

IMITATION OF CHRIST



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THE SODALIST'S
IMITATION OF CHRIST

Imitation of Christ
THE SODALIST'S

IMITATION OF CHRIST

BY

THE VENERABLE

THOMAS HEMERKEN À KEMPIS

An English Translation

Reproducing the Rhythm of the Original

REVISED, CORRECTED, AND EDITED

BY

FATHER ELDER MULLAN, S. J.

P. J. KENEDY & SONS

Publishers to the Holy Apostolic See

NEW YORK

MARYLAND-NEW YORK PROVINCE
OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

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Provincial.

NEW YORK, July 16, 1908.

BV4821
. A1
1908

Imprimatur

FR. ALBERT LEPIDI, O. P.,
Master of the Sacred Palace.
JOSEPH CEPPETELLI,
Patriarch of Constantinople, Vice-gerent of Rome.

Nihil Obstat

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JOHN M. FARLEY

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Two Copies Received

MAK 29 1909

Copyright Entry

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CLASS a XXX. No.

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P R E F A C E

THIS edition of the *Imitation* is meant for members of Our Lady's Sodality and for all who, with them, are likely to seek in the famous work of à Kempis wholesome food for mental prayer.

The translation here published was made by an anonymous English writer. It was chosen because it reproduced well the spirit of the original, even so far as to copy its rhythmical structure, and so invites to meditation, as the original was clearly meant to do. Every line, and indeed every word, of the English has been accurately compared several times with the corresponding line and word of the superb Pohl edition (1904) of the Manuscript of the author. It is believed, in consequence, that this present English text may be considered even more thor-

ough and up to date than was needed for the purpose intended. Needless to say, however, the aim has been not to meet criticism, but to be useful.

It may be well to call attention to the fact that, as has been done more than once in late editions, the third and fourth books are here restored to their original order.

It was at the suggestion of Father Samuel H. Frisbee, S. J., and to some extent with his co-operation, that the work has been done. The editor trusts that this little book, as it is the lasting glory of Thomas Hemerken, has added many a flower to the crown of one who was very like him in many ways in life and now, we hope, is with him in the

Light eternal and infinite brightness,
Firm peace and rest secure

of the

Blessed mansion of the City above !

The editor wishes also to express here his sincere gratitude to R. Rush Ranken, S. J., and W. Coleman Nevils, S. J., for valuable assistance and advice, and particularly to the Very Rev. Herman Walmesley, S. J., who kindly read the proofs throughout.

ELDER MULLAN, S. J.

GERMAN COLLEGE, ROME,
1 July, 1908.

THE VENERABLE THOMAS HEMERKEN A KEMPIS

BORN 1379 OR 1380 — RELIGIOUS 1399 —

PRIEST 1413 OR 1414 — DIED 1471

THE Venerable Thomas Hemerken was born in the year 1379 or 1380 in a small town called Kempen, in the diocese of Cologne. His father was a laboring man, and his mother is said to have kept a school for little children.

His brother John gave himself to the service of God in the Brotherhood of Common Life, a Congregation under the direction of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine.

Thomas, who was some fifteen years younger, was first trained at home and in the grammar school of Kempen. In his thirteenth year, being a boy of great promise, he was sent to complete

his studies at the celebrated school of Deventer.

During his life here as a student, à Kempis fell into the only serious sickness of his life.

At Deventer, Thomas came in contact with members of his brother's Order, whose virtuous example did much to form his character and draw him to the religious life. At twenty years of age he sought admission himself among the Brethren of the Common Life at Mt. St. Agnes, near Zwolle. He was received and commenced his long religious life of seventy-two years (1399-1471). He got the habit in 1406 and was ordained priest in 1413 or 1414.

The life of Brother Thomas as a religious was largely determined by the virtues and instructions of one of his holy Superiors. The name of this excellent man was William Vornken. He was

Prior at Mt. St. Agnes for sixteen years. The *Imitation of Christ*, published (about 1420) while he was Superior, is a faithful portrait of Thomas' spiritual father.

Later on, in 1429, Thomas was Sub-Prior of his Monastery. In 1432, after fourteen months spent attending his brother in his last illness in the Monastery near Arnheim, Thomas returned to Mt. St. Agnes, where he continued until his own death, in 1471. He was Procurator for a while — an office little to his liking — and later a second time Sub-Prior.

His personal appearance has been thus described by Cruise: "He was a man of good figure, scarcely under middle height, of dark complexion and vivid color, the forehead broad and high, the face a little elongated — a noble head, with elevated crown and piercing intelligent eyes, always gentle and kind, clement and

charitable to the weak, encouraging to the kind, occupied at all times with his various duties and unceasingly at work."

The Venerable Thomas Hemerken lived especially an interior life, the record of which is in his books. His external work was that of a confessor and director of souls, a preacher, a superior, and a writer. Of his writings the *Imitation* forms about a tenth part.

This book was written in Latin, of the medieval type, of which Thomas was one of the greatest masters. The style is simple and easy. The illustrations are homely and telling. The language is rhythmical, sometimes poetical, and often eloquent. The author uses Scripture references, phrases, and passages with great freedom. This is doubtless one of the sources of the unction for which his little book is remarkable.

The copy of the *Imitation* which is

here reproduced in English was made by the author himself, perhaps before 1420. At the end of the volume containing it, he wrote: *Finished and completed in the year of our Lord 1441 by the hand of Brother Thomas Kempis at Mt. St. Agnes near Zwolle.*

HOW TO USE THE *IMITATION*

THE *Imitation* is best read slowly. Indeed, the purpose of this edition is to provide Sodalists of Our Lady with a text which will help them to use the book in their daily meditations or spiritual reading of rule.

The Sodalist will do well, then, to read a line or two and think and pray ; then take a second line or two in the same way, and so fill out the allotted time of mental prayer or reading. Some will find it useful to look out, in the alphabetical Index, passages which suit their present mood or need. Some will prefer to begin at the beginning and read the chapters successively. Some will reserve the third book for the time of Holy Communion. Some will usually open the book at random and make their mental prayer on whatever they chance upon ; it is wonderful how often this process provides apposite food for thought.

But in all cases, the proper way is to read slowly and ponder.

Perhaps there is no more helpful method for this than the

SECOND METHOD OF PRAYER

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

1. Let your mind repose a little. Seated or walking, think what you are going to do and for what purpose.

2. Make a *Preparatory Prayer*, according to the person to whom the prayer, which you are going to make your subject, is addressed.

3. Take the text you wish to use. Kneel or sit down, whichever makes you better able to pray or gives you greater devotion.

Keep your eyes shut, or fixed on one spot, without allowing them to wander about.

Read the words of the text singly ; dwell on each as long as you find meanings, comparisons, relish, and consolation in it.

Be more reverent when addressing a sacred person directly.

4. At the end, turn to the person with whom the text was concerned and in a few words ask for the virtues or graces you feel you want most. You may add a vocal prayer if you choose.

5. Jot down in your Spiritual Diary notes of your lights and Resolves.

NOTE

If in one or two words you find enough to think of, be not anxious to pass on.

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Book 1

LESSONS USEFUL FOR THE SPIRITUAL
LIFE

CHAPTER 1

OF IMITATING CHRIST AND DESPISING ALL
THE WORLD'S VANITIES

“**H**E that followeth Me walketh not in
darkness:”

Thus saith the Lord.

These are Christ's words, and by them we
are taught

That we must imitate His life and ways,
If we would be truly filled with light,
And from all blindness of heart be set at
liberty.

Therefore our study above all must be
Upon the life of Jesus Christ to ponder.

His teaching passes all the teachings of
the Saints,
And he who had the spirit of Christ
Would find the manna hidden there.
But it is thus, that many a man,
Hearing the Gospel ever and again,
Feels for it but little taste,
Because the spirit of Christ is none of his.

But he who would with relish
Fully understand the words of Christ
Must study to make all his life like unto
His.

