

## THOUGHTS ON PRAYER.

## A Fragment.

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Nothing tends to make us faint in prayer, more than what is called a want of a frame in the beginning and progress of that duty. We often measure the success of our supplications by the inward feelings of our own mind, rather than by the exercise of grace, and our simple dependence on the infallible word of God. We are attached to a life of sense, and while we wish to obey God, and pray without ceasing, we wish also a sensible emotion of spirit, a gale from above to encourage our progress and animate our hearts in coming to the glorious high throne. When God is pleased to deny this, we say "we do well to be angry" and restrain prayer before God. When our thoughts about God and ourselves are confused, when we "cannot order" our speech because of darkness," how are we discouraged, how soon do we faint. When instead of that fullness of thought, profusion of words, and strength of argument, we once enjoyed in prayer, our voice falters, our minds are overwhelmed, and our mouths are sealed before God, how natural is it for us to neglect this important duty. Formerly we poured out our hearts to God with enlargement of mind and pertinence of expression, to our own improvement and to the edification of others. Now our thoughts are frozen, and when we enter into our sanctuary, we cannot prevail. How little heart do we often find to our duty, and especially to frequent and fervent converse with the most High God. Many a time do we begin to pray without a sense of the authority of the supreme Lawgiver, without the constraint of the love of Christ, and without a desire to glorify the spirit of grace and supplication. The fear of offending the generation of the saints, our love to our own reputation, or the force of custom, often excite us to address the Father of mercies rather than a sense of need and obedience to the royal law; and if such inferior motives impel us to duty, how formal and cold must we be in the performance of it.

2. We are ready to faint in prayer, when our thoughts wander in it. To serve God without sin and infirmity, without interruption, is not granted to the holiest man upon the footstool of God. It is the province of heaven and not of earth; in every duty there is some defect, and who dares affirm before God and the Church, that he ever prayed without a wandering thought. Our hearts are naturally volatile and restless, and ever after we return to our true rest by faith, they retain a great deal of their former instability. It is no uncommon matter, that the mind is distracted in the presence of God. Our hearts are like the troubled sea, our adversary the devil strains every nerve to divert our affections from God and things above; and the vanities of time press upon us when making our nearest approaches to our Father in heaven. Our faith is weak, our love feeble and our experience scanty, hence how easy is it to overcome a weak faith, to damp an expiring love, or contradict a wavering experience. We are but sanctified in part, our affections are in alliance with the objects around us, our heart is an evil heart