing that regards our Practice.

XX. For Retirements and frequenting the Sacraments, we must govern our selves by the Advice of the Person we confide in. We must consider our Wants, the Effect which the Communion produces in us, and many other Circumstances peculiar to each Person.



XXI. Retirements depend on our Leisure, and the need we have of them. I say the *need*; for in nourishing the Soul, we must act as in nourishing the Body: When we can't go through a Work without a certain Nourishment, we must take it; otherwise we run the hazard of fainting. I add the *Leisure*; for except in the case of this absolute want of Nourishment, which we have mentioned, we must fulfil the Duties of our Station, rather than follow the Fervour of our Disposition. A Man who is engag'd to the Publick, and who shou'd spend the time allotted for the Exercise of his Function in meditating in Retirement, would be wanting in his Duty to God, while he imagin'd to unite himself to him. The true Union with God, is to do his Will without Intermision, and to do it in spight of all his natural Disrelish; in all the most irksom and painful Duties of his State and Condition.

XXII. As for the Precautions to be taken against Distractions in general, they are these. We must avoid all Intercourses of Continuance and Confidence with Persons, whose Maxims are contrary to Piety, and especially when those contagious Maxims have heretofore seduc'd us. They will easily

fily open again our Wounds; they have even a secret Intelligence within our Heart; we have there a soothing, flattering Counsellor always ready to blind, and to betray us.

XXIII. Wou'd you judge of a Man, faith the Holy Spirit, *observe who are his Friends*\*. How can he who loves God, and who desires to love nothing else but for his sake, chuse such for his intimate Friends, who neither love nor know God, and who look upon his Love as a Weakness? A Heart that's full of God, and that feels its own Frailty, can it ever be at rest, and at ease in the Company of those, who think in nothing as it does, and who are every Moment in a Condition to rob it of all its Treasure? The Taste of such Persons, and that which is given by Faith, are incompatible.

XXIV. I know very well that we cannot, and even that we ought not to break with certain Friends, to whom we are engag'd, by our Esteem of their good natural Qualities, by their Services to us, by the Bond of a sincere Friendship, or lastly, by the outward Decency of a polite and

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\* *Ecclus.* xiii. 20.

virtuous Commerce. We cut our Friends to the quick, after a very dangerous manner, when we discontinue altogether a certain Familiarity and Confidence of which they have been in Possession. But without breaking abruptly, and without declaring our Coldness, we may find easy and imperceptible ways of tempering this Intercourse. We see them in private; we distinguish them from half Friends; we open our Heart to them upon certain things, where worldly Probity and Friendship are sufficient to put them in a Capacity to give prudent Counsels, and to think as we do, tho' we think the same things with them upon Motives more pure and more exalted. In fine, we serve them, and we do them all the good Offices of a cordial Friendship, without giving up our Heart.

XXV. Without this Precaution, all is in danger, and if from the very beginning we don't get the upper Hand to make ourselves free and independent of these prophane Friends in the Practice of our Piety, it is a Piety that threatens an approaching Fall. If a Man that is beset with such Friends is frail by his natural Temper, and if his Passions are easily inflam'd, it is certain that even his sincerest Friends will  
be.

be those who will again entangle him. They are, if you please, good-natur'd, Men of Worth, full of Fidelity, and of every thing that, according to the World, renders Friendship perfect: 'Tis no matter, their Conversation is infectious. The more amiable they are, the more to be fear'd. As for those who have none of these valuable Qualities, we must give them up; too happy! that such a Sacrifice, which ought to cost us so little pain, shou'd be worth to us so precious a Security for our eternal Salvation.

XXVI. Besides that we must chuse with great Carefulness the Persons we see; we must likewise reserve the necessary Hours for seeing God only in Prayer. Those who are in considerable Employments have so many indispensable Duties to fulfil, that they have but very little of their Time remaining to be with God, unless they apply themselves diligently to manage it well. If they have but never so small an Inclination to Amusement, the Time destin'd for God and their Neighbour is entirely lost.

We must then be firm in setting ourselves a Rule. A rigid Strictness in observing it seems excessive; but without it all falls into Confusion: We become dissipated; we relax; we lose our Strength; we insensibly

sibly wander from God; we give our selves up to our Inclinations; and we begin not to be aware of our being gone astray, till we are got so far out of the way, that we dare hope no more ever to find it again.

Let us then pray, let us pray without ceasing. Prayer is our only Safety. *Blessed be the Lord who hath not withdrawn my Prayer, nor his Mercy from me* \*. To be faithful to Prayer, we must be faithful to regulate all the Employments of the Day with a Firmness that is never to be shaken.



*Of Aridity and Distractions in Prayer.*

**W**E are tempted to think that we pray no longer than while we continue to taste a certain Pleasure in Prayer. To undeceive our selves, we must consider that perfect Prayer, and the Love of God, are the same thing.

Prayer then is neither a sweet Sensation, nor the Charm of an inflam'd Imagination,

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\* *Psal.* lxvi. 20.

nor the Light of the Understanding, which discovers with Facility sublime Truths in God, nor even a certain Consolation in beholding God: All these are extraneous Gifts, without which Love may subsist, and is so much the more pure, as being deprived of all these things, which are but the Gifts of God, we adhere solely and immediately to God himself.

This is the *Love of pure Faith*, which makes Nature desolate, because it leaves it no Support: It thinks that all is lost; and it is thereby that all is gain'd.

*Pure Love* is in the Will only; so that it is not a Love that may be sensibly felt, for the Imagination has no share in it. It is a Love that loves without feeling, as pure Faith believes without seeing. We must not fear that this Love is imaginary; for nothing is less so than the Will disengag'd from all Imagination: The more purely intellectual and spiritual our Operations are, the more they have not only of the Reality, but of the Perfection which God requires: The Operation then of it is the more perfect on that Account; at the same time Faith is exercis'd, and Humility preserv'd in it.

'Tis then that Love is chaste ; for it is God in himself, and for himself, and not the Pleasure he makes us feel to which we cleave ; we follow him, but it is not for the multiply'd Loaves.

What, will it be said, does the whole of Piety consist only in a Will to unite ourselves to God, which perhaps shall be rather a Thought, or an Imagination, than a real Will ?

If this Will is not sustain'd by Fidelity, in the principal Occasions, I shall think that it is not real ; for the good Tree bringeth forth good Fruits : And this Will should produce an Attention to accomplish the divine Will ; but in this Life it is compatible with little Frailties, which God leaves in the Soul to humble it ; if then we experience only those daily Frailties, we must gather thence the Fruit of Humiliation without losing Courage.

But, in fine, true Virtue and pure Love are in the Will only. Is it not a great deal to will always the sovereign Good as soon as we perceive it ? To return our Intention towards it the Moment we remark its having declin'd from it ? Never to will any thing deliberately, but according to its Order, and in fine, to continue submitted in a Spirit of Sacrifice and Resignation to it,  
when

when we have no more any sensible Comfort. Do you count it for nothing to cut off all the unquiet Reflections of Self-love; to walk always without seeing where we go, and without stopping; never to think with Complacency upon *self*, or at most to think of it only as one wou'd think of another Person, for the fulfilling a Duty in the Order of Providence in the present Moment, without looking farther? Is it not this which gives Death to the old Man, sooner than all the beautiful Reflections, wherein Self-love still engages us in Self-occupation; and sooner than many external Performances by which we should be carried to bear Testimony to our selves of our own spiritual Progress?

'Tis by a kind of Unfaithfulness to the Attraction of pure Faith, that we seek always an Assurance of our doing well: It is to desire to know what we do, which is what we shall never know, and what it is God's Will we should be ignorant of: It is to amuse our selves in the way, in order to reason about the way itself. The surest and the shortest way is to renounce, forget, abandon, never more to think of our selves, but when Fidelity to God requires it. All Religion consists solely in going out of our selves,



selves, and of our Self-love, that we may tend towards God.

For Distractions that are involuntary, these distract not Love, for Love is in the Will, and the Will has never any Distractions without its own Consent. As soon as we remark them, we let them drop, and turn again our Thoughts towards God; thus while the outward Senses of the Spouse are asleep, her Heart waketh: Her Love has no Relax. A tender Father does not always think distinctly of his Son: A thousand Objects draw away his Imagination and his Mind, but his Distractions never interrupt the paternal Love: Whenever his Son returns into his Thoughts he loves him, he feels in the very inmost of his Heart that he has never discontinued one Moment to love him, tho' he has ceas'd to think of him: Such shou'd be our Love to our heavenly Father; a Love that's simple, without Diffidence, and without Disquiet.

If the Imagination wander, if the Spirit be drawn away, let us not be troubled: These Powers are not the true Man of the Heart, *the hidden Man*, of which St. Peter speaks \*, *which is in the Incorruptibleness*

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\* 1 Pet. iii. 4.

*of a meek and quiet Spirit.* We need only make a good use of those Thoughts we are Masters of, in turning them always to the Presence of the Beloved, without disquieting our selves about the rest: It is the Work of God to increase, when he shall think fit, that sensible Facility of preserving his Presence.

Oftentimes he takes it from us for our Advancement: For this Facility amuses us by too many Reflections: These Reflections are real Distractions, which interrupt the simple, and direct beholding of God, and which by that means draw us out from the Darknes of pure Faith.

In these Reflections we often seek the Repose of Self-love, and a Consolation in the good Testimony we desire to give to our selves: Thus we become distracted by this sensible Fervour; and on the other hand, we never pray so purely, as when we are tempted to think that we don't pray at all: We are then afraid of praying amiss: But the only thing we ought to fear, is to give way to the Faintheartedness of cowardly Nature, to philosophical Infidelity, which desires always to demonstrate to itself its own Operations in the Life of Faith; in  
fine,

fine, to the impatient Desires of seeing and feeling, that we may be comforted.

There is no Penance more bitter than this State of pure Faith without sensible Support: Whence I conclude that it is the Penance the most real, the most crucifying, and the most exempt from all Illusion. Strange Temptation! We impatiently seek for sensible Comfort out of fear of not being sufficiently penitent! Ah, why don't we practise for Penance the renouncing of that Consolation, which we are so tempted to seek after? In fine, we must call to mind *Jesus Christ*, whom his Father abandon'd upon the Cross: God withdrew all comfortable Sentiment and Reflection, that he might hide himself from *Jesus Christ*: This was the finishing Stroke of the Hand of God, which smote that Man of Sorrows: This was what consummated the Sacrifice. We must never abandon our selves more to God, than when he seems to forsake us. Let us receive therefore the Light and the Comfort when he sheds it upon us, but without attaching our selves to it: When he plunges us in the Night of pure Faith, let us readily enter into that Darknes, where all is Agony.