What good is it to you
Deeply of the Trinity to discuss,
If you lack humility, and so displease the
Holy Trinity?
In fact, deep words make no man just and
holy;
But lives of virtue make men dear to God.
Rather had I feel compunction
Than be able to define it.
If you should know the Bible through and
through
And the sayings of all philosophers,
What — without love of God, without His
grace — would all be worth to you?

Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity,
Save loving God and serving Him alone!
The highest wisdom is this:

By scorning the world to strive to gain the
kingdom in the skies.

Therefore it is but vanity to seek the
riches that will fail,
And to build hopes on them.
It is but vanity to aim at honors:
It is but vanity to raise oneself on high.
It is but vanity to follow longings of the
flesh,
And covet what must bring us heavy pun-
ishment in days to be.
It is but vanity to wish for life that shall
be long,
And care but little for its being good.
It is but vanity to think upon the present
life alone,
And not look forward to the things which
are to come.
It is but vanity to love what with all speed
is passing by
And not to hasten there where joys eternal
dwell!

Bethink you often of the saying:
“The eye is never satisfied with seeing:
The ear is never filled with hearing.”
Try, then, to wean your heart from loving
 what you see,
And turn to what you cannot see.
For they who follow where the senses lead
Defile their conscience,
And lose the grace of God.

CHAPTER 2

OF HUMBLE THOUGHTS OF SELF

ALL men by nature dearly love to know;

But knowledge without fear of God —
what is it worth?

Better certainly the humble peasant, fearing God,

Than the proud thinker who neglects himself and studies the courses of the stars.

He that well knows himself grows cheap
in his own sight,

And praise from man delights him not.

If I knew all that is in the world,

And yet were not in charity,

What would it profit me before God,

Who is to judge me from my deeds?

Rest, rest from this excessive longing to know:

In it you will find great distraction and deceit.

Gladly the men of knowledge would seem
wise,

Gladly be talked of as "the learned."

But there are many things

Of little or no profit to the soul to know.

Unwise indeed is he

Who turns his mind to aught,

But that which serves the saving of his
soul.

Much talk contents not the soul;

But a good life refreshes the mind,

And a pure conscience

Brings us great confidence in God.

The more you know, the better that you
know it;

The sterner will the Judgment be, unless
your life have been the holier.

Then be not raised on high in pride

For any skill or knowledge that you
have;

But rather fear for what knowledge has
been given you.

If you think you know much and understand things well;

Reflect, however, there is much more you do not know.

Be not high-minded;

But rather confess your ignorance.

Why would you put yourself before another,
When many can be found more learned
than you,

Many more skilled in the law?

But if you would know and learn something that will profit you —

Love to be unknown and held as naught.

The deepest lesson for a man to learn is
this,

And the most useful too —

Truly to know — ay and to despise —
himself.

Great wisdom is it and perfection

To think no great things of yourself,

And always well and highly of your neighbor.

If you were to see another clearly sin,
Or do some grievous deed,
You should not think the better of yourself.
For how long can you stay good? You
cannot tell.

We all are frail.
But this must be your thought —
“None is more frail than I.”

CHAPTER 3

OF TRUTH'S TEACHING

HAPPY the man taught by the truth
itself,

Not by shapes and sounds that pass,
But by the very truth.

Our thoughts and our senses often lead
us wrong,

And they see but little.

What is the use of great disputes
On what is hidden and obscure?

We shall not on the Judgment Day
Be blamed because we knew them not.

But it is great unwisdom

To neglect the useful and the needful things,
And turn our willing thoughts to what is
curious and hurtful.

Eyes we have, and do not see;

Why should we care about scholastic terms?

The man to whom the Word Eternal
speaks

Is loosened from the bonds of many
theories.

From one Word come all things;
And all things speak — one Word.

This Word is the beginning,
Which also speaks to us.

Without this Word, no one can judge
Or think aright.

But he to whom all things are One,

And who draws all things to One,

And in One sees all things —

Steadfast-hearted can he be,

And stay at peace in God.

O God, Who art the truth,

Make me one with Thee in everlasting love!

Oft am I weary reading and listening:

All I wish and long for is in Thee.

Then silent be all teachers, hushed be all
creation in Thy sight:

Speak to me, Thou alone!

The more a man is one within himself
And simple in his inner life;

The deeper and the more he understands
— yet without toil.

For down from Heaven there comes to him
The light of understanding.

A spirit simple, pure, and steady
Is not wasted in a multitude of business;
Because it does its work all to honor God,
And strives to be at rest within itself from
all self-seeking thoughts.

Who troubles and hinders you more
Than your heart's affection — yet unkilld?
The good and pious soul first maps out in
his heart

The exterior things he has to do,
Nor do they drag him off
To the longings of his evil inclinations,
But he bends them to follow reason that is
right.

Who fights a braver fight
Than he who strives to win a battle over
self?

This, this should be our ceaseless work,
To overcome the enemy that is ourselves,

Daily to get a stronger hold on him,
And win some ground upon the better path.

To all perfection in this life
Some imperfection clings,
And no deep thoughts of ours are free from
some dark mists.

The humble knowledge of yourself
Is a surer road to God
Than deep searching into learning.
Yet knowledge is not to be blamed,
Nor any simple knowing of a thing.
Nay, in itself considered, it is good,
And is of God ordained.
But a good conscience and a virtuous life
must ever stand before it.
Still, because many rather strive to know
Than to live well,
They often err,
And bring forth little fruit, if any fruit at all.

O, if they used the care they spend
upon their questions,

In rooting out their vices and in sowing
seeds of virtue;
There would not be such scandals and
such evils in the world,
Such careless ways within the cloister walls.

But, when the Day of Judgment comes,
We shall be asked
What we have done, — and not what we
have read:
How holy were our lives —
And not how fine our words.

Tell me,
Where now are all those Doctors and those
Masters
Whom you knew well while on the earth
they lived
And flourished in their learning?
Now others hold their offices —
And I know not if they think of them!
In life it seemed that they were something
great,

And now none speaks of them.

How fast, how fast the glory of the world
flits by!

I would their lives had tallied with their
knowledge:

Then good had been their studies and
their readings.

How many perish by vain learning in the
world

Whose care is little for the service of their
God.

Because their choice

Is rather to be great than humble,

Therefore grow they vain in their conceits.

Truly great is he

Who has great charity.

Truly great is he

Who in himself is small,

And holds as naught all heights of honor.

Truly wise is he

Who deems all earthly things as dung,

That he may win the prize which Christ is.
And truly well taught is he
Who does God's will,
Letting his own will go.

CHAPTER 4

OF PRUDENCE IN WHAT WE HAVE TO DO

WE must not credit every word and
every impulse;

But with care and patience

We must weigh the matter in the scales
of God.

Oh, it is sad,

More readily we speak, more readily believe
Ill of another rather than good:

So weak are we.

But perfect men do not lightly credit
Every teller of a tale;

Because they know human weakness,
Which is so prone to ill,

And apt enough to stumble through the
tongue.

Great wisdom is it,

Not to run headlong on in what we have
to do,

Nor to stand obstinately fixed in our own
opinions.

It is a part of wisdom, too,
Not to believe any and every word of
man,
Nor presently to pour into another's ear
What we have heard or credited.
Take counsel with the wise
And those whom conscience rules;
And seek instruction from a better man
than you
Rather than follow up your own inventions.

A good life makes man wise
As God would have him wise;
And skilled in much.
The humbler one is in himself,
And the more subject unto God;
The wiser will he be in all, the more at
peace.

CHAPTER 5

OF READING HOLY WRIT

IN Holy Writ we must seek truth,
Not eloquence.

In the spirit in which each Holy Book was
made,

In that must it be read.

Use we should look for there,

Not subtle speech.

We should be just as glad to read simple
and pious books

As deep ones and profound.

Let it not trouble you whether the writer
be of weight or no,

Whether his name be great or small;

But let the love of simple truth draw you
to read.

