

When something which seems "impossible to men" is required of you, say to yourself "Nothing is impossible to God."

How shameful it is, that a soul created for God should have such an inclination after self-idolatry. You must be humbled, suspect yourself, and make use of this unfortunate propensity, to lower your opinion of yourself, and perform generously and bravely all that the Spirit of God requires of you.

Be discouraged at nothing; carry yourself humbly in your inequalities, your weakness and pains; bless God with as much fervour for the progress others may make in virtue, as if it were your own progress. Neither be disheartened by the agitation of self-love: let it pass without condescending to notice it.

In the impatient reaction of your spirit, when it feels ashamed of the past, you act like the foolish goldsmith, who, seeing his gold melted in the crucible, threw it away, believing all lost. Hard as the trial may be, if you willingly bear it, it will be useful to you, if faithfully sustained, without discouragement. Chiefly fear offending God deliberately. Light faults, into which we have carelessly fallen, though easy to repair, chill our love when they become habitual, if they dwell in our hearts as the Scripture says, "Dead flies corrupt the sweetness of the ointment."

Purify your conscience then most carefully from the faults of the day. Let not sin remain in your heart: little as it may be, it darkens the light of grace, burdens the soul, hinders that frequent

communion which ought to be held with Christ Jesus: and in proportion as we become lukewarm, we forget God more, and are more affected by the creature. On the contrary, an upright soul, which abases itself, and rises again after the smallest faults, is always fervent and steady.

God makes us feel our weakness, only that he may give us his strength: whatever is involuntary ought not to disturb us. The one thing needful is, never to act against the light within; and to be willing to follow as far as God leads.

*Extracts from the Private Letters of
Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray.*

LETTER 41.

Be at peace, M——. Sensible delight does not depend upon yourself.—All you are responsible for is your inclination. Let God have this without reserve. The question is, not whether you feel a relish for piety, but whether you will acquiesce in the divine will. Know your own faults; separate yourself from them; abandon selfish thoughts. Love God more than yourself; and his glory better than life; at least so desire to love him, and pray for that perfect love. God will love you, and plant his peace in the depths of your heart. This is the subject of my prayer to him for you, and I would endure much to obtain it.