One Moment in this Tribulation is worth a thousand: We are troubled, and we are in Peace: God not only hides himself from us, but he hides us also from our selves, to the end that all may be in Faith. We feel our selves discourag'd, and yet we have an immoveable Will that wills every Severity which God wills: We will every thing, we accept every thing, even the Trouble by which we are try'd: Thus we are secretly in Peace by the means of this Will, which is preserv'd in the Center of the Soul for enduring the Conflict. Blessed be God who doth such great things in us, notwithstanding our Unworthiness.



*That the Spirit of God teacheth Men inwardly.*

**I**T is certain from Scripture, that the Spirit of God dwells within us \*, that he acts in us, that he prays in us without ceasing, that he groans in us, that he de-

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\* *Rom. viii. John xiv.*

66 *Pious Thoughts concerning*

fires in us, that he demands in us what we know not to ask our selves, that he prompts us on, animates us, speaks to us in Silence, brings to our Mind all Truth, and unites us so to him, that we are *but one Spirit with God*. This is what we are taught by Faith. This is what the Doctors the most averse to the interior Life cannot forbear avowing. Yet, notwithstanding these Principles, they always incline to suppose in the Practice, that it is the external Law, or at most a certain Light from outward Instruction and Reasoning, which enlightens us inwardly, and that it is afterwards our Reason which acts by itself upon this Instruction. They make too little account of the internal Teacher, which is the Holy Spirit, and which does all in us. He is the Soul of our Soul: We cou'd not form a good Thought or Desire but by him. Alas then, how great is our Blindness! We reckon as if we were alone in that interior Sanctuary, and, on the contrary, God is more intimately present there, than we are our selves.

You will perhaps say to me ; Are we inspir'd then ? Yes, without doubt ; but not as the Prophets and Apostles. Without the actual Inspiration of the Spirit of Grace, we  
can

*the Operations of the Spirit of God. 67*

can neither do, nor will, nor think any good. We are then always inspir'd; but we continually stifle the Inspiration. God never ceases to speak; but the Noise of the Creatures without, and of our own Passions within deafens us, and hinders us from hearing him. We must make every Creature keep Silence; we must our selves be silent, that in this profound Silence of the whole Soul, we may hearken to that ineffable Voice of the Spouse. We must listen with an attentive Ear, for it is a still small Voice, which is not heard, but by those who hear nothing else. O how seldom is it that the Soul keeps itself silent enough for God to speak! The smallest Murmur of our vain Desires, or of a Self-love attentive to *self*, confounds all the Words of the Divine Spirit. We perceive very well that he speaks, and that he demands something; but we know not what he says, and we are often very glad not to guess it. The least reserve, the least regard to *self*, the smallest Apprehension of hearing too clearly that God demands what we are unwilling to give, disturbs the internal speaking. Ought we then to be surpriz'd if so many Persons even devout, but full of Amusements, vain Desires, mistaken Wisdom, Confidence in

their Virtues, are not able to hear it, and that they look upon this internal Word as a Chimera of Fanaticks? Alas, what is it they wou'd aim at with their disdainful Reasonings? To what purpose wou'd be the external speaking of Pastors, or even of the Scripture, if there was not an internal speaking of the Holy Spirit itself, which gives all its Efficacy to the other? The external Word even of the Gospel would be but an empty Sound without this living and fruitful Word in the Interior. It is *the Letter*, which being alone *killeth*, and *the Spirit* only can *give us Life* \*. O Word! O Eternal and Almighty Word of the Father, it is thou who speakest in the inmost of the Soul. That Word which came from the Redeemers Lips in the Days of his mortal Life, was not accompany'd with so much Virtue, nor produc'd so much Fruit, but because it was animated by that Word of Life, which is the *Word* himself. Thence it is that St. *Peter* saith, *To whom shou'd we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life* †.

It is not then only the external Law of the Gospel, which God shews us inwardly by the Light of Reason and of Faith; it is

\* 2 Cor. iii. 6.

† John vi. 69.

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his Spirit which speaks, which touches,  
which operates in us, and which animates  
us; infomuch that it is this Spirit, that does  
in us whatsoever Good we do, as it is our  
Soul which animates our Body, and which  
regulates all the Motions of it.

'Tis true therefore that we are continu-  
ally inspir'd, and that we do not live by the  
Life of Grace, but so far as we partake of  
this internal Inspiration. But, O my God,  
there are few Christians who are sensible of  
it; for there are very few, but what extin-  
guish it by their voluntary Distractions, or  
by their Resistance.

This Inspiration ought not to make us  
think that we are like the Prophets. The  
Inspiration of the Prophets was full of Cer-  
tainty in the things which God discover-  
ed to them, or commanded them to do;  
it was an extraordinary Motion either for  
revealing of things future, or for working  
Miracles, or for acting with the Fulness of  
the Divine Authority. Here, altogether  
on the contrary, the Inspiration is without  
distinct Light, and without Certainty; it  
confines itself to insinuate to us Obedience,  
Patience, Meekness, Humility, and all the  
other Virtues necessary to every Christian:  
It is not a divine Motion for prophesying,



for changing the Laws of Nature, and for giving Commands to Men on the part of God: 'Tis a simple Invitation in the Center of the Soul to obey, to suffer *self* to be destroyed and annihilated agreeably to the Designs of the divine Love. This Inspiration thus taken in its due Bounds, and in its Simplicity, contains nothing more therefore than the common Doctrine of the whole Church; if the Imagination of Men adds nothing to it, it has not of itself any Snare either of Presumption or Illusion: On the contrary, it holds us in the Hand of God under the Conduct of the Church, ascribing all to Grace, without injuring our Liberty, and allowing nothing either to Pride or to Imagination.

These Principles being settled, we must allow that God speaks continually within us\*. He speaks in impenitent Sinners; but these, deafned by the Noise of the World, and of their Passions, are not able to hear him: His Word with them passes for a Fable. He speaks in Sinners, who are upon their Conversion: These feel the Remorses of their Conscience, and these Remorses are the Voice of God,

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\* *Imit. of J. Christ.* Book iii. ch. 3.

which

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which upbraids them inwardly with their Vices. When these Sinners are truly touch'd, they have no difficulty to comprehend this secret Voice; for it is this that so pierces them to the quick. It is that two-edged Sword within them, of which *St. Paul* speaks\*: It goes even to the dividing of the Soul from itself. God makes himself be felt, relish'd, follow'd: They hear that soft Voice, which carries a tender Reproach even into the Center of the Heart, and the Heart is rent thereby. This is the true and the pure Contrition.

God speaks in Persons enlightned, learned, and whose Life exteriorly regular, seems adorn'd with many Virtues: But oftentimes these Persons full of themselves and of their Knowledge, give too much ear to themselves to listen to God. They reason upon every thing: they form to themselves Principles of natural Wisdom, and prudential Methods for all those things, in which we might be better instructed by the way of Simplicity, and a Docility to the Spirit of God. These Persons appear to be good, sometimes more than others, and even so they are to a certain Point; but it is a mix'd Goodness. They

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\* *Hel.* iv. 12.

possess, and they ever will possess themselves according to the measure of their Reason; they desire always to remain in the Hand of their own Counsel; they are strong and great in their own Eyes. O my God, I give thee Thanks with *Jesus Christ* \*, for that thou hidest thy ineffable Secrets from these great and these wise ones, whilst thou takest pleasure to reveal them to feeble and little Souls! It is with Children only that thou usest a Familiarity without reserve. Thou treatest the others after their own Fashion. They will have Knowledge and high Virtues; thou givest them splendid Light, and makest them a kind of Heroes. But this is not the best Portion. There is something more hidden for thy dearer Children. These repose themselves with *John* upon thy Bosom. For those great ones, who are always in fear of stooping low, and of becoming little, thou leavest them in their Grandeur; thou treatest them suitably to their Gravity: they shall never have thy Caresses and thy Familiarities; Children only, and such as play upon thy Lap, can merit these. I have often remark'd that a gross and ignorant Sinner who

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\* *Matt. xi. 25.*

*the Operations of the Spirit of God.* 73  
begins, in his Conversion, to be truly touch'd with the Love of God, is more dispos'd to hear this internal Language of the Spirit of Grace, than certain enlightned and learned Persons, who are grown old in their own Wisdom. God, who seeks only to communicate himself, knows not, so to speak, where to place his Foot in these Souls, that are so full of themselves, and so overfed with their own Wisdom and Virtues: But, as the Scripture saith, *his familiar Conversation is with the Simple* \*.

Where are they, these simple ones? I hardly see any of them. God beholds them, and it is with them that he delights to dwell: *My Father and I, saith Jesus Christ, we will come unto them, and we will make our abode with them* †. O how a Soul, that's abandon'd to Grace, without Self-reflection, counting itself for nothing, and letting itself wholly be conducted at the pleasure of pure Love, which is the perfect Guide, experiences things which the wise and prudent can never experience or comprehend! I have been wise and prudent (I may venture to say it) as another; but then while I thought that I saw all, I saw no-

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\* *Prov. iii. 32.*

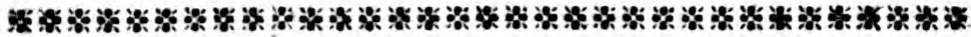
† *John xiv. 23.*

thing. I went on groping by a Train of Reasonings; but the Light shined not in my Darkness. I was content with reasoning: But, alas, when we have once impos'd Silence upon every thing in us that we may hearken to God, we then know all without knowing any thing; and we cannot doubt but that till then, we have been ignorant of every thing, that we imagined our selves to comprehend. All that we held escapes us; we are no more concern'd about it; we have no longer any thing of our own; we have lost all, we have even lost our selves. There is a certain I know not what, that cries within us, like the Spouse in the *Canticles*; *Make me to hear thy Voice, let it resound in my Ears* \*. O how sweet is this Voice. It makes all my Entrails to leap for Joy. Speak, O my Spouse, and let none other venture to speak but thou alone. Be silent, O my Soul, speak thou, O Love. I say that then, *we know all, without knowing any thing*. 'Tis not that we have the Presumption to think, that we possess all Truth in our selves. No, no: quite the contrary; we are sensible that we see nothing, that we can do nothing, that

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\* *Cant.* ii. 14.

we are nothing. We feel this, and we are ravish'd at it. But in this Disappropriation without reserve, we find from one Moment to another in the Immensity of God every thing that is necessary in the Course of his Providence. 'Tis there that we find the daily Bread of Truth, as of every other thing, without making a Provision of it. 'Tis then that the Unction teacheth us all Truth, in taking from us all Self-wisdom, all Self-glory, all Self-interest, all Self-will, in keeping us contented in our Impotence, and beneath every Creature, ready to give place to the lowest Worms of the Earth, ready to confess our most secret Miseries before the Face of all Men, apprehending nothing in our Failings but our Unfaithfulness to God, without fearing either the Punishment, or the Shame. In this State, I say, the Spirit teacheth us all Truth; for all Truth is eminently comprehended in this Sacrifice of Love, wherein the Soul strips itself of every thing, that it may give all to God. This is the Manna, which without being each Meat in particular, has the Savour of them all.