You must not ask who said it,

But what is said — attend to that.

Men pass away;

But the truth of the Lord abides forever.

And, without caring for the person of the
writer,

God speaks to us in many ways.

Often in reading Holy Writ

Curiosity obstructs our path:

We wish to understand and argue,

Where we should simply pass by.

If you would drink a profitable draught,

Read with humility,

With simpleness and faith,

And never wish to have the name of

“learned.”

Ask your questions freely,

And hear the words of holy men — not
answering them.

And be not displeased by the parables of
the ancients:

Not without reason are they put before you.

CHAPTER 6

OF INORDINATE INCLINATIONS

WHEN we desire a thing in an inordinate way,

We grow at once unrestful in ourselves.

The proud and covetous are never at peace :

He who is in spirit

Poor and lowly

Spends his days in peace that is abundant.

The man who is not yet quite dead
within himself

Is soon tempted,

And is overcome in small and trifling things.

He that is weak in spirit,

And in a way a slave to the flesh,

Leaning to things of sense,

Finds it hard to draw himself wholly away
from earthly longings,

And when he does so, he is often sad.

Easily also is he angered, if a man withstands him.

Yet if he gain his end,
At once his conscience rises to accuse him,
And he is cast down because he followed
 where his passions led:
Passions that aid him not at all to gain
 the rest he sought.

So, by resisting passion,
True peace of heart is found,
Not by yielding to it like a slave.
Therefore, peace has no being in the heart
 of carnal man,
Nor in the man given up to outward things;
But in the fervent spiritual soul.

CHAPTER 7

OF FLIGHT FROM VAIN HOPES AND PRIDE

VAIN is he
Who puts his trust in man or in
created things.

Blush not to serve your neighbor
For the love of Jesus Christ;
Nor blush at seeming needy in this world.

You must not stand upon yourself;
But rest your hope in God.
Do what you can,
And God will help you if your will be good.

You must not trust in knowledge of your
own,
Nor in the cleverness of any man that lives;
But rather in the grace of God,
Who helps the humble and humbles them
that count upon themselves.

Glory not in riches, if you have them,
Nor in your friends that they are high in
power;

But glory in God, Who gives you all,
And longs to give you, above all other
things — Himself.

Pride not yourself on size or beauty,
Spoilt and made ugly by a touch of sick-
ness.

Take not complacence in your ability or
talent;
Lest you displease your God,
To Whom your natural goodness all belongs.

Think not yourself a better man than
others,
Lest you be thought (may be) a worse
one in God's sight:
He knows what is in man.
And be not proud of your good works;
God's judgments are different far from
men's,
And, when men smile, He often frowns.
If you have any good in you,

Believe still better things of other men :
This is the way to keep humility.
It hurts you not to place yourself lower
 than all other men ;
But it does harm you sorely,
To prefer yourself to even one.
Peace lives ever with the humble ;
But in the proud man's heart,
Envy, and frequent wrath.

CHAPTER 8

BEWARE OF TOO GREAT INTIMACIES

DISCOVER not your heart to every
one;

But tell your case unto the wise, God-fear-
ing man.

Keep not much company with the young
And those who are without.

When with the rich, flatter them not;

Nor willingly appear before the great.

Make to you friends of the simple and the
humble,

The pious and the obedient,

And talk of what will edify.

For women — be not intimate with any;

But commend in general all good women
unto God.

Only with God and with His Angels
choose to be intimate:

And shun the knowing of men.

Charitable you must be towards all;

But intimacy is not good.

Sometimes it falleth out,
That one unknown is great in reputation:
And yet acquaintance with him brings
disgust.

Sometimes we think to please another by
our joining with him;
And we displease him rather, by the unholy
character he sees in us.

CHAPTER 9

OF OBEDIENCE AND SUBJECTION

A GREAT thing it is to stay in obedience,

And live under a superior,
And not be one's own master.

Far safer standing is it in a lowly place,
Than in authority.

Many live under obedience because they
must,

Rather than from love of God.

Such as these have hardship,
And murmur easily.

And never will they get true liberty of soul
Until for God's sake they submit themselves
With all their hearts.

You may run here, you may run there;
But you will find no rest save in humble
subjection,

Beneath the rule of him that is set over you.
And dreams of places

And the changing of them,
Have led astray full many.

True, every man likes to act according
to his own ideas,
And rather turns to those who think with
him.
But if God be in our midst,
Now and again we must give up our ideas
To enjoy the boon of peace.

Who is so wise
That he can know all things in all their
fulness?
Then listen readily unto another's view:
Trust not too deeply in your own.
If your own view be good,
And yet for God's sake you leave it
And follow another,
You will get greater good from that.
I have often heard it said:
"Safer to take counsel than to give it,
Safer to listen."

Ay, it may happen, too,
That each man's idea is good;
But to refuse to agree with others,
When reason or the case demands it
Is a mark of obstinacy and pride.

CHAPTER 10

OF SHUNNING EXCESS IN TALK

AS far as may be, shun the noisy
throng of men.

For it hinders much to treat of worldly
things,

Simple though the motive be.

For we are tainted soon by vanity, and soon
enslaved.

O that I had oftener held my tongue
And been away from men!

But why are we so glad to talk and chat
with one another,

When so rarely we get back to silence
With an unwounded conscience?

We are so glad to talk

Because we look for comfort each from one
another's words;

Because we seek to ease the heart weighed
down by various thoughts.

And of such things as we much love

And much desire,
Or think to be against us,
Much do we like to talk and think.
But, sad to say,
Our talk is often empty, and in vain.
For this comfort from without
Is no small hurt to that from God which
comes to us within.

So we must watch and pray,
For fear our time goes idly by.
If you may talk and it is well to do so,
Talk things that will build up the soul.
Evil habit, and neglect of our advance
Do much to make us keep no guard upon
our mouth.

But pious conference about the things of
God
Helps us no little on the spiritual path,
And most of all when men in mind and
spirit one,
Associate in God together.

CHAPTER 11

HOW TO GAIN PEACE AND OF ZEAL FOR PROGRESS

WE might have peace, great peace,
If we would not occupy ourselves
with others' words and deeds,
And with what concerns us not.
How can he be long at rest
Who meddles in another's cares,
And looks for matters out of his own path,
And little or seldom gathers his thoughts
within him?

Blest are the simple-minded,
For peace in abundance shall be theirs.

Why were certain of the Saints so perfect,
So contemplative? —
Because they strove to wholly mortify
themselves
To all the longings of the world;
And thus with all the marrow of their
hearts they could cleave to God,
And be free to give attention to themselves.

We are too busy with our passions:
We are too careful of the things that pass.
We seldom utterly overcome one fault,
And are not eager to improve each day:
So we stay cold and tepid.

If we were wholly dead unto ourselves,
And no wise entangled in our inner hearts;
We then could relish even things divine,
And have some experience of heavenly
contemplation.

Our whole, our greatest hindrance, this,
We are not free from passions and con-
cupiscence,
Nor do we try to enter on the perfect way
The Saints have gone.
When even a little trouble faces us,
We are too soon cast down,
And turn aside to human consolations.

If we strove to stand in battle line like
soldiers true,

Above us we should surely see God's help
 descending from the sky.

Ready is He to help all those that fight
And build their hopes upon His grace:
He makes for us chances to fight — that
 we may be victorious.

If we will put our progress but in those
 outward rules we keep,
Soon will our devotion find its end.
But let us lay the axe unto the root,
To purge ourselves from passions,
And to gain the treasure of a mind at
 peace.

If every year we rooted out one fault,
Soon we should be perfect men.
But now it is often just the opposite:
We find that we were better, purer men,
When we set out towards God,
Than after many years' profession.

Our fervor and our progress should grow
 daily more;

But now a great thing it seems
If one can keep a part of his first fervor.

