

possess ye your souls," Luke xxi. 19. The soul loses itself by impatience; whereas, when it submits without repining, it possesses itself in peace, and it also possesses God. To be impatient is to desire what one has not; or not to be content with what one has. An impatient soul is a slave to passion, having cast off the restraints of reason and faith: what weakness! what error is this! As long as we endure willingly an evil, it is not an evil to us: why then should we make it a real evil by refusing to bear it willingly? The inward peace resides, not in the senses, or inferior appetites, but in the will. It may be preserved amidst the bitterest sorrows, as long as the will continues firmly resigned. The peace of this world consists not in an exemption from suffering, but in bearing it voluntarily.

2. To hear your murmurings and repinings, it would seem that you are the most innocent soul living: and that it is great injustice that you are not admitted into the terrestrial paradise. Remember how you have offended God, and you must acknowledge his righteous dealing with you. Confess to him with the humility of the prodigal son, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight." If I were left to myself, I should deceive, I should spare, I should betray myself. But the merciful hand executes what I should never have the courage to do; it corrects me in love. Grant also that I may endure with patience its salutary corrections.

## SEVENTH DAY.

*Of submission and conformity to the will of God.*—

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

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

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

## EIGHTH DAY.

*Of prayer.*—1. "Pray without ceasing," 1 Thess. v. 17. Such is our dependence upon God that we are obliged not only to do every thing for his sake, but also to seek from him the very power. This happy necessity of having recourse to him in all our wants, instead of being grievous to us, should be our greatest consolation. What a happiness is it that we are allowed to speak to him with confidence; to open our hearts, and hold familiar conversation with him by prayer! he himself invites us to it; and, as St. Cyprian well observes, we may judge how ready he is to give us those good things which he himself solicits us to ask of him. Let us pray with faith, and not lose the fruit of our prayers by a wavering uncertainty; which, as St. James testifies, hinders the success of them. The same apostle advises us to pray when we are in trouble, because thereby we should find consolation; yet we are so wretched that this heavenly employment is a burden, instead of a comfort to us. The lukewarmness of our prayers is the source of all our other infirmitates.

2. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," Matt. vii. 7. If riches were to be had for asking, with what earnestness, assiduity, and perseverance, would men ask for them? If treasures were to be found with looking for, what place would escape their search? If by knocking they could gain admittance into the king's council, or the highest places of preferment, what a knocking should we hear! But what reproaches, pains, and disappointments, we undergo, in search of false happiness, vain honours, and wretched pleasures of this world, where nothing remains to us beside remorse. Dying grace is the only true good, yet the only thing they neglect; the only thing which they have not patience to wait for. The promise of Christ is fully certain, and it is our own fault if we do not feel the effect of it.

## NINTH DAY.

*Of hearkening to the voice of God.*—1. "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life," John vi. 68. It is Jesus Christ who must be hearkened to. Men are no farther to be heard or followed than as they have the truth and authority of Jesus Christ. Books are only so far good as they teach us the Gospel. Let us go, then, to this sacred source. He, therefore, only speaks and acts, that we might hear him, and only ourselves to study the particulars of his life. What he does as we are, we follow our vain thoughts, and neglect the truth itself, whose words give eternal life. O uncreated Word, yet incarnate for me, make thyself understood in my soul! speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth, and desireth to obey thee!

2. Men often say that they would gladly know what they should do to advance in virtue. But when