On the Words:

*Lord, teach us to pray.* Luke xi. 1.

**O** Lord, I know not what I should ask at thy Hands. Thou only knowest what is needful for us: thou lovest me better than I can love my self. O Father, give to thy Child what he cannot ask himself. I dare not ask either Crosses or Comforts: I only present my self before thee, I open thee my Heart. Behold my Wants, with which I am unacquainted; behold and do according to thy Mercy. Smite or heal; depress me, or raise me up. I adore all thy Purposes, without knowing them; I am silent, I offer my self in Sacrifice. I abandon my self. No more any Desire but to accomplish thy Will. Teach me to pray; pray thou thy self in me.

*Of*



*Of the Presence of God.*

THE principal Spring of our Perfection is contain'd in that word, which God heretofore spake to *Abraham*; *Walk in my Presence, and be thou perfect* \*.

The Presence of God calms the Spirit, gives a peaceful Slumber and Repose, even during the Day-time, in the midst of all our Labours; but we must be resign'd to God without any Reserve.

When we have found God, there is nothing more to be sought for in Men; we must make a Sacrifice of our best Friends: The good Friend is within the Heart; he is the jealous Spouse who suffers none else to abide there.

It requires not much time to love God, to renew in us the Sense of his Presence, to lift up our Heart to him, or to adore him in the Center of it, to offer him what we do, and what we suffer; this is the true

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\* *Gen. xvii. 1.*



*Kingdom of God within us* \*, which nothing can disturb.

When the Dissipation of the Senses, and the Vivacity of the Imagination hinder the Soul from recollecting itself after a sweet and sensible manner, we must at least calm our selves by the Rectitude of our Will; the desire of recollecting our selves is then a kind of Recollection, which suffices: We must bring back our Thoughts to God, and perform with an upright Intention whatsoever he would have us do.

We must endeavour to awaken in us from time to time the desire of adhering to God with the whole Extent of the Powers of our Soul, that is, with our Understanding, to know, and to think of him, and with our Will to love him. Let us desire likewise that our exterior Senses may be consecrated to him in all their Operations.

Let us take care that we be not voluntarily too long busied, whether outwardly or inwardly, about unprofitable things. These occasion so great a Distraction to the Heart and Mind, and draw in such a manner both the one and the other out of themselves,

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\* *Luke xvii. 21.*

that they have a Difficulty to enter in again to find God.

The Moment we perceive that any foreign Object gives us Pleasure and Joy, let us separate our Heart from it: and in order to hinder our Heart from taking its rest in this Creature, let us present to it immediately its true Object, and its sovereign Good, which is God himself. Were we faithful, but never so little to break inwardly with the Creatures, that is, to hinder them from entering into the Center of the Soul, which our Lord hath reserved for his own Habitation, and to be there honour'd, ador'd, and lov'd, we shou'd soon taste of that pure Joy, which God will never fail to give to a Soul, that's free and disengag'd from all human Affection.

When we perceive any eager Desires in us after any thing, and see that our Temper carries us with too much Liveliness to the doing of whatever there is to do, whether to the speaking of a word, the seeing of an Object, the making of a step, let us endeavour to moderate our selves, and let us desire of our Lord to restrain the Precipitation of our Thoughts, and the Violence of our external Actions; since he hath  
said

said himself, that his Spirit dwelleth not in trouble.

Let us be careful not to take too much Interest in what is said or done, nor to fill our Thoughts too much with it: 'Tis a great Source of Distractions. As soon as we have seen *what God demands of us in each thing*, that presents, let us confine our selves to that, and forget all the rest. By this means we shall always preserve the Center of our Soul free and even, and shall cut off abundance of useles things, which perplex our Heart, and hinder it from turning itself readily towards God.

An excellent means to preserve our selves in internal Solitude, and Liberty of Spirit, is, at the Conclusion of every Action, to stop there all Reflections arising from it, the Returns of Self-love, accompany'd sometimes with vain Joy, sometimes with Sadness; because these are some of our greatest Miseries. Happy is he, who retains nothing in his Mind but what is necessary, and who thinks of each thing only in its proper Season! Infomuch that it is rather God who awakens the Ideas of them in us by the Impression and View of his Will, which we are to accomplish, than the Mind itself,  
taking

*concerning the Presence of God.* 81

taking pains to seek, and to foresee them. In fine, let it be our Custom to recall our selves inward in the Day-time, and in the Course of our Employments, by a simple view of God. Let us pacify thereby all the Motions of our Heart, as soon as we see it in Agitation. Let us quit all Pleasure that comes not from God alone. Let us retrench our unprofitable Thoughts and Musings. Let us speak no idle Words. Let us seek God within us, and we shall infallibly find him, and with him Joy and Peace.

In our external Affairs, let us be more taken up with God than with any thing else. To do them well, we must do them in his Presence, and must do all for him. At the look of the Divine Majesty our inward Man shou'd grow calm, and remain compos'd. A word of our Saviour calm'd heretofore a raging Sea : A look from him to us, and from us to him, ought every Day to do the same thing.

We must frequently lift up our Heart to God ; he will purifie it ; he will enlighten it ; he will direct it. This was the daily Practice of the holy Prophet *David* ; *I set always,\** says

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\* *Psal.* xvi. 8.

he, *the Lord before my Eyes*: Let us likewise oftentimes repeat these beautiful Words of the same Prophet; *Whom shou'd I seek in Heaven but thee, or on Earth besides thee? O my God, thou art the God of my Heart, and my only Portion for ever \**.

We must not wait for Hours of Liberty, when we may shut our Door: The Moment in which we lament the want of Recollection may be employ'd to practise it. We must turn our Hearts towards God after a manner that's simple, familiar, and full of Confidence. All the most broken Moments are good at all times, even in eating, in hearing others talk: Unprofitable and tedious Stories, instead of tiring, refresh us, by affording Intervals, and the liberty of recollecting our selves: Thus every thing turns to Good for those who love God.

We must practise frequent reading of such things as are adapted to our Relish and our Wants, but with frequent Interruptions, that we may give Place to the internal Spirit, that calls us inward. Two Words simple and full of the Spirit of God, are the hidden Manna. We forget the Words, but

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\* *Psal.* lxxiii. 25, 26.

they operate secretly: the Soul feeds upon them, and thrives thereby.

We must endeavour to have a continual Intercourse with God. Let us be persuaded, that the most advantageous, and the most desirable State of this Life, is that of Christian Perfection, which consists in the Union of the Soul with God; an Union which includes in it the abundance of all spiritual Goods; a Familiarity with God so great, that there are no Friends upon Earth who converse together either oftener, or more tenderly, or with more Facility, Frankness, and Openness of Heart; a wonderful Liberty of Spirit, which raiseth us above all the Events of Life, which sets us free from the Tyranny of human Respect; an extraordinary Force for the well performing of all our Actions, and the Discharge of our Employments; a Prudence truly Christian in all our Undertakings; a profound Peace and Tranquillity in all kinds of Conditions; and, in fine; a continual Victory over our Passions, and our Self-love.

'Tis to this happy State that we are call'd, we, whom God hath separated from the Corruption of the World. If we partake not of these heavenly Blessings, it is our

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own fault, since the Holy Spirit disposeth us thereto, and continually excites us to aspire after them : But we frequently resist him, either by an open Repugnance, or by a secret Refusal, or for want of Resolution and Courage, or by voluntarily letting our selves be cheated by the Pretexts and Artifices of our Self-love, which inspires us with a thousand base Thoughts and deceitful Self-Indulgences. Let us suffer our selves no more to be seduc'd into them, but become wise, as saith the Apostle, that we may never be turn'd aside from the right way.



*Of Fidelity in little Things.*

**I**T is a Saying of St. *Francis of Sales*, that it is with great Virtues and little Fidelities, as with Salt and Sugar. Sugar has a more exquisite Taste, but it is not of such frequent use : On the other hand, Salt is an Ingredient in all the Nourishments necessary to Life. The great Virtues are rare. The occasion for them seldom happens.

pens. When it presents, we are prepar'd for it by every thing preceding; we are excited by the Consideration of the Greatness of the Sacrifice; we are supported in it by the Glory of the Action, which we do before the Eyes of others, or by the Complacency we have in our selves, when we make an Effort which we think extraordinary. The little occasions are unforeseen, they return at every Moment, they set us continually at War with our Pride, our Sloth, our Haughtiness, our passionate and peevish Humour: they tend to break our Will in every thing, and to leave us no reserve. If we will be faithful in them, Nature has never any time to recover Breath, and she must die to all her Inclinations. We shou'd like a thousand times better to make certain great Sacrifices to God, tho' violent and painful, upon condition of being compensated by the liberty of following our Inclinations and Habits in all the smaller Occurrences. However, it is only by Faithfulness in little things that the Grace of true Love is maintain'd, and distinguish'd from the fleeting Fervours of Nature.

It is in Piety as in the Management of our temporal Concerns: If we don't look narrowly to it, we ruin our selves more by



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the small Contingencies, than by the great Articles of Expence. Whoever knows how to make Advantage of little things in Spirituals as in Temporals, heaps up great Wealth. All the things that are great, are only so by the putting together of little things, that are carefully collected. He who lets nothing be lost, will very soon grow rich.

Furthermore, consider that God seeks nothing in our Actions but the Motive of Love from which we do them, and the Pliability that he requires in our Will. Men hardly judge of our Actions but by the outside: that which shines the brightest in them to the Eyes of Men, God accounts for nothing. What he requires is a pure Intention, a Will prepar'd for every thing, a Will supple in his Hands; 'tis a sincere Disengagement from our selves. All this is exercis'd more frequently, with less danger from Pride, and in a manner that puts us to a severer Trial in the common Occasions, than in those that are extraordinary. Our Affections are sometimes more engag'd to a Trifle than to a thing of great Value: We shall have more Repugnance to deprive our selves of an Amusement, than to give away in Alms a very great Sum.