If at the first we would but be a little
hard upon ourselves,
Then we could do everything in after days
With ease and joy.
Hard is it to cease
From what we are accustomed to,
But harder still to go against our will.
Yet if you vanquish not the slight and
little things,
When will you overcome the greater ones?
Stand up against your inclination at the start;
Unlearn the evil habit;
Lest the little greater grow, and make
things harder for you still.

I fancy you would be more eager on your
spiritual path,
Did you but think what peace to your own life,
What joy to others you would bring
By having yourself in order.

CHAPTER 12

OF THE USES OF ADVERSITY

USEFUL it is for a man sometimes to
meet troubles and adversities,
For they often call him back to his own
heart;
That he may know he is in exile,
Nor place his hope in aught upon the earth.

Useful it is for a man
To suffer sometimes contradiction,
And have men think ill of him,
Or know but half the truth,
Even though he does well and means well.
These things often help unto humility,
And shield him from vainglory.
For then we better look towards God, the
inner Witness of our deeds,
When outwardly men hold us cheap,
And do not well believe us.
Therefore, a man should root himself in
God — so fixedly

As not to need to seek for many human
consolations.

When a man (who means to do so well)
Is troubled or tried,
Or afflicted with evil thoughts;
Then does he see he has more need of
God,
And grasps the fact that without God he
can do nothing good.

Then he is sad, too, and moans, and
prays,
By reason of his misery.
Then, weary of longer life,
He sighs for death to come,
To be dissolved and be with Christ.
Then, too, he marks well
That in this world full peace and perfect
safety cannot be.

CHAPTER 13

OF RESISTING TEMPTATIONS

SO long as in this world we live,
We cannot be untempted and free
from trial.

Wherefore in the Book of Job we read:
The life of man upon the earth is trial.
So every man should have a care
Of his temptations;
And in prayer keep watch,
For fear the devil find occasion to deceive
him.

He never slumbers,
But goes about in quest of men he may
devour.

None so perfect, none so holy,
As not to meet temptation now and
then:

We cannot quite be free.

Yet are temptations often very useful
unto men,

Though they be hard and troublesome;
For, meeting them,
We are made humble,
Pure, and wise.

All Saints have gone through many a
trouble, many a temptation —
Gone through with gain.
And those that could not bear temptations,
Reprobate have they become and fallen
away.

No order is so holy, and no spot so
hidden
That troubles or temptations do not come.
Long as he lives, none is wholly safe from
them,
Because the root whence the temptation
comes
Is in man himself.
For we were born in concupiscence.
One trial or one trouble over, another takes
its place;

And we shall always have something to
bear,
Since man has lost the blessing of his happy
state.

Many try to shun temptations:
Deeper fall they into them.
By flight alone we cannot overcome;
But by patience and true humility
We get stronger than all our foes.

He who only shuns them outwardly,
And plucks not out the root,
Will make but little way.
Nay, sooner will they come again at him,
And his condition will be worse.

By slow degrees,
By patience and long waiting of the soul,
God helping, you will overcome,
Better than by severity and restlessness of
yours.
Receive men's counsel often in temptation;
And with them that are tempted

Deal not harshly;
But pour consoling balm upon the wound,
As you would wish done to you.

A fickle mind, and a want of trust in
God,
Are the beginning of all temptations;
For, as a ship without a helm is driven by
the waves now here, now there;
So the lax man
And he that abandons what he purposed
Is variously tempted.

Fire proves the iron:
And temptation proves the just.
Often we know not what our powers are;
But temptation shows us what we are.

Yet must we keep a special watch
To meet the first approach;
For then an enemy is vanquished with
more ease,
If we will give no entrance at the gateway
of the mind,

But meet him straightway at his knock
beyond the threshold.

Hence one has said:

“Withstand disease’s onslaught at the start:
The doctor’s medicine may be too late.”

For first into the mind the bare thought
comes;

Then comes the strong imagination.

Then comes the pleasure in it, and the evil
motion,

And the assent.

And thus by slow degrees

The wicked foe gets entrance full,

If not resisted at the first.

And he who lazily puts resistance off,

Weaker and weaker grows he every day:

Stronger and stronger his foe.

Some suffer greater temptations in the
beginning of their conversion:

Some at the end.

Some, again, are troubled through almost
all their lives.

Some are tried lightly enough —
As God in wisdom and in justice wills.
He weighs what each man is, what each
deserves;
And preordains all things unto the saving
of His own.

Therefore, when tempted should we not
despair;
But send more fervent prayer to God
That He will deign to help us in our every
trial;
For surely, in the words of Paul,
He “will provide,
Along with trial, an escape,
To make it possible for us to bear it.”

Humble your souls, then, beneath the
hand of God
In every trial and in all temptation:
The lowly-minded He will save and will
exalt.

In temptations and in trials the progress
of the man is proved;
In them his greater merit lies;
In them his virtue shows itself the clearer.
And it is nothing much,
If we be pious, if we fervent be, when we
feel no burden;
But if a man bears up with patience in
adversity,
There will be hope of great advancement.

From great temptations some are guarded
safely,
And are often worsted in petty trials of the
day;
And why? —
That they may be humbled,
And in great things never trust themselves,
Who in such small things are so weak.

CHAPTER 14

OF AVOIDING RASH JUDGMENT

TURN on yourself your eyes:
Beware of judging others' deeds.
We toil in vain in passing sentence upon
men;
We often make mistakes:
Sin easily:
But if we judge ourselves and look within
ourselves,
We always work with profit to the
soul.

As we have a thing at heart,
So do we often judge of it:
We easily lose the power of judging true
because we love a thing.
If in our desire we only aimed always at
God,
We should not be so easily disturbed at
resistance to our views.
But often something lurks within,

Or even falls upon us from without,
That drags us with it in its train.

Many there are that secretly in all they
do seek themselves,
And know it not.
They also seem to be at peace,
When all chimes with their wishes and their
views;
But if a thing be other than they like,
At once they grow disturbed and cross.

Because ideas and opinions are so many,
Often quarrels come between friends and
townsfolk,
Between Religious and the devout.
An ancient custom is so hard to leave,
And none is willing to be led
Farther than himself can see.
If you trust more in your own reason, or
in your own work,
Than in the virtue that subjects to Jesus
Christ;

Rarely and slowly will the light illumine you ;
For God would have us wholly subject to
Him,
And soar above all reason by the ardor of
our love.

CHAPTER 15

OF DEEDS DONE OUT OF CHARITY

NEVER for anything of earth,
Never out of the love of any one,
May any evil deed be done;
But for the profit of a man in need,
Your works of good should freely now and
then be interrupted,
Or even changed to works of better sort.
For then your good work is not ruined:
Rather improved.
The outward work is nothing worth, if
charity be absent;
But all that out of charity is done —
Never so little, never so trivial though it
be —
Is wholly fruitful;
Since God weighs more the reason why
you do your deed,
Than what you do.
Great is his deed
Whose love is great.

Great is his deed
Who what he does does well.
Good is his deed
Who rather serves the common good than
his own will.

A thing often seems charity,
And is rather love of the flesh:
For man's own natural inclination,
And man's own will,
Man's hope of return,
Man's love of ease,
Are rarely absent from his deeds.

He that has true and perfect charity
seeks self in nothing;
But ever unto God alone desires that glory
be given.
He envies none,
Because he loves no joys of his own;
Nor in himself would he rejoice,
But above every blessing longs to be in
bliss in God.

Attributing no good to any man,
He turns it all to God,
From Whom as from a fount flows every-
thing;
In Whom, as their last end, the Saints all
take their joy and rest.

If he had but one spark of real charity,
A man would surely feel
That all the things of earth are full of
vanity.

CHAPTER 16

OF BEARING WITH THE WEAKNESSES OF OTHERS

ALL that you cannot better in yourself
Or in others,

You must patiently endure,

Till God ordains a change.

And think that it is better thus, per-
chance, to try your patience and to
prove you ;

For without this your merits

Must weigh but lightly in the scale.

