

treasures of the earth. God, most liberal and bounteous of all other things, teaches us by the frugal dispensation of his providence how careful we ought to be to make good use of time, because he never gives us two moments together, nor grants us a *second*, till he has withdrawn the *first*, still keeping the *third* in his own hand, so that we are in a perfect uncertainty whether we shall have it. Time is given us to prepare for eternity, and eternity will not be too long to regret our lost time, if we have made a bad use of it.

2. Our whole life, as well as our heart, is due to God: they are neither of them too much for him. He gave them only that we might love and serve him. Let us, therefore, rob him of nothing. It is not every moment in our power to do much for him; but we may always do what is proper for our station. To be silent, to suffer, and to pray, when there is no room for outward action, is an acceptable offering to God. A disappointment, a contradiction, an injury received and endured for God's sake, is of as much value as a long prayer; and the time is not lost which is spent in the practice of meekness and patience. But we must be cautious that such sufferings are not occasioned by our own fault. Thus we should regulate our life, and "redeem the time" as St. Paul saith, flying from the world, its vain amusements, useless correspondences, and unprofitable conversations, which serve only to dissipate our minds, and indulge our self-love. By these means we shall find time for the service of God: all that is spent otherwise is lost.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

Of the presence of God.—1. "Walk before me, and be thou perfect," Gen. xvii. 1. They are the words of God to Abraham, instructing us that to live in the presence of God is the way to perfection. We never depart from that way but by losing sight of God, and forgetting our dependence upon him. God is the light by which we see, and the end at which we should aim. In all the business and events of life, we should consider only the order of his providence, and we should maintain a sense of his presence, in the midst of our avocations, as long as we have no other intention in performing them, but purely that of obeying him.

2. "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help," Psalm cxxi. 1. Looking only to our feet will not be sufficient to deliver us from the many snares that surround us: the danger, indeed, is below, but the deliverance can only come from above; thither must we lift our eyes to Him from whom our help cometh. Our enemies encompass us incessantly; nor are we in less danger from within, by reason of our infirmity: we have no hope but in Jesus Christ, who has overcome the world for himself and for us; his omnipotence will support our infirmities.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

Of the love God hath for us.—1. "I have loved you with an eternal love," Jer. xxxi. 3. Before all ages, and even before we had being, God thought of us, and of us only to do us good. His meditations

were in eternity; his performances in time. His bountiful hand has bestowed on us every kind of blessing. Our infidelities and ingritudes, numerous as they are, have not dried up the fountain of his gifts, nor stopped the course of his miracles. O love without measure, which has made us what we are, which has given us what we have, and which promises as infinitely more! O love without interruption, and without inconstancy, which all the bitter waters of our iniquities could never extinguish! O my God, is there a heart that is not pierced with gratitude, love, and tenderness.

2. But what do we behold? A God, who, after having given all, gave up himself! A God, who comes to seek after us, even when we are lost! Him who condescended to take the form of a slave, to deliver us from the slavery of our enemies! Him who made himself poor to enrich us! Him who expired in torments to save us from the arms of death, and gave us instead a happy life! yet how often do we refuse both him and the life he offers! What should we take a man to be, who should love another as God loves us: and what afflictions do not those deserve, who, after this great sacrifice, will not love the Lord Jesus Christ?

THIRTIETH DAY.

Of the love we ought to have for God.—1. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee," Psalm lxxiii. 25. When we say to God, that we love him with all our heart, it is often a mere form of words without truth or meaning. Men learn it when they are young, and continue to use it when they are grown up, without thinking of what they say. To love God is to have no other will but his; to keep faithfully his law, and have in abhorrence all violation of it. To love God, is to love what Christ loved—poverty, humiliation, and sufferings; it is to hate what he hated—the world and its vanities. Can we be said to love an object which we do not desire to resemble? To love God is to desire to converse with him, to wish to go to him, to sigh and languish after him. That is but a feigned love which does not desire to see the Beloved.

2. Our Lord "came to bring fire upon the earth," Luke xii. 49, and desires that fire might overspread it. Yet men live in a deadly coldness and indifference. They love money, buildings, titles, and a chimera which they call reputation; they love even the meanest and most contemptible things; but divine love rarely finds a place in their hearts. Do thou, O Lord, vindicate thy right in us, notwithstanding our infidelities: let the fire of thy love extinguish all other fires. What can we see lovely out of thee, which is not to be found in its full perfection in thee? O thou Fountain of all good! grant us but grace to love thee, and we shall then love thee only, thee eternally.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

Sentiments of divine love.—1. "We love him because he first loved us," 1 John iv. 19. But when shall we return love for love? When shall we seek

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