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We deceive our selves so much the more easily in little things, as we think them more innocent, and as we imagine that we have less Attachment to them. Yet when God takes them from us, we may readily discover by the Pain we suffer how much our Attachment to, and our Use of them was excessive and inexcusable. Moreover, by the Neglect of little things, we continually give Offence to our Families, to our Domesticks, and to the whole Publick. Men can never imagine that our Piety is real, when our Conduct appears loose and irregular in its several Parts. What ground is there to think, that without Hesitation we should make the greatest Sacrifices, while as soon as the smallest are requir'd, we shrink at the very Thoughts of them?

But that which is the most dangerous, is, that the Soul by the Neglect of little things accustoms itself to Unfaithfulness. It grieves the Holy Spirit, it leaves itself to its own Conduct, it accounts it nothing to be wanting to God. On the other hand, true Love looks not upon any thing as little: Every thing appears great to it that may please or displease God. Not that true Love throws the Soul into Perplexity and Scruple: but it sets no Bounds to its Fide-

88 *Pious Thoughts concerning*

lity. It acts simply with God: and as it troubles not itself about things which God does not require of it, so will it never hesitate a single Instant about those which God does demand, whether they be great or small. Thus it is not by an anxious Solitude that we then become faithful and exact in the smallest things: 'tis by a Sentiment of Love which is exempt from the Reflections and Fears of scrupulous and unquiet Souls. We are as it were drawn on by the Love of God; we are content with doing what we do, and we have no Will to do any thing that we do not do. At the same time that God, jealous of the Soul, urges it, presses it forward without respite in the smallest Matters, and seems to deprive it of all liberty, it finds itself at large, and in him enjoys a profound Peace. O how great is its Happiness!

Moreover, such as are naturally less exact, are those especially who ought to lay themselves under a more inviolable Law with respect to little things. We are tempted to despise them: we get a habit of counting them for nothing: we don't consider enough the Consequences of them: we don't sufficiently represent to our selves the insensible Progress which the Passions make:

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we even forget the most fatal Experiences we have had of them. We chuse rather to promise our selves an imaginary Constancy and Firmness, and to trust to our own Courage, which has so often deceiv'd us, than to subject our selves to a continual Fidelity. 'Tis a mere Nothing, say they. Yes, it is a Nothing; but a Nothing, that is all for you; a Nothing which you love so much, as even to refuse it to God; a Nothing which you despise in Words, that you may have a Pretext to refuse it: But at the bottom it is a Nothing which you reserve from God, and which will be your Destruction. It is not an Elevation of Mind to despise little things; on the contrary, it is from too short a Sight that we look upon those things as little that have such extensive Consequences. The greater Pain it gives us to take our Precautions about little things, the more shou'd we fear the Neglect of 'em, the more shou'd we distrust our selves, and take care to fix some invincible Barriers against Remisness and Relaxation. *Qui spernit modica paulatim decidet* \*.

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\* *Ecclus.* xix. 1.

90 *Pious Thoughts concerning, &c.*

In fine, be judg'd by your self. Wou'd you be satisfy'd with a Friend who owes you all he has, and who very willing out of Duty to serve you in those rare Occasions, which we call great ones, yet wou'd not subject himself to have either Complacence or regard for you in the common Commerce of Life? Be not afraid of this continual Attention to little things. It requires Courage at first; but it is a Penance which you deserve, which you stand in need of, and which will make your Peace, and your Security: Without it nothing is to be expected but Trouble and Relapse. God will by degrees render this State sweet and easy to you. True Love is attentive without Anxiety, and without Contention of Spirit.



CHRIST



CHRISTIAN  
INSTRUCTION  
FOR  
YOUNG PEOPLE.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PAUL H. RAVENHILL

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1961

YOUNG PEOPLE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



A LETTER upon the  
following INSTRUCTION.



*Some Advice about Prayer, and particular concerning the Driness we may happen to feel in it.*



Have a great Compassion for you, my dear Daughter, knowing your good Will, and the sincere Desire you have to give your self up wholly to God without reserve, and that nevertheless you have not a secure Rule for your Conduct. I know you have Books; but Books, tho never so good, are yet of little use if we don't understand 'em, and don't discern what suits our own Condition,  
and



and what is particularly proper for us in the State wherein God has placed us, and in that Vocation to which he has called us. To remedy this as far as I am able, I send you *a short Direction for young People*, which will teach them how to lay a solid Foundation: For there is no want of Instructions for more advanced Persons, except it be for passing some Streights, where they might either lose their way, or go back for want of a Guide; in other Cases such Persons being used to the Conduct of God, follow it very readily.

To begin with Success, I am to tell you, that, besides the observing this Method which I send you, it is of the last Consequence to keep to the little pious Exercises you propose to your self with an inviolable Fidelity. For which reason you ought not to be loaded with Burdens too heavy for you to bear, nor with such Exercises as are inconsistent with your Vocation: For the Yoke of the Lord is easy and Light, and it is his Will that every one should be sanctified in that State of Life which Providence has placed him in, without being obliged to change it. We must then establish such a Piety as shall be lasting. If you would frequently read, *The short and easy Method*

*Method for Prayer*, you would find a great many useful things in it, and the more you read it, the better you will understand it.

As *Prayer* is the most essential thing in the spiritual Life, so it is what I most insist upon.

They who are constant and faithful in the Use of it, find the Happiness of Life in it; and they see clearly that in every State we may and ought to apply our selves to it; that it is so far from being inconsistent with any Condition of Life, that on the contrary it perfects all States, and makes us faithfully discharge the Duties of our Callings, according to the Design and Will of God concerning us.

There are two dangerous Rocks for Beginners: The first is, that they frequently perish for want of Nourishment, that is, for want of being diligent and constant in nourishing their Souls with some Truth in Prayer in the beginning. The other is, that when they have laid down a Method, or form'd a Plan of Life for themselves, they adhere to it so strictly, that they will not suffer themselves to be guided by God, to follow his inward Motions by Recollection: not by a forc'd Recollection from the intense Application of the Head; but  
by

by entering frequently into ones self by frequent [spiritual] Acts, by a lively Faith of God's being present in the bottom of the Heart, as the little *Method* which I send you will shew you clearly.

You must seek God then with all your Heart, and in your Heart, and enjoy his Presence when he communicates it to you: Which is the Effect, not of a strong Application of the *Head*, but of a gentle Inclination and Tendency of the *Heart* towards God: which you may promote by the Remembrance of what *Jesus Christ* has suffered for you, provided you consider his Mysteries as in your self, not out of you.

As soon as you perceive that this simple Consideration has produced in you any Sense of God's Presence, stop there, and rest in it, without seeking any thing else: For then it is that God works in your Soul, or else make use of your Affections, and of Acts of Love, Trust, &c. as you will find this Matter explain'd in the little *Method*. At other times throw your self into God, as into a Sea of Love; hide your self in the Wounds of *Jesus Christ* without doing any other thing than remaining swallowed up there.

Above all, never let Driness, or Distaste, or Weakness, make you give over Prayer. When you are not sensible of receiving any thing from God in Prayer, then make a *Prayer of Patience*, and testify to God, that since you come to pray, for no other end but to do his Will, since you are there for no other reason but to please him, and not for your own Satisfaction, you will remain there out of Obedience to him. A Beggar waits a long while at a Door before he receives an Alms; he suffers Cold, Heat, and Repulses; and yet he does not quit his hold for all that, but frequently obtains by Perseverance, what he was denied at first asking.

As Driness is the Cause of our Slackness and Remisness in Prayer, and of our quitting it altogether at last, and yet is frequently an Attendant upon it, 'tis a Matter of great Consequence to know how to behave and govern our selves in this case.

In the first Place, we must be sure never to give over Prayer upon the account of Driness, but persevere in it constantly to testify our Love to God. When God gives us Consolation in Prayer, he gives us Marks of his Love; but when we meet with Driness and Desolation, and continue in it notwithstanding,

standing, we then give God Proofs of our Love and Fidelity to him: and in doing thus, as I have been directing, you need not fear being idle and doing nothing. Is a Servant idle when he waits in an Anti-Chamber for his Master's Orders? This pretended fear of Idleness in Prayer, is one of the subtlest Artifices of the Devil to hinder Prayer. Remain there only expos'd to the Fire without stirring your self, and you will certainly feel the Warmth of it. Why does the Scripture tell us\* that we *must bear with the Suspension and Delay of God's Consolations, that we must wait for the Lord, and be patient in Sorrow, that our Life may grow and increase?* And in another Place †, *I waited with great Patience for the Lord, and at last he inclined unto me:* And again, *My Soul wait for the Lord, for of him only cometh thy Salvation.* Therefore do not apprehend this to be Idleness. How can you be said to be idle, when you practise a great many Virtues; as *Humility* in believing your self unworthy of any Consolation; *Fidelity*, the Proof of which is to be given in times of Trouble, not of Consolation; *Patience*, in abiding by God, notwithstanding your Uneasiness and Pain; *Faith*, in believing that *God sees and knows*

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\* *Eccles. ii. 2, 3.* † *Psal. xl. 1.*

*the Preparation of the Heart of the Poor,* as the Scripture speaks; *Hope*, in hoping against Hope itself; *Charity*, because you give God the greatest Proofs of your Love, and that a pure Love, not seeking your own Interest, but the good Pleasure of God, whose Will it is that you should be in this Condition; *Obedience*, because you are there to obey God, and not for your own Consolation; *Resignation*, and perfect Submission to the Will of God, since you prefer his Orders before your own Satisfaction.

Secondly; A State of Driness is very purifying; it destroys Self-love; it conceals from us God's Gifts to us, and what he works in us, and by this means hinders us from appropriating them to our selves: It gives us a very low Opinion of our selves and of our Works; and takes away a certain Trust and Reliance we are apt to have upon what we do our selves.

Instead of being dejected, we ought to be more couragious in time of Driness: 'Tis nothing but our Self-love which causes our Discouragement. God sends Driness for no other reason but to oblige us to deny our selves, and to make us practise in a secret and imperceptible manner the

Virtues I just now mentioned ; and yet we torment our selves, we can't bear it, and frequently throw all aside, and thereby lose infinite Treasures of Graces.

God sends Winter to kill Insects, and to make Trees take deeper root. The inward and spiritual Winter has the same Effect ; but we are so fond and jealous of our own Works and Activity, that we think we lose when we gain most ; because the Operation of God, which is fine and delicate, is less sensible ; and our own Operation, which is gross, is more perceptible ; therefore we value nothing but this : As if the Work of a Painter were not more valuable than that of a Labourer ! We even hinder the Work of God [in us] by too great Activity, by a certain Solitude which makes us never content with the State in which God places us. And yet 'tis this Submission to the Will of God in all States, which is the Basis and Foundation of all Perfection.