Yet under hindrances like these you ought
to pray to God

To deign to give you help

To bear them and be kind.

If, once or twice, you warn a man and
yet he listens not,

Strive not with him ;

Leave all to God ;

That His own pleasure may be done in all

His servants, and He in all be honored :

Skilful is He to turn the evil into
good.

Try to be patient
In bearing others' failings and infirmities,
Be they what they may;
For you, too, have many things
Which others must endure.
And if you cannot make yourself all that
you wish,
How can you have another as you will?

We would have others perfect;
And yet we do not root our own failings out.
We would have other men corrected strictly;
And yet we want no correction for ourselves.
Displeased we are when others have free
scope to act;
And yet we would not be refused in any-
thing we ask.
We would have others bound in by laws;
And yet in no way can we bear more
restraint.

Thus it is plain
How rare it is for us to weigh our neighbors
In the same balance with ourselves.

Were all men perfect,
What then should we have
To bear for God from others?
But now has God ordained it so,
That we should learn to carry one another's
 burdens;
For none is without his failings,
None without his burden,
None sufficient for himself,
None wise enough,
But we must hear each other,
Each other comfort,
Help, admonish, and instruct.

Each man's virtue
Clearer shows in times when men oppose
 him.
Occasion makes no man frail,
But only shows what kind of man he is.

CHAPTER 17

OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

NEEDS must you learn to break your
will in many things,
If you would keep peace and harmony with
other men.
No little thing it is to dwell with monks or
in an Order,
And there pass your life without a word
of blame,
And faithful persevere unto your death.
Blessed is he who there has lived well,
And made a happy end.

If you would be as you should be,
And make the progress that you should,
Then must you hold yourself an exile, a
stranger on the earth.
If you would lead the life of a religious,
You must become a fool for Christ.
Little the profit in the habit or the tonsure:
It is the changed life,

The perfect killing of the passions,
That makes the true religious.

He who seeks aught but God alone,
And the saving of his soul,
Will find but pain and tribulation.
He cannot even long remain in peace
Who will not try to be the least,
And subject unto all.

It is for service you are here —
Not for rule.
You have been called, you know, to suffer
and to work,
And not to gossip or be idle.
Here, then, are men tried,
As in the burning furnace gold is tried.
And no one's feet are firm,
Unless with all his heart he wills
To humble himself for love of God.

CHAPTER 18

OF THE EXAMPLES SET US BY THE HOLY FATHERS

LOOK on the vivid patterns set us by
the holy Fathers,
In whom religion and true perfection shone.
What, then, is all we do? —
Trivial or naught.
O, what is our life compared to theirs!

Saints, and the friends of Christ,
They served the Lord in hunger and in
thirst,
In nakedness and cold,
In labor and fatigue,
In hours of watchfulness and days of fast,
In prayer and holy meditation,
In many insults and in persecution.
How great the ills they suffered, and how
many,
Apostles,
Martyrs,
Virgins, and Confessors,

And all the rest,
Who wished to follow in the steps of Christ!
For in this world they hated their own souls:
That they might keep them for eternal life.

How strict, how self-forgetful were the lives
The holy Fathers in the Desert lived!

How long the trials they went through,
how stern!

How often they were harassed by the foe!
How frequent and how fervent were the
prayers they offered up to God!

How rigorous their fasts!

How great their zeal and fervor for perfec-
tion!

How strenuous the fight they fought to
overcome their faults!

How pure and right their intention unto
God!

By day they toiled,
By night they kept time free for lengthened
prayer:
And even while they toiled,

They ceased not from their mental prayer.
All their time passed usefully,
Every hour seeming short
Which they spent with God.
And for the great delight of contemplation,
The body's need of food was often quite
forgot.

All wealth,
And dignity,
All honors, friends, and kinsfolk they re-
nounced.

They longed for nothing from the world:
Scarce did they take necessities for life,
Grieving to serve the body even in its needs.
So they were poor in earthly things,
But very rich in grace and virtues.
In want without:
They were refreshed within with grace and
comfort from on high.

Strangers to the world,
They were very near and familiar friends
to God.

To themselves they seemed as nothing,
And of this world despised;
But they were precious and beloved in the
 eyes of God.

They lived in true humility;
Were simply obedient;
Walked in patience and in charity;
And therefore every day they made advance
 upon the spiritual road,
And gained great grace with God.

They have been given for example unto
 all religious;
And rather should we follow them to good
Than let the army of the tepid make us
 slack.

Think of the fervor in all religious,
When first their holy institution was begun.
Think of their devotion in prayer,
And how they rivalled one another in the
 goodness of their lives.
Think of the discipline that flourished.

Think of the reverence and obedience of all
Beneath the rule of their superior.

The traces of their footsteps left behind
them

Yet witness that they were truly holy men
and perfect,

That fought so stout a fight and trampled
on the world.

Now we deem him great

Who does not break the rule,

And can with patience bear the yoke he
took upon himself.

Alas, our lukewarm ways, and woe to our
neglect,

That we so soon cool down from our first
zeal,

And, tired and chill, are weary of our lives !

You who have seen many a pattern set by
the devout,

O may you not wholly slumber in your wish
To make advance in virtue !

CHAPTER 19

OF THE DUTIES OF A GOOD RELIGIOUS

THE life of a good religious
Should be filled with every virtue,
That he may be, within,
What outwardly he seems to men to be.
And with good reason should his inner life
Be far more than we see outside;
For He Who looks within our life is God,
Whom above all we ought to reverence,
 wherever we may be,
Walking in His sight
As do the Angels — pure.

With each fresh day we should renew the
 purpose we have set before us,
And rouse ourselves to fervor,
As if to-day for the first time we came to
 our new life,
And say:
“Help me, O Lord my God, in my good
 purpose,

And in Thy holy service;
Grant me now to-day perfectly to begin;
For all I have yet done is naught! ”

As our resolve is,
So is the course of our advance,
And he that would advance must needs be
very diligent.

But if the man who makes a strong
resolve
Often fails,
What will he do who only now and then,
Or but languidly resolves?
In many a way we come to leave resolves
that we have made,
And a slight omission in our exercises
Hardly ever goes without some loss.

Resolves of just men rest more on God's
grace than any wisdom of their own.
In Him, too, they always trust,
Whatever they take in hand.
For man proposes,

But God disposes,
Nor is man the master of his way.

If out of pity, or to do a service to a
brother,
We sometimes let a regular exercise go,
Afterwards we can with ease recover what
is gone.
But if we lightly let it go for weariness or
carelessness,
Then quite faulty is our act,
And we shall feel the harm.

Much as we try,
We yet shall slightly fail in many a thing.
But we should always lay a certain plan
before us,
And most of all against those things which
hinder us the most.

Our outer and our inner life
Must both be closely scrutinized and put in
order,
For both are useful for advance.

If you cannot always recollected stay,
Sometimes at all events you can,
And once a day at least,
In the morning, namely, or at eventide.
In the morning lay your plans,
At eventide search through your ways,
What you have said this day,
What done, what thought;
For more than once you may have sinned
In these against God and your neighbor.

Gird you like a man against the devil's
wickedness.

Bridle appetite,
And you will with greater ease hold the
rein

On every inclination of the flesh.

Never be wholly idle,

But read, or write,

Or pray, or meditate,

Or do some useful work for all.

Bodily exercises must be done with
moderation,

And are not to be taken up by every one
alike.

What is not common to all,
Must not be shown outside,
For what is yours alone, is safer done apart
from men.

Yet you must not be slow to share the com-
mon exercises,

And quicker to fly unto your own;
But, having wholly, faithfully fulfilled
All that your duty and obedience requires,
If then you are at leisure, give yourself to
yourself

As your devotion moves.

All cannot have one exercise:
One serves for one, one for another.
And even different times have different
exercises:

Some please us best on Holy Days,
Some are more to our taste on the common
week-days.

Some we need when in temptation:

Some in days of peace and quiet.
Some things we love to think on in our
hours of gloom:
Some when we are joyful in the Lord.

