

with which he is wont to speak to his elect. But in order to engage him to reveal himself beforehand, and to communicate his lights, there is no more efficacious or certain method than prayer. Go, therefore, as often as you can, prostrate yourself before him, and say to him with Samuel: Speak, O Lord, thy servant heareth; speak and discover to me your designs with regard to me. Behold, I am ready to hear you, to obey you, to execute all your commands. Whatever difficulty there may be in any thing you prescribe me, or however it may be opposed to my inclinations, from the moment I understand it is your will, I hesitate no longer, but will consider it my duty to accomplish it without delay. Such, O my God! is my resolution, and I hope with your grace, that nothing will be able to shake or to change it. To this prayer you may also add, that of David: *Shew me, O Lord, the way in which I should walk, for to thee I have lifted up my soul.* Ps. 142. The Prophet here uses a powerful reason to touch the heart of God: *Because I have lifted up my soul to thee!* And indeed, if God wishes nothing more ardently than to see us correspond with his Providence and walk in his ways, will he leave us in ignorance of them, and will he have no regard to the desire which we manifest, and the righteous intention which we have of obeying his will?—To interest him in your favour, and dispose him to grant your request, add some particular devotions, and good

works, especially frequent communion, and even some practice of Christian penance; for, according to St. Paul, these are the victims and sacrifices by which God is appeased.

VIII. After having discharged your first duty to God, you should then address yourself to the ministers of God. These are our guides, our conductors, and they have been appointed to give us salutary advice. It is for this purpose God specially enlightens themselves, and it often happens, that he teaches us through their mouths, what he would not reveal to us himself.—Hence, in the old law, the prophets were called *seers*, and it was to them God sent his people to receive all the necessary decisions and advice. Now, by the ministers of God, I understand two kinds of persons. First, in the most general and proper sense they are the priests of the Lord, our confessors, and the directors of our conscience.—Choose a wise director, a man of God, in whom you can have confidence, and explain to him with simplicity and candour, all your views and thoughts, all the good and evil dispositions of your soul. Propose to him your doubts.—Point out to him for what you feel an attraction, and to what a repugnance.—Use no dissimulation with him; and when you believe you have told him every thing, beg of him to examine you himself, and answer his questions with the humility of a child. Above all things, make him feel that he can speak to you with perfect freedom, and ask