When the Driness is very great, and the Imagination roving, endeavour gently to recal your Mind inwards by some Act [of Recollection.] When you cannot succeed after several Efforts, humble your self profoundly under the mighty Hand of God,  
and

and remain in Patience. An humble and meek Patience is an excellent Prayer. The more we pray, the more we advance in the Love of God, and in Submission to his holy Will.

As soon as ever you perceive any Sense of God's Presence which moves you to Recollection, remain in quiet, and cease all Action of your own, to let God act in you, and never go to hinder the Operation of God, by your course way of acting.

Besides Prayer, Reading is also very useful: you shou'd not read much together, but in reading things which have an Unction in them, as soon as ever any thing touches you, you must quit the Book, to suffer your self to be penetrated by that which moved you.

Sometimes one feels the Unction, without knowing any express word that cou'd be the cause of it: Our Business then is to remain calm and recollected, that this Unction or Touch may have the full Effect that God designs by it. This is of great Consequence, and of great Use for grounding the Soul in God.

Sometimes it happens that after having been distracted and dry in Prayer, we feel our selves recollected out of Prayer. We



ought then, if it be in our Power, to retire in private, to let our selves be possessed by God. If we cannot retire, we must give a profound Attention inwardly, which is a kind of Correspondence of the whole Heart.

What other Advice is necessary, you will find in the little Book I send you.

Be of good Courage; never give over your Enterprize whatever happens, and whatever it costs, and then you are safe. Rely more upon God, than upon all the Works he requires of you. May he be your Strength, your Consolation, and your Prayer!





# CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION

FROM A

MOTHER to a DAUGHTER.

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## S E C T. I.

*Inconveniencies to be avoided in Devotion. Solid Devotion, to which we are all called, and how to answer this Call, especially in what concerns the inward Life, the Habitation of God in us, and walking in his Presence.*



AS you now begin, my dear Daughter, to enter into an Age in which you may, and ought to be instructed in the indispensable Duties to which the Character and Quality of a Christian obliges you; I thought it my Duty not to delay giving you a little In-

H 4. *struction,*

*struction*, by the Practice of which, I might engage you in a Life not more Christian, than sweet and pleasant.

I don't require you, my dear Child, to undertake those sorts of Devotion which, besides their being troublesome to all the World, are of very little use to those that practise them; because they are equally ignorant both of the Principles, and of the Duties of a Christian Life. In the times of Paganism every one made himself a God after his own Fancy; and now every one frames to himself a Devotion after his own fashion. Some make it consist in the Recital of a Number of vocal Prayers, and believe that, provided they omit no part of the Task they have set themselves, they may let their Hearts and Affections be possessed by Creatures; thinking they have given God enough, when they have given him this Tribute of their Lips. Others place their Piety in being always absent from their Families, to give themselves, as they say, to Works of Charity; or perhaps they pass a great part of the Day at Church, neglecting the care of a Family, which God has entrusted them with, to employ themselves in things which, tho' good in themselves, yet are no farther good for them,  
than

than as they are consistent with those principal Duties which they are bound to discharge in the State wherein God has placed them.

When we carry Devotion to Extremity, it can never last ; and yet when we neglect it we enter into the Coldness of Death.

I hope you will avoid both these Inconveniences, if you will believe, and faithfully follow what our Lord inspires me to tell you concerning them : I hope also from his Goodness, that this Fidelity of yours will draw down many Blessings upon you, especially that of persevering in his Love, and of never losing his Grace.

You are then, my Daughter, a Christian, that is, *a Child of God* \*, and consequently an Heir of God himself, *a Co-heir with Jesus Christ*, call'd to enjoy God, to be his Temple, for which reason it is that you were consecrated to him in Baptism. Does not *St. Paul* say to Christians, that they are *the Temple of God* † ? If you are the Temple of God, God will dwell in you ; and he will dwell there, as the same Apostle says, *by Faith* ‡. This then, my Child, is what you are called to.

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\* *Rom.* viii. 17.    † *2 Cor.* vi. 16.    ‡ *Eph.* iii. 17.

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But it would be but a small Matter to shew you what your Vocation is, if I did not at the same time teach you the way and means fully to answer it.

As you are compos'd of two Parts, an inward and an outward, they must both be taken care of and regulated, beginning with your noblest part first.

I have told you, my Daughter, that you are *the Temple of God*, if so be *God dwell in you*. How will he dwell in you? By Faith. And what is that which can procure you this Advantage? Hear the Oracle of Truth: *If any one, saith Jesus Christ, doth my Will, my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him* \*. Therefore to have *God dwell in you*, you must *do his Will*.

Methinks I hear you saying, my dear Child; How shall I do *the Will of God* if I don't know it? You may easily know it, if you are but desirous enough to know it. God teaches you no other thing but his Will: His Will is to reign in us; but how shou'd he reign in us, if he does not dwell in us?

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\* *John xiv. 23.*

Take great care, that you do not become like a profaned Temple, which from being an Habitation of God, is become the Retreat of Owls. Never force God by any Sin to retire from you: and if ever you shou'd chance to be so unhappy, delay not one Moment to return to him, and to invite him in the Bitterness of your Soul to return to his Habitation again. But if you let him be absent long, how ought you to fear lest he never return again! Not from any Dis-inclination in him; for he is always desirous to return into the Heart of Man: but Man is weaken'd and harden'd by his Separation from his God; and the longer he remains in this Separation, the more harden'd he becomes. Let not a vain Fear (which for want of Light is called Humility) hinder you from returning as soon as ever you have fallen. This is of the last Consequence, and without it, 'tis impossible to lead a Christian Life.

But as it is much better not to fall, than to rise again, tho' never so soon afterwards, you must have a Preservative against falling.

*Walk, saith God, in my Presence, and be perfect* \*. It is written, *Have God*

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\* Gen. xvii. 1.

*always present, and you will not sin* \*. You see then plainly, that to do the Will of God is to *walk in his Presence*. This is what is absolutely necessary for us.

We may easily *walk in the Presence of God*, when we can pray to him inwardly. Whence comes it then that so few Christians walk in the Presence of God? It is because they do not know that God dwells in them. But as for you, who cannot be ignorant of it, there needs no more but to shew you the way of making a right use of this divine Presence.



## S E C T. II.

*Two ways to keep our selves in the Presence of God: The one, Prayer. An Exercise of Prayer for every Day in the Week. The other, to know and practise the Will of God.*

**T**O do this, there are two ways. The first is Prayer; the other is the

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\* *Psal.* xvi. 8.

Practice of the Will of God, in the Order of your daily Affairs. As to Prayer, you see plainly that you must apply your self within your self to him that inhabits there, and that it would be to give your self a great deal of Trouble to little purpose, to seek for him afar off whom you have so near. For which you may take St. *Austin's* word sooner than mine. Thus this great Saint complains for having sought after God out of himself. " I sought thee, says he \*, my " God, in Heaven, in Earth, and in the " Creatures, and there I found thee not. I " sought thee afar off, and thou wast very " near: I no sooner sought thee in my " Heart, but there I found thee. This then is the Place where you must seek God, and this is the Place where you will find him.

Having learned the Place where you ought to seek God, and to address your Prayers to him, you must be taught *how to pray.*

There are two sorts of Prayer, *Vocal Prayer*, and the *Prayer of the Heart*: But since vocal Prayer owes all its Worth to that

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\* *Confes.* lib. 10. c. 6. & 27.



of the Heart, I shall content my self with teaching you this.

I have told you, that you must address your Prayers to God dwelling in your Heart, and possess your self with a Spirit of Faith, which will make you firmly believe that God is there, that he is attentive to you, and will hear you from his holy Temple. This firm Faith will naturally lead you both to Respect, and to Trust: The Greatness of his Majesty will create Reverence; and the Excess of his Goodness, which makes him stoop so low as even to you, and to be your Father, will engage you to a Love, and Resignation of your self to him so much the greater, as you have less reason to be regarded by him.

Pray then with Faith, Trust, and Love; but pray with your Heart: Let your Prayer flow from Love, rather than from your Lips: Ask what you want with full Assurance: Frequently think upon what *Jesus Christ* has suffered for you; but above all, beg of him to be your Master, and to teach you to pray himself. Say to him often, Lord, I am but a Child, I know not how to speak; be persuaded of what *St. Paul* says, that *we know not what we ought to ask, nor how to ask*

*ask it as we ought; but that the Holy Spirit will ask it for us with Groanings which cannot be uttered\**. Pray therefore this Holy Spirit to ask for you that which he wou'd have you to be, and do. For some time I would have you make use of the following Exercise.

SUNDAY: Look upon God as your MASTER, and keep close by him like a little Scholar who desires nothing but to be taught, saying to him with your whole Heart, and entirely recollected within your self; *Teach me, O my divine Master, to do thy Will †*, and to please thee: And after remaining in Silence as it were to hearken to him, say with *Samuel, Speak, Lord, thy Servant heareth ‡*; and with *David, Teach me the way of thy Statutes; I will hear what the Lord my God will say to me within me\*\**. Think that he says to you with the Royal Prophet, *Hear, my Daughter, forget thy Father's House, and the King shall greatly desire thy Beauty ††*. But all this must be done in great Silence and Recollection.

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\* Rom. viii. 26.

† Psal. cxliii. 10.

‡ I Sam. iii. 10.

\*\* Psal. cxix. 12, 33, 35. and lxxxv 8.

†† Psal. xlv.

10, 11.

MUNDAY:

MUNDAY: Look upon God as a KING, and beg of him that his *Kingdom may come*, and that he would reign in you. Give him your Heart entirely, that he may possess it wholly; and, as a King ought to be absolute in his Kingdom, that he may in like manner command absolutely in your Soul, and make himself obeyed. Say, O my God, *make flexible this rebellious Heart* \*, that it may be obedient to thee. He says to thee, my Daughter, *Behold thy King, who cometh to thee full of Meekness* †: Bid your Heart *open itself, that the King of Glory may enter in* ‡. After which, resign up your self wholly to this divine King: Remain in his Presence with Respect, ready to receive the Orders which he shall please to give you.

TUESDAY: Look upon him as a FATHER; and be full of humble Acknowledgment, for his being graciously pleased to look upon you as his Daughter. For if this Relation of Father engages God to heap his Blessings upon you, and to make you Heir of his Kingdom, it obliges you at the same time to love him supremely, and to endeavour to please him in all things; and this

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\* *Psal.* cxix. 36.