About the principal Feasts, we should
renew
The exercises that are good,
And with greater fervor should implore
Prayers from the Saints.
We should lay our plans from one Feast to
another,
As though we were upon that day to take
our flight out of this world
To an eternal Holy Day.
Therefore we ought with care at pious
times
To make ourselves the readier,
Live holier lives,
Observe each rule more carefully,
As though we shortly were from God's
hands to receive
The meed for our toil.

And, if that day be long,
We must believe we are not ready,
And not worthy of the greatness of the
glory
That will be revealed in us
At the appointed time;
And we must try to make ourselves more
ready
For our passing hence.
“Blessed the servant,”
Says the Evangelist St. Luke,
“Whom his master shall find watching
when he comes!
Amen, I say to you,
That over all his goods he will appoint him
lord.”

CHAPTER 20

OF THE LOVE OF SOLITUDE AND SILENCE

SE EK a fit time to be at leisure for your-
self,
And often think on the benefits of God.

Leave curious things:
Read well the things
That rather bring you sorrow for your sins
Than give you occupation.

If you withdraw yourself from talk that
is superfluous,
And idly going here and there,
And hearing rumors and the news,
You will find time enough, and time well-
fitted too,
To give to meditations that are good.

The greatest Saints avoided, when they
could,
The company of men,
And chose to serve God in secret.

Some one has said:

“As often as I was with men,
Less of a man did I return.”
This again and again we see,
When we keep chattering long.
Easier is it to be wholly silent,
Than not to step beyond the line in talk.
Easier is it to stay quietly at home
Than to keep sufficient guard over ourselves
abroad.

He, then, who would attain the inner
spiritual life
Must draw, as Jesus did, away from the
crowd.

No man safely comes abroad,
Unless he loves to stay at home.
No man is safe to speak,
Unless he loves not to speak.
No man is safe to be in power,
Unless he loves to be subject.
No man is safe to give commands,

Unless he has learned the lesson of obedience well.

No man is safe in joy,
Unless he has within
The witness of a conscience that is good.

Yet mark. The safety of the Saints
existed not
Without a thorough fear of God;
And no less anxious, no less humble, were
they in themselves,
For all the splendid glory of their virtues
and their grace.
But for the fancied safety of the bad,
It springs from pride and from presumption,
And in the end turns
To its own deception.

Brother, good as you may seem,
Hermit, pious as you are;
Never in this life promise security to yourself.

Often those who stood the highest in the
thoughts of men

Have been in the gravest peril from their
too great confidence.

So it is better for many a man

Not to be scot free of all temptations,

But that they should be frequently at-
tacked,

For fear they get too sure,

And be lifted up in pride:

For fear, too, they laxly turn

To comforts from without.

O if a man would never seek the joys
that pass so quickly by;

If he would never take his time up with
the world;

How good then would he keep his con-
science!

If he would but cut away every vain
solicitude,

If he would only think of what is for the
saving of his soul

And what belongs to God,

If he would build all his hope on God;

How great would be the treasure
Of his peace and quiet!

No one deserves consolation from above,
Unless he diligently practises a holy sorrow
for his sins.

If you would be sorry in your heart,
In with you to your cell,
And bar out the tumult of the world,
As it is written,
“In your room bemoan your sins.”

You will find in your cell
What you will often lose outside its walls.
Your cell, if you stay in it, grows sweet to you :
If you keep it ill, it makes you loathe it.
If when at first you turn to God, you do but
live within your cell and keep to it,
It will be afterwards a friend most dear,
And most welcome solace of your life.
'T is in the silent quiet hour the pious soul
goes forward on its path
And learns the secrets of the written Word
of God,

Finding streams of tears,
Wherewith to wash and cleanse itself night
by night

And draw the closer to its Maker
The farther off it dwells from all the bustle
of the world.

If one withdraws himself from friends and
those he knows,
God and His holy Angels will come near him.

Better to live a hidden life and take care
of oneself,
Than to work miracles and leave oneself
neglected.

To go abroad but now and then,
To shun being seen,
Ay, even not to wish to see the face of man :
All this is to be praised in the religious man.

Why wish to see
What you may not have ?
The world goes by, and its desires !
The wishes of our sensual nature draw us
on to roam abroad ;

But when the hour is gone,
What bring you back
But a conscience heavy and a dissipated
heart?
The merry going forth oft brings the sad
return,
And the merry watch kept up till late makes
the morning sad.
So every fleshly joy comes with a smiling face;
But at the last it bites and kills.

What is there in the outer world that you
find not in your cell?
Here you have heaven and earth and all the
elements:
For out of these all things were made.

What can you see, as you look round,
That can remain for long under the sun?
You think perhaps you will be satisfied:
You cannot gain this goal.
If you could see all things together pres-
ent before you,
What would they be? — An empty show!

Lift up your eyes unto your God on high,
And pray for your sins and for your
negligences.

Throw vanity to the vain;
But, as for you, mind you the precepts of
your God.

Go in and bar your door,
And call upon your loved one, "Jesus,
come to me!"

Stay in your cell with Him,
For elsewhere you will not find a peace so
great.

Had you not left your cell,
Had you not heard a whisper from the
gossip of the world,
You would have better held the boon of
peace.

But as you love now and again to hear the
news,

You needs must bear the trouble of heart
it brings.

CHAPTER 21

OF COMPUNCTION OF HEART

IF you would make any progress,
Keep in the fear of God,
And do not be too free,
But under discipline hold all your senses
down,
And do not give yourself to silly mirth.
Give yourself over to compunction,
And you will find devotion there.
Compunction is the key to many a blessing
Which dissipation soon destroys.

It is so strange
That man can ever in this life wholly rejoice,
If he but ponders on his state of exile,
And considers and weighs the many perils
to his soul.
We are so light of heart,
We think so little of our faults,
That we feel not the sorrows of the soul;

But, when we really ought to weep,
Then often comes the empty laugh.
No liberty is real,
And no joy is good,
Save in the fear of God and in a conscience
that is good!

Happy the man who can cast off all hin-
drance of distractions,
And recollect himself to the union of a
holy sorrow for his sins.
Happy the man who puts away from him
All that can weigh upon or stain his con-
science.

Fight like a man:
Habit is overcome by habit.

If you can let men go their way,
They will let you go yours.
Then drag not others' matters on yourself,
And do not entangle yourself in greater
men's affairs.
Always keep your eye first on yourself,

And give your special admonitions to
yourself, before all those you love.

You may not have the favor of men;
Be not so sad for that.
But that you do not live a life careful or
good enough,
As fits God's servant and a devout religious:
This should be a grief to you indeed.

Often men find it better, safer often,
Not to have many consolations in this life,
And least of all those of the flesh.
But that we have not comforts from on high,
Or if we only feel them now and then,
We are to blame;
Because we do not seek compunction of
heart,
Nor do we wholly cast aside empty and
exterior consolations.

Know that you deserve no comfort from
on high,

But rather many tribulations.
When a man is wholly sorry for his sins,
Then the whole world is as a burden to
him, and a bitter draught.

The good man finds enough for mourn-
ing and for tears.

For whether he considers himself,
Or thinks of those about him,
He knows no man lives here free from
tribulation.

And the closer that he looks upon himself,
The greater is his grief.

Matter enough for grief and sorrow within
are all our sins and faults;

Wherein we lie so tangled
That we can rarely contemplate the things
of heaven.

Did you but oftener ponder on your death,
Than on your living long,
You would, no doubt, amend your life more
fervently.

If, too, you would within your heart but
weigh
Hell's future torments,
Purgatory's pains,
I fancy you would willingly endure labor
and grief
And shrink from no austerity.
But since these thoughts get not down
into the heart,
And we still love things that flatter us,
Therefore stay we cold and very dull.

Oftentimes a want of spirit is the
reason
Why the wretched body so easily complains.
Pray, then, humbly to the Lord
To give to you a spirit of compunction,
And with the prophet say:
“Feed me, O Lord, with bread of mourning,
And give me plenteousness of tears to
drink.”

CHAPTER 22

THOUGHTS ON THE MISERY OF MAN

WHEREVER you are, wherever you
turn, you are miserable,
Save when you turn to God.

Why are you so disturbed
When things succeed not with you as you
dearly wish?
Who is there that has all things to suit his
will?
Not I, not you,
Not any man on earth.
There is no one in the world
Without some tribulation or distress,
King though he be or Pope.
Who is it that is best off?
Surely he who can bear something for
God:

Many weak and feeble persons say:
“See what a good life that man has —

How rich, how great, how high, how
powerful ! ”

But turn your eyes to heavenly goods,
And you will see that all these temporal
things are naught,

But very uncertain,
And rather burdensome,
For they are never owned apart from
anxious thought and fear.

Man's happiness does not consist in
having an abundance of the things of
time :

Enough for him a moderate amount.

Life on the earth is misery indeed.
The more spiritual a man would be
The greater grows to him the bitterness of
this present life :

More clearly does he see, more feel, the
weaknesses of man's corruption.

We eat, we drink,

We sleep, we watch,

We rest, we work,

We are subject to the other needs of
nature —

All this is misery truly great and affliction
to the pious soul,

Who longs to be set free and clear of any
sin.

The interior man is much weighed down
By the needs of the body in this world.

Whence comes the prophet's pious prayer
To be free from them :

“From my necessities, deliver me, O Lord !”

But woe to them that know not their
misery,

And woe, worse woe to those who love this
life,

So wretched, and so ready to decay.

For some hug life to them so close,

Though they can scarcely get enough for
need

By begging or by work,

That if they could but live on here for
ever,

They would care nothing for God's kingdom.

Fools and faithless of heart,
So deeply are they sunk in earthly things
That they relish nothing save the flesh!
But at the last these wretched men will yet
 feel heavily
How cheap and worthless are the things
 that they have loved.

 But the Saints of God and all the pious
 friends of Christ
Regarded not what pleased the flesh;
Cared not for all that flourished in this
 passing time;
But all their thoughts and all their hopes
Panted for the everlasting good.
All their desires were lifted up
To what will last,
To what cannot be seen:
That by the love of what they saw they
 might not be drawn down to lowest
 things.

My brother, lose not heart in going on
upon your spiritual path !

There still is time : the hour is not yet past.
Why will you so put off your plans for good ?
Rise ! and at once begin,
And say :
“ Now is the time to act ;
Now is the time to fight ;
Now is the time to make myself a better
man ! ”

When you are in evil way and trou-
ble,
Then is the time to merit.
Through fire and water you must pass
Before you come to where refreshment is.
And, save you act with violence to your-
self,
Faults you will not overcome.

As long as we have with us this weak
mortal frame,
Sinless we cannot be,

Nor can we live apart from weariness and
pain.

We would so gladly be at rest from all our
wretchedness;

But, as by sin we lost our sinless state,
We lost as well true blessedness.

So we must needs be patient
And wait God's pity,
Till this iniquity be overpast,
And our mortality be swallowed up by
life.

O think of man's weak state,
Ever prone to evil ways!
To-day you shrive you:
To-morrow you will sin again the sins you
have confessed.

Now you purpose to be on your guard,
And in an hour you go and act
As if the purpose never crossed your mind.
We are right, then, to humble ourselves,
And never have high thoughts,
Because we are so weak and fickle.

Soon we may lose, because of our neglect,
What with much toil we had scarcely gained
at last through grace.

What in the end, then, will become of us,
Lukewarm so early?

Woe be to us if so we would now turn
aside to rest,
As though peace and security were now,
While yet there is no trace of real holiness
in our lives.

Very needful were it
That we should yet again be trained,
Like good novices, to the best ways,
If there might perchance be hope
For some future betterment
And greater spiritual progress.

CHAPTER 23

OF THE THOUGHT OF DEATH

SOON, very soon, it will be over with
you here:

Think how it may be with you — there.

Man lives to-day:

To-morrow he is gone.

And when he passes from the eyes of
men,

Soon also does he pass from the mind.

How dull, how hard the heart of man:

Only on the things that are he meditates,

And foresees not rather things that are to
be.

So should you keep yourself in every deed
and thought

As though you were to die to-day.

If your conscience were but good,

You would not have much fear of death.

Better it were to guard against your sins,
Than to fly death.

If to-day you are not ready,
How will you be to-morrow?
To-morrow is an uncertain day,
And what do you know as to your having
to-morrow?

What is the use of living long,
When our improvement is so slight?
Ah, a long life does not always make us
good:
It often rather makes our guilt the greater.
Oh, would to God that in this world we
had spent one day well!
Many count up the years since first they
turned to God;
But often there is little fruit to show of life
made holier.
If it be terrible to die,
Perhaps the living on will be more danger-
ous still.

Happy the man who ever holds before
his eyes his hour of death,

And every day makes himself ready for the
end.

If you have ever seen a death,
Think that you too must pass by the same
road.

In the morning say:

“I shall not see the evening of the day.”

And at the eventide:

“I dare not promise morning to myself.”

Therefore be ready always,

And live so

That death may never take you unawares.

Many die suddenly and unexpectedly:

For “in an hour when you think not,

The Son of man will come.”

And when that last hour does come on you,

Then you will begin to feel so differently

Concerning all your life that has gone by,

And you will grieve and grieve

That you were so negligent and remiss.

How happy he, and prudent,

Who tries in life now to be such a man

As he would be found in death!
For perfect contempt of the world,
Fervent longing to make progress in virtue,
Love of discipline,
Penitential work,
Quickness to obey,
Self-denial,
And bearing for love of Christ whatever
 goes against him —
Will give a man great hope of a happy
 death.

You can do many a good deed in your
 days of health;
But I know not what you can in sickness.
Few by sickness are made better men.
So, too, they who often go on pilgrimage
Seldom become holy.

Trust not in your friends and neighbors,
And put not off the saving of your soul for
 days to be,

For men will forget you sooner than you
think.

Better provide in time,
And send some good deed on the way before
you,

Than put your hope in others' help.
If now you are not careful for yourself,
Who will be careful for you in the time to
come?

Now is the hour so precious:
Now are the days for saving your soul:
Now is the acceptable time.
How sad it is you do not spend it better,
When you can merit
What will give you life eternal!
There will come a moment,
When you will long for one day, or hour,
To amend in,
And perhaps you will not get it!
Ah, my dear friend,
Freed from how great a peril you can be,
Saved from how great a fear,

If only you be ever fearful
And ever on your guard for death!

Try now so to live
That in the hour of death you may be able
to be

Rather glad than fearful.

Learn now to die to the world,
That you may then begin to live with Christ.

Learn now all things to despise,

That you may then be able

Freely to go to Him.

Chastise your body now by penance,

That then your confidence may be sure.

Ah, fool, why think you you will live so
long?

For you have no day sure to you!

How many have been deceived

And torn from the body unexpectedly!

Have you not ever and again heard people
say,

“He was pierced through with the sword;

Another drowned;
Another killed by falling from a height;
One stiffened into death as he was eating;
Another in his play came to his end;
Fire took another,
Or the steel,
The plague,
Or robbers on the road " —
And thus is death the end of all,
And human life is like a shadow swiftly
passing by.

Who will remember you after death?
And who will pray for you?

Whatever you can do now, do now, my
friend:

You know not when your death may come,
Nor do you know what is to follow for you
after death.

While there is time,
Gather immortal riches.
Think of nothing but your salvation:
Care for nothing but what is of God.

Make now friends unto yourself by honoring
God's Saints,

And doing as they have done;

That, when you fail in this life,

They may receive you to the eternal dwelling-places.

Keep yourself as a stranger and pilgrim on
the earth,

To whom the world's affairs do not at all
belong.