† *Matt.* xxi. 5.

‡ *Psal.* xxiv. 7.

shou'd move you to speak to him often with Confidence. A *Child* is not a Stranger to his *Father*, who loves the little Evidences it gives him of its Love, excuses his Weaknesses, and easily forgives him. *O best of Fathers, hold me as a little Child!* shou'd you say to him: and afterwards remain recollected in Repose in the Arms of your Father, without any other care than to look upon him and care for him.

Say to him frequently, *My Father, my Father.* The Testimony we have within our selves of the divine Filiation, makes us cry, as St. *Paul* says\*, *Abba, Father!* The word *crying* expresses perfectly well the Action of a Child towards its Father whom it loves. Love makes it *cry, My Father, my Father,* rather than *speak* it. It cries both for Love, and for Grief. And as a little Child that only cries, and says, *Father,* makes itself understood in a thousand other things which it does not say, by a paternal Heart: Just so it is with us; in crying only this word, God understands and hears us. The word *crying* teaches us, that God is not satisfied with a weak and languid word pronounced out of Custom by

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† Gal. iv. 6.

the Mouth, but not sent from the Heart: There ought to be a Cry of the whole Heart for a proper Acknowledgment of the Beneficence of such a Father. This *Spirit* of Love and Acknowledgment is the very same which *beareth witness to our Spirit that we are the Children of God\**. My Daughter, love, love passionately so good a Father, and never forfeit the Quality of a Child: Be, as *St. Paul* says, *a Child without Malice †*.

WEDNESDAY: Present your self before *Jesus Christ* as a sick Person cover'd all over with the Wounds of Sin. Look upon him as a *PHYSICIAN* full of Charity and Love, who came to heal you of your Wounds. To heal you, did I say? He is not content to assuage your Grievs; he bears them himself; he covers himself with your Wounds to heal you of them; he takes the bitter Medicine himself, and leaves you nothing but what's useful and agreeable. Be not afraid therefore to approach him, how full of Sores soever you may be, and to say to him with the Leper, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean ‡*; then remain in Silence expos'd to his divine Eyes. A sick

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\* *Rom.* viii. 16.

† *1 Cor.* xiv. 20.

‡ *Matt.* viii. 2.

Man, who, without much speaking, is content to lay open his Wounds, moves more Compassion than he who exaggerates his Miseries with an affected Eloquence. Heal me, Lord, that my Wounds may not become inveterate. *Speak but a word only, and thy Servant shall be healed* \*.

THURSDAY: Be as little Sheep near your SHEPHERD, and ask of him with Confidence the Nourishment of your Soul. Our Lord was pleased to take upon him the Quality of a Shepherd with relation to us. He tells us himself, that *his Sheep bear his Voice* †. How can we be assured that *Jesus Christ* is our true Shepherd, but only by this, that we know his Voice? And how shall we know it if we do not hearken to it? *My Sheep,* says he, *know me, and I know them, and they follow me.* The Royal Prophet, who, tho' Shepherd of *Israel*, was yet himself a beloved Sheep, does not he say, *Thy Crook and thy Staff have comforted me* ‡? The little Sheep then that would be faithful must not stray from its Shepherd, but suffer itself to be conducted by his Hook, and to be led where he pleases. And whether wilt thou lead thy Sheep, O my divine

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\* *Matt.* viii. 8.

† *John* x. 27.

‡ *Psal.* xxiii. 4.

Shepherd? I will lead them, says he, *into excellent Pastures* \*; what more excellent Pasture than to nourish it with thy self? These are fat and fertile Pastures, which make those who are fed in them fruitful in all sorts of good Works. The Royal Prophet says, that *this Rod and this Staff have comforted him*. How is this to be understood; for the Crook is for correcting the Sheep? O, the thing is this, the Sheep strays sometimes from its Shepherd to go to feed elsewhere: then he brings it back by the Hook of some Affliction into the Pasture which he himself has prepar'd for it. "O Lord, thou art my Shepherd, what can I fear! If I wander, thou bearest me up on thy Shoulders: If I am weak, thou refreshest me." Abide near him then, my dear Child, and never leave him.

FRIDAY: Look upon him as your SAVIOUR and REDEEMER, who redeems you from the Slavery to which you had voluntarily subjected your self; and say with the Royal Prophet, *Bless the Lord thy God, O my Soul! 'tis he that forgiveth all thy Sins; and healeth all thy Diseases, and redeemeth thy Life from Death* †. But what was the Price he

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\* Ezek. xxxiv. 14.

† Psal. cii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

paid for this Ransom? All his Blood, and his Life; in word, he gave himself wholly. He became himself a Slave to make you free; and all that he requires of you, is only this, that you would be willing to be brought out of your Captivity, and be set at liberty by him, since you can be set at liberty by no one else. Wou'd you not then be a great Enemy to your self, shou'd you not suffer him to do it? He says himself, *If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be truly free* \*. You belong to him by Right of Purchase; you are his Possession and Heritage: He says it himself, that *Israel is the Inheritance of the Lord* †.

As it was his Blood which was the Price of our Redemption, pray him to wash you in it: place your self very near him, that the Blood which flows in such abundance from his Wounds may serve you for a Bath. Say to him, *Lord, I am oppressed, answer for me* ‡. After this, melt into Love and Acknowledgment, then remain in Silence before him, who speaks for you to his Father with as many Mouths as there are Wounds in his Body.

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\* *John* viii. 36.

† *Jer.* x. 16.

‡ *Isai.* xxxviii. 14.



SATURDAY: Present your self before *Jesus Christ* as a Spouse before her Husband. But is not this Presumption? No. He has espoused human Nature, and in that has espoused you. He would also unite you to himself in the closest Union, which he ask'd of his Father, when he said, *Father, let them be one, as we are one* \*. Doubt not in the least, my dear Child, but that you are called to this supreme Happiness. Our Lord himself invites you, *My Sister, my Spouse*, says he, *open your Heart entirely to me* †; 'tis but this I want and wait for, to give my self entirely to thee. *My Head is all cover'd with the Drops of the Night of my Passion: Come from Lebanon, my Spouse, that I may crown thee* ‡, and that thou mayst know by Experience that *my Delights are to be with the Children of Men* \*\*; that I am the Lover of your Soul; that I have left the Bosom of my Father to espouse you. I have embraced Sorrow and Affliction to make a Conquest of your Heart. I demand nothing but this Heart in exchange for mine. *My Daughter, give me thy Heart* ††.

“ O sacred Spouse, who wou'd not love thee!  
 “ Consume me with thy Flame. Make me

\* *John* xvii. 21, 22.† *Cant.* v. 2.‡ *Cant.* iv. 8.\*\* *Prov.* viii. 31.†† *Prov.* xxiii. 26.

“ wholly

“ wholly thine. Never suffer me to do any  
“ thing unworthy of the Honour which thou  
“ dost me.” After this, repose your self in  
the Arms of your divine Spouse.

Do not, my Daughter, like those *adulterous* Spouses who withdraw their Heart from their lawful Husband to prostitute themselves to infamous Creatures. This Spouse assures us, that he will *destroy those adulterous Souls who separate themselves from him* \*. Say then with the Royal Prophet, *It is good for me to hold me fast by God, and to put my whole Trust in him.*

This, my dear Daughter, is the *little* inward *Exercise* which I would desire you to use *every Day*, in the order I have set it down: and when you have a Taste of God, and Prayer is become easy to you, make use of the Books which I have recommended to you.

You must endeavour all the Day long to continue your Prayer by fervent Aspirations, and by returning constantly within your self, conformably to your Disposition in the Morning, sometimes by throwing your self into the Arms of your Father, othertimes into the Arms of your Spouse, following

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\* *Psal.* lxxii. 27, 28.

the Dispositions prescribed above. By this Prayer, you will come to know *the Will of God*, which I observed to you was the second Part of the inward Christian.

The Will of God is known two ways; by Inspiration, and by daily Providences.

Men make no use of either of these; and that is the reason why they neither know, nor do the Will of God.

*Inspiration* is lost, being not so much as known to the greatest part of Christians, because they do not hearken to God speaking in them, far from imitating holy *David*, who *hearkned to what the Lord said to him within him* \*.

The whole depends upon this Attention; upon which Account it is said, *To Day if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts* †. Why is it said, *to Day*? To shew us that we must be in continual Attention. And why must we be so attentive? Because the Voice of Inspiration is delicate. It is a Voice which inclines the Heart; not a Voice which makes itself understood by Ideas and distinct Words. It is said, that *David inclined the Heart of all Israel, as of one Man* ‡. This divine Voice is a power-

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\* *Psal.* lxxxv. 8.

† *Heb.* iii. 7, 8.

‡ *2 Sam.* xix. 14.

ful Operation, which sweetly and gently inclines the Heart. God *speaks to the Heart of Jerusalem* \* : And to be flexible to Inspiration, the Heart must not be fasten'd to the Earth. It must also be very attentive to it by reason of the great Delicateness of the Voice of Inspiration. *Elijah* says, God *was not in the strong Wind, nor in the Earthquake, nor in the great Noise* †, but he was *in the Zephyr* a soft and gentle Wind.

Whence is it then, may you answer, that it is said in other Places; that *the Voice of the Lord thunder'd*, that *the Voice of the Lord breaketh the Cedar Trees* ‡, if it be so delicate as you represent it? To this I answer, my Child, that the Voice of the Anger and Indignation of the Lord is of this sort; but that the Voice of Inspiration is of another Nature. 'Tis true, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles, it was with a great Noise \*\*; but the Business at that time, was not a particular Inspiration, it was to establish a Church, and to convince Mankind by Prodigies.

\* *Isai.* xl. 2.

† *1 Kings* xix. 11.

‡ *Psal.* xxix. 3, 5.

\*\* *Acts* ii. 2.

It is necessary then to be attentive within, to know the inward Will of God, in order to follow it when known.

As for the outward Will of God, *continual and daily Providence* discovers it to us every Moment ; and our Business is faithfully to follow it from Moment to Moment, cheerfully accepting all that befalls us (sweet or bitter, crucifying or gratifying) whether from the Hand of God by Afflictions, or from Men by ill Usage and Persecutions, or from our own selves by our Imprudences and Mistakes : and in doing thus we cannot be deceived : for it is most certain that whatever happens to us (excepting Sin) is the Will of God.

For the Practice of this Will of God, let this be your Rule ; after having followed the Method laid down for your inward Exercise, you must prefer the doing of that which properly belongs to your State and Condition of Life, before any thing else. This is your chief and principal Devotion. Now to secure you from falling into an idle and uselefs way of Life, I thought it proper, my dear Daughter, to give you the Regulation of a Christian Day : which I shall do, begging of you to be as exact as possible in observing all the Directions.

S E C T.



## S E C T. III.

*The Regulation of a Christian Day.*

**R**ISE every Day, and go to Bed at a set Hour. Where there is no Rule, we live in perpetual Disorder. You shou'd not go to Bed later than Ten, nor rise later than Seven. When you are older, you wou'd do well to rise earlier.

As soon as you are awake, give the first of your Thoughts to God, and offer up to him the First-fruits of the Day.

Never fail to fall down upon your Knees as soon as you are up, you owe this Mark of Adoration to the supreme Majesty of God.

Endeavour to pass half an Hour in Prayer after you are up in the Morning. Unite your self to the Sacrifice which *Jesus Christ* made of himself, and sacrifice your self to him, that he may do in you and with you whatever he pleases. Let your principal Exercise be a continual Submission to all that God wills: Endeavour to conform  
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your self to this divine Will in all things : let it be your Sovereign ; be you its Servant ; knowing this, that to serve God, is to reign.

Dress your self as quick as you can : lose no time ; Time is given us to be employ'd, not to be thrown away. Fly loitering. Avoid Magnificence and Affectation in your Dress ; avoid Negligence also. Be decent and clean that you may not disgust those you converse with. Avoid Expensiveness. Let your Cloaths be decently suitable to your Rank ; let your Virtue, your Civility, and your good Behaviour distinguish you, and not your Dress. They that are fond of being distinguish'd by their Habits and Equipages, must certainly be unprovided of real Merit.

Never pass the Morning without reading some spiritual Book, as *the Imitation of Jesus Christ*, by *Thomas à Kempis*, the Works of *St. Francis de Sales*, and such like excellent Books. Read but little at a time, but read with Relish and Application. Read slowly, that you may nourish your self with what you read, and lose not by Dissipation of Mind out of Prayer, what you receiv'd of God in Prayer, but keep it with all the care with which you would preserve a precious

cious Liquor from evaporating. The Fire is kindled in Prayer, but it soon goes out if it be not continually supply'd all Day long. And the Fewel you are to feed it with is this, *viz.* simple and frequent Acts of Recollection within your self, calm Acts of Love, of Gratitude and Acknowledgment, of offering up your self, of gentle Tendence to and Union with your Center, which is God.

But above all Books, I recommend the *Holy Scripture* to you. For by reading of *This*, you will be particularly instructed in the Duties and Obligations of Christianity. Read it frequently: make it your principal Study: let it be your daily Bread. There you will learn of *Jesus Christ* himself what you shou'd do to avoid displeasing him. There you will see what *Jesus Christ* has done and suffer'd for you. There your Religion is in its Purity. There you will be supported by the Example of the Patriarchs and Saints of the Old Law, as well as of the chief Pillars of the Church. To the reading of this then, my Dear Daughter, I advise you above all other Books. Here you will find the Substance and Savour of all spiritual Writings. I wou'd never have you pass a Day without reading something  
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of it. Read sometimes where the Book happens to open, but generally read it in order, that you may better perceive all its Beauties, and taste all its Sweetness. Read with Humility, not for Ostentation, but to nourish and edify your Soul, to know your Duty to God, and what the Covenant he has made with you engages you to.

Your Afternoon you will employ in working, and making Visits. You may take some time for Recreation; but never pass an Afternoon without taking some time for Recollection and Prayer.

In the Evening make an *Examination* of your self, and an Act of Contrition. Lie down in the Arms of my Divine Master, in the sacred Sleep, [or reposing of the Soul in God] and do not quit the one, but to enter into the other. This will procure you a gentle, quiet Sleep. Awake in the same Arms, and betake your self again to this mysterious Sleep. Rise in the same Disposition.

Avoid during the Day as much as ever you can the Employment and Occupation of the Head, to preserve only that of the Heart. When any Thoughts or Reflections come into your Mind, take great care how you present 'em to your Reason: On the

contrary, let 'em drop, that you may open your Heart to God. Continue your Day as you began it, so as that in the very midst of your Occupations you may from time to time repose your self in God.



S E C T. IV.

*How we ought to mortify our selves several ways, and in several things.*

**M**ortify your self every Day in some thing that wou'd be a Satisfaction to you, in Imitation of *St. Paul*, who bore in his Body the Mortification of *Jesus Christ* \*. Man naturally loves Pleasure; he must therefore avoid Pleasure till he has arrived at so perfect a Degree of Conversion, that he loves Pain as much as he lov'd Pleasure. It is of great Consequence, as the Apostle says, to make *the Members* that have served Iniquity, *become the Servants of Righteousness* †.

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\* *Gal. vi. 17.*

† *Rom. vi. 19.*

Let the *Eyes*, which have been the Source of infinite Sins, be punished. There are two ways of punishing them. The one by Tears; which yet is not to be enjoyn'd to all the World. For the Tears which are not produced by the fervent Heat of Love, but flow only from a Tendernefs for our selves, are not those which God requires: He himself must kindle the Fire in the Heart, before the sacred Heat evaporates through the Eyes. But as Tears are not necessary to Penitence, (altho' where they are, they are a Proof of it) and as they are not in our Power, so they cannot be enjoyn'd. The other way of mortifying ones Sight, is by Recollection in Prayer, shutting our Eyes to all outward Objects, that the whole Force of the Soul may be kept for God. It is necessary also to mortify them in all Curiosity, depriving them of the Satisfaction of seeing a great many, and great Variety of things. This sort of Mortification is of great use, and yet no way prejudicial to Health.

The *Tongue* ought to be mortify'd by restraining it from saying things which at once flatter our own Vanity, and gratify our Antipathy and Spleen against others. The *Taste* must be mortified in refusing it that which is most agreeable, and giving it that which  
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is most disagreeable to it, This may be done without letting any thing appear, and without any Injury to the Health. The *Ears* shou'd be mortified by avoiding the hearing of all flattering and poison'd Discourses, and by delighting in hearing the Word of the Lord, not only the outward Word, which strikes our bodily Ears, but that which God speaks within us.

The Softness and Effeminacy of the Body ought to be mortified and overcome, by not suffering it to sleep so much, and by stealing some Moments from our Sleep to consecrate them to God. We ought moreover to lay aside a thousand little Niceties. The true way of chastening the Body, and which may and ought to be practised at all Times and in all Places, is to suffer, for the Love of God, all the Inconveniences of Life which happen to us in the Order of Providence, Heat, Cold, a hard Bed, lying awake, a sickly Constitution, the Inconsiderateness of those we live with, the Unhandiness of Servants, the Ill-will of Men, their pointed Raileries, their Calumnies; and lastly our own Defects, and the pains we are at to conquer our irregular Habits.

The *Humiliation* which is most advantageous, and hardest to bear, is, that which

is occasion'd by our own Faults, Miseries, and Sins. We ought to bear with our selves, and to consider our selves, as if, for the Love of God, we had the Care of some Leper: We must every Day cleanse his Wounds, without being tired and surprized at the Stench of his Ulcers.

Thus, my dear Daughter, it is necessary for you to join a true and solid Mortification to your Prayer. Let us not flatter our selves, Prayer and Mortification are two Sisters so inseparably attendant upon one another, that the one is no sooner lost, but it costs the Life of the other. Driness in Prayer is very often caus'd by nothing but Unmortifiedness. God is a jealous God; he punishes our Delicacies and Infidelities by his Absence. Observe therefore the Rule I have laid down, and every Day offer this double Sacrifice to God, of depriving your self of what is most agreeable to you, and doing what is most repugnant to your Senses: And in this don't flatter your self: Be sincere with God; and whatever you do, do it so purely for God, as to conceal it, as much as possible, from the Eyes of all Creatures, having nothing but God in view in all that you do. God regards the Intention as much, or more than the Action.

Give

Give your self to God with a right, sincere, and disengaged Heart: mortify and deny your self continually. When you feel your Inclinations carried towards any Creature, and your Mind and Heart busied about it, you must bear with your self, returning to God with an humble Confidence, letting the Thoughts of it drop, and suffering the Uneasiness it causes you, without opposing it directly, which wou'd but encrease your Trouble; but remain quietly in the Presence of God without multiplying your self by Acts. All that you have to do, is to avoid as much as possible the Occasions, and to die to all the little Satisfactions and Desires of seeing, of speaking, and hearing.

You must not disquiet your self for the Troubles, Clouds, Temptations, and continual Vicissitudes to which human Nature is subject. But bear 'em mildly, letting 'em run off, accustoming your self to Calmness and Peace.

You must not make a Scruple of doing any thing your State of Life requires of you; but do every thing in the Order of God, and for God; and look upon every thing that happens to you as the Order of God, nourishing your self with his Will in the

present Moment ; be content with every thing ; without troubling your self about what may appear more holy and better to others : The Order of God ought to be your Guide.

Die to the Desire of speaking of God and holy things, it is always imperfect ; what God desires of you is a Death to all things. 'Tis not in speaking of God, that we should express what we feel of God ; on the contrary, it is hurtful to us. If I have any Credit with you, you must be a long while silent of God, that you may only speak to God. God would have what he works in us be a Secret ; and if we are to manifest his Operation, it must be by such an outward Behaviour, as is all Sweetness, and Meekness, all Humility, all Submission, all Sincerity and Chearfulness.

Preserve always an inward Solitude, without which the outward signifies nothing. Forget your self, and rid your Mind of the Thoughts of all Creatures, to employ it only upon God : But don't make your self uneasy at what passes within you without your Consent. No impetuous Desires are from God. God dwells in the Calm.



## S E C T. V.

*Some Rules for Conversation.*

**A**S Conversation is that in which the Society of Life does chiefly consist, you ought especially to learn how to behave your self in it.

Conversation ought to be easy, obliging, and free from Dispute. When any arises, yield easily, never make any one uneasy; bear with the Defects of others.

Never speak of any one but to their Advantage, taking the part, as far as you can, of the defam'd absent. Never judge any body, and don't easily believe the ill that is said of others. Never lie, nor exaggerate any thing.

Let your Conversation be free and chearful, but shun all Vanity.

Avoid Flatterers, and those who applaud your Defects. Look upon those as true Friends who tell you of a Fault. Be asur'd that the Commendation of any thing



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S E C T. V.

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It ought to be easy, obliging,  
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Be attentive to the Advantage  
of any one but to their Ad-  
vantage the part, as far as you can,  
be present and absent. Never judge any  
person's Faults. Don't easily believe the ill that  
others say. Never lie, nor exaggerate.

Conversation be free and cheerful, without  
all Vanity.

Be moderate in your Discourse, and  
avoid all Controversies, and those who  
are apt in the Dispute. Look upon those  
as Fools who are too ready in their  
going on. Never commend any one  
other respect. Never commend any one  
had their Faults. Never commend any one  
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that is ill in us, is nothing but Raillery and Satyr.

Never contract a Friendship with Persons who allow themselves too great Liberties; don't converse with 'em. Make your Friendships among Persons of Piety, and Prudence, of Virtue and Solidity. Give your Friends all liberty to reprehend you; and when they do so, take it kindly of 'em; without which, you will never be perfect, tho' you labour after it all your Life long. Never look upon those who flatter you as your true Friends; they are self-interested, not sincere Friends.

Never break with your Friends, unless they are vicious; and endeavour to chuse such as are not likely to give you the occasion. Be very distrustful of Women that are not virtuous; they are often more dangerous than Men.

Never suffer any Man to have any manner of Freedom with you: You must be upon the Reserve with them. Never receive any one with Assiduity. Never give occasion for suspecting that you make a Preference in your Heart, which Decency constrains you to conceal; but with Civility to all, be familiar with none. It is not enough, not to aim at making Lovers; you must

must shun more than Death whatever may cast the least Blemish upon your Reputation. Never be with a Man alone, and never give him an Opportunity of saying that to you which you ought not to hear. Take care that you give not any Man an Entrance into your Heart: 'tis like breaking a Dam, after which there is no stopping the Inundation.

Give *Alms* according to your Fortune. Visit the sick. Take care of a Provision for the Poor where your Estate lies; those you are obliged to assist. Comfort the afflicted, and never afflict any one. Let all your Works be done with Discretion and Charity.

Be mild, chearful, peaceable: Have no whimsical and fantastical Humours: Never reprove without reason, and then your Correction will be useful: but never do it in a Passion. Much Steadiness and Charity, but little Familiarity with your Domesticks. When they are sick, suffer 'em not to be put out of Doors: You ought to shew them the greatest Charity. If their Distempers are such as that they cannot be kept in the House without danger, soften their going out by the kindest Assurances in other respects, that they may be convinced their

being put out was not out of Unkindness, but Necessity.

Never injure any body, not even in jest: it is very indecent: and never say any thing which you think will give another any Uneasiness. Pardon Injuries readily; but never give occasion to others to do the same by you. Never play upon any one whatsoever, 'tis a great Sin.

To conclude, dear Daughter, be instant in begging of God his Help and Assistance: and I doubt not but if you live according to these Directions, you will be happy both in this World, and in the next.





*The following Letter giving Light to some Points in the foregoing Instruction, was thought proper to be added to it.*



THE fovereign Happinefs of Life is the Dependence upon the Will of God. How God manifests his Will outwardly and inwardly, and the Fidelity we owe to it. Prayer of the Heart preferable to that of the Head. We ought to hearken to God, who speaks to the Heart, and how. Solid Devotion, in what it confifts. Positive Refolutions. Motives not to give way to Difficulties. Not to forget God, but to feek him constantly within us.

1. The fupreme Happinefs of Life, as you well obferve, is the continual Dependence upon the Will of God, in every thing. This is the Substance, and whatever is not this, is but the Shadow of Piety. For, I pray, of what ufe is that Servant who burdens himfelf with Bufinefs that is not requir'd of him, and neglects what his Mafter has pofitively commanded him? I know  
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it may be said, that no one wou'd expressly contradict the Will of God by a manifest Disobedience, that has but the least Knowledge of God, and design to please him: But this is not enough: the holy Scripture says, that *it is as the Sin of Witchcraft, to resist; and as the Sin of Idolatry not to be willing to obey* \*. All the Difficulty then for Men of good Will, is to know the Will of God.

2. The Will of God is manifested outwardly or inwardly: Outwardly, by the State, Employ, or Vocation of every one: We ought always to prefer the proper Duty of our State to all particular Devotions whatsoever. The Will of God is also known by the Law, by the Gospel, and by the good Orders and Discipline of the Church, which we are bound by God to obey. This is a general Rule for all. But there is also a divine Order expressly for every one of us in particular: and that is, whatever happens to us from Moment to Moment, whether from God, who tries us; or from the Creatures, who crucify us; or from our selves, by our Imprudences; In fine, every thing that happens to us, except Sin, shews us the outward Will of God.

3. His inward Will is manifested either by the simple Inclination God gives to the

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\* 1 Sam. xv. 23.

Soul, or by the Dispositions into which he puts it. The Soul ought to be equally faithful to both of these. For as on the one hand we ought to resist the irregular Desires of *Nature*, so on the other, we ought to acquiesce in the Desires form'd in us by *Grace*. We may know our Desires are from Grace, when they are not self-interested, when they have God only for their End, and when they are not contrary to the Duties of our State. For all Desires which contradict any Duty of our Place, how good soever they may appear, are certainly not of God. For God cannot be contrary to himself; and 'tis in this Sense, that we must mortify and die to the Desires of good things, when they are inconsistent with what God requires of us otherways. As for our inward Dispositions, how painful and troublesome soever they are, we must bear them in the Spirit of Sacrifice: for he that does not deserve any thing, has no reason to expect any thing. The wise Man advises us, to *bear the Delay of Consolations, that our Life may be renewed and encrease* \*.

4. To answer simply your Question concerning what kind of Prayer it is, that I think God would have you to use; I must say, that your Prayer ought to be rather the

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\* *Eccles. ii. 3.*



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Product of your Heart, than of your Head. God values *Love*, much more than *Reasoning*. Love much, and reason little. 'Tis a good way to speak a little to God, who dwells in the midst of our Souls on purpose to hearken to us; but after having spoken to God, we ought out of respect to hearken to him some Moments. If God did not speak to our Heart, he wou'd not have said in so many Places of Scripture, that *he speaks to the Heart of Jerusalem*\*; that we must hear him; *hearken, O Daughter*†! Do you hearken to him then for some Moments. But perhaps you will say, I don't know the Voice of God. The reason is, because you do not understand his Language: for he speaks incessantly, but he speaks efficaciously. [His Words are Works.] The Voice of God is a [powerful and] intimate Touch [or Movement;] which teaches with little Noise the divine Science of *knowing* and *loving* God, and of knowing and hating our selves. Never end your Prayer before you have rested some Moments in Silence to hearken to God; begging of him that he himself wou'd teach you to pray. One cannot always when one wou'd pray with the Head, our Imagination is so volatile and roving. And as all our Endeavours and Efforts sometimes cannot fix it, I shou'd

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\* *Isaiab* xl. 2.

† *Psal.* xlv. 10.

think the time we employ upon this, wou'd be better bestow'd in making Acts of Love.

5. You are in the right to be afraid of *ridiculous* and *extraordinary* Devotions. But the Prayer of the Heart, and the Love of the Will of God cannot fall under either of these Censures. This [Prayer of the Heart and of Love] is as old as the World, and God never requir'd any thing of Man but his *Heart*. This is the Prayer of the old Law, and of the new. If Prayer depended only upon reasoning, the Scripture wou'd not have said, that *God hears the Preparation of the Heart of the Poor* \*, that he loves Simplicity. The same may be said of Submission to the Will of God: This is the Hinge upon which the whole Practice of the Gospel turns, first to submit our selves to the divine Will, afterwards to conform our selves, and at last to unite our selves to it. If this be thought an *extraordinary* Devotion, it is because every thing that is not an entire Depravation, is [at present] look'd upon as extraordinary: and for my part, I think it much more extraordinary that Men shou'd rather reason upon the Will of God, than submit to it. When we are once instructed in the Truths of Christianity, we need not reason any more before God [in Prayer;] but endeavour to love him, and

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\* *Psal. x. 17.*

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to submit our selves to him. To love him out of Gratitude and Acknowledgment, is, as I observ'd, the first step to a Love of Trust and Confidence, which at last is changed into an absolute and perfect Resignation of our selves into the Hands of him we love.

6. I see nothing of *extraordinary* in all this; but I rather think, that no other way, is the way of the Spirit. This is so true, that the Soul is always uneasy, and in a State of Slavery, till it has taken this way, which is the Path of *Peace* and *Liberty*, in which we find our Souls at ease. *St. Paul* says, that *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty* \*. Man cannot subsist long in a violent State: it is necessary then to take up such a Piety as gives him Peace and Tranquillity. I add also that nothing is more reasonable than this: for what can be more just than to pray to, to speak to, to hearken to God, and to wait for, and expect all our Assistance from him? Than to submit our selves to his Appointments? To accept chearfully all that he does, or orders for us? If we don't do thus, are we not always restless and uneasy, and often even rebellious and disobedient? Nothing is more certain than that the Practice of Submission to the Will of God gives Peace to the Soul. For he that wills nothing but

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\* 2 Cor. iii. 17.

what God orders, can never be deceived. This is the only way that can properly be called simple, it being uniform, and always one and the same Exercise.

7. As to positive Resolutions [about particular things] they are never agreeable to those who have ever so little Knowledge of themselves: they know how little themselves are to be depended upon: they therefore present themselves before God, and give themselves up to him, that he may do his holy Will in them and by them, that he may make them avoid such and such Faults, and practice such and such Virtues. If the Resolutions we made about our Imperfections cou'd give us Strength, what you say wou'd be true: But all Strength is in God, and Misery and Weakness in us: when we commit any faults, we must have recourse to God, implore his help, be convinced of our Misery, and that if God shou'd leave us to our selves, we shou'd be still more miserable, and we shou'd give our selves up to him that he may guard us, since we are not able to guard our selves.

8. Be of good Courage, the greater difficulties you find in the Path of Virtue, the more shou'd they animate you to pursue it. God well deserves it, and tho' we did not find our Interest in serving him, yet that which he is in himself, and that which we owe to him, ought to make us do all things for him.

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9 Never forget this God of infinite Goodness: Reproach your self all the Moments you live without having your Thoughts and Heart employ'd upon him. How can you forget him, whom you have so near you? What? Is he in the midst of you, and are you at a loss for means to bring him to your Remembrance? The Scripture says, *he is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be moved* \*. How come you then to be moved for Trifles and things of nothing, since he is in you? It is because he is there alone, and you do not seek his Face continually, nor endeavour to come into his Presence. You will never get an Habit of seeking God within you, unless you strive to do it. Seek him then diligently and incessantly, that your Faith and Love may never fail.

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\* *Psal. xlv. 5.*

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