Keep your heart free and raised up to God,
For here you have not an abiding city.

Thither every day make prayers and groans
and tears ascend,

That after death your spirit may gain a
happy passing to the Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER 24
OF THE JUDGMENT AND THE PUNISHMENT
OF SIN

IN all things look to the end,
And think how you will stand before
the strict Judge,

Whose eye sees all;
Who is not appeased by bribes,
Nor takes excuses;
But will judge with a judgment that is just!

O foolish and most wretched sinner!
You who sometimes are afraid of the look
of an angry man,
What answer will you have for God, Who
knows all your evil deeds?
Why not provide yourself against the
Judgment Day?

When none can by another man be
shielded,
Or excused,
But every man will be a burden to himself
Heavy enough to bear.

Now your toil bears fruit;
Now are your tears acceptable;
Now your groans can reach His ear;
Now your grief will cleanse you and will
satisfy your God.

The patient man
That, when receiving wrong,
Grieves more about the other's evil will,
Than for the injury to himself;
That willingly prays for those who con-
tradict him;
That from his heart forgives offences;
That is not slack in asking pardon of others;
That is readier for pity than for wrath;
That often does violence to himself;
And strives entirely to subject the flesh
unto the spirit —
He has a great and wholesome Purgatory.

Better is it now to purge our sins,
And cut away our faults,
Than keep them to be purged in days to
come.

In truth we cheat ourselves
By our disordered love unto the flesh.
What else shall be the fuel of that fire,
If it be not your sins?
The more you spare yourself in life,
And follow the flesh,
The harder will the reckoning be,
And the more the fuel you keep to burn.

In what things a man has sinned,
In them shall he be punished with the
greater pain.
There the lazy shall be driven with burn-
ing goads,
And the glutton shall be tortured with a
thirst and hunger infinite.
There the impure and the lover of pleasures
In burning pitch and fetid brimstone shall
be bathed.
And like mad dogs
The envious shall howl for grief.
No sin

That shall not have its own peculiar torment.

There shall the proud
Be covered with all confusion.

There the miser
Shall with most miserable want be straitened.

There one hour in punishment shall
heavier be

Than fivescore years on earth
In heaviest penance spent.

On earth, from time to time,
There is rest from toil,

And here, now and then,
Comfort is enjoyed from friends:

There, is no rest,
No comfort for the damned.

Be careful now, and sorrowful
For your sins,

That on the Judgment Day you may be
safe among the blest.

For then with great constancy the just
shall stand
Against the men who hemmed them in and
kept them down.
Then shall he stand up to judge
Who humbly now subjects himself to the
judgments of men.
Then shall the poor and humble be confi-
dent indeed:
Then shall the proud be terror-struck on
every side.
Then shall he be seen to have been wise
in this world
Who learned to be a fool and despised for
Christ.
Then shall every tribulation patiently
endured
Be a pleasant memory,
And all iniquity shall stop her mouth.
Then shall every pious soul be glad,
And every irreligious man shall wail.
Then the afflicted body shall more exult

Than if it had been always nourished in
delights.

Then shall the mean garment glitter with
splendor,

And fine raiment become obscured.

Then shall the lowly hut of poverty be
praised

More than the gilded palace.

Then shall steadfast patience be of more
avail

Than all the power of the world.

Obedience, plain obedience shall then
higher stand

Than all the cunning of the world.

A conscience pure and good shall make a
man more glad

Than studied learning.

Then shall the contempt of wealth weigh
heavier in the scale

Than all the treasures of the sons of men.

Then you shall get more comfort from a
pious prayer

Than from a dainty meal.
Then you shall be joyful for the silence
 you have kept,
Rather than for long gossiping.
Then shall holy deeds be worth
More than many lovely words.
Then shall penance stern and a strict life
 be a pleasure to you
More than all delights of earth.

Now learn in little things to suffer,
That then you may be freed from heavier
 sufferings.
Try first here
What you can stand hereafter.
If now you can endure so little,
How will you bear the everlasting torments?
If now a little suffering makes you so im-
 patient,
What will Hell make you then?
Behold the truth — the two you cannot
 have:
Here in the world to have delights,

And afterwards to reign with Christ.
And had you ever lived even till to-day in
honors and in pleasures,
What would it all have done for you,
If in this instant you were to die?

So, all is vanity
Save loving God and serving Him alone!
For he who loves God with all his heart
Fears neither death, nor punishment,
Nor Judgment, nor Hell;
Because perfect love gives safe access to God.
But he whom sin still pleases,
What wonder if he fears his death and
judgment?

Yet it is good
That if love cannot yet recall you from evil,
At least the fear of Hell-fire should restrain
you.

But he who puts the fear of God behind
his back
Will not be able long to stand in good,
But quickly will he run into the devil's nets.

CHAPTER 25

OF THE FERVENT AMENDMENT OF OUR WHOLE LIFE

BE watchful in God's service and be diligent,

And often ponder what you have come here for

And why you left the world.

Was it not to live to God

And get to be a spiritual man?

Be fervent, then, to advance;

For soon you will receive the wages of your toil,

And fear and sorrow shall then no more be in your borders.

You shall do a little work,

And you shall find great rest, nay, everlasting joy.

If you continue in your work, fervent and true,

God will, beyond all doubt, be true to you, And rich in His reward.

Keep a fair hope
That you will one day win the palm;
But take not security to yourself,
Lest you get sluggish, or else proud.

A man that ever wavered,
Hanging between hope and fear,
Once on a time, oppressed with sadness,
Threw himself down in prayer
Before an altar in a church,
And thus he thought and said:
“Did I but know I should hold on unto the
end!”

And, as he prayed, he heard a voice divine
within him answer:

“If you knew it,
What would you wish to do? —
Do now what then you would wish to do
And you will be safe.”

Forthwith, consoled and strengthened,
He trusted himself unto the will of God,
And all his anxious wavering ceased.
And he would not curiously seek

To know what would befall him afterwards;
But he rather tried to find
The acceptable and perfect will of God
To begin and carry through each good
work.

“Hope in the Lord, and do thou what is
good,”

Thus says the prophet,
“And dwell thou in the land:
And thou shalt feed upon its wealth.”

There is a thing that keeps full many a
man from getting on,
And from an earnest bettering of his
life:
That he dreads the difficulties, or finds the
conflict toilsome.
For it is those who strive with most manly
heart to overcome
What is most harsh and grievous to them,

Who make most progress on the road of
virtues.

For then a man makes more advance,
And merits fuller grace,

When he more overcomes himself
And mortifies himself in spirit.

But all men have not equal things to con-
quer and to kill.

Yet the careful zealous soul
Will be the stronger to make progress,

Though he have more to overcome,
Than he of well-conducted ways,

But less zealous to be virtuous.

Two things above all others help to great
improvement:

The first, to take yourself away with vio-
lence

From that which nature wickedly inclines
to;

And next, most to press on towards the
good

Which you lack the most.

You should, too, guard against and overcome

What is wont to grate on you in others.

Look to your progress everywhere:

So, if you see or hear of a good example,
Be on fire to copy it.

But, if you have observed a thing to disapprove,

See that you do not the same.

Or if you should have some time done it,
Try the sooner to correct yourself.

As your eye scans other men,

So in your turn you are by other men observed.

How sweet and pleasant to behold
brothers fervent and devout,

Obedient and well disciplined!

How hard and sad to see men wandering
from the path,

Not practising the things to which they have
been called!

How hurtful to neglect the aim of our
vocation,
And turn our thoughts to what does not
concern us!

Remember, then, your purposed plan of
life,
And put the image of the Crucified before
you.
Looking on the life of Christ, you well
may be ashamed
That you have not yet tried more to make
yourself like Him,
Though you have long been walking in the
ways of God.
The religious whose intent and pious prac-
tice lies
In the most holy life and passion of the
Lord,
Will find in it abundance for his uses and
his wants;
Nor does he need to ask for better
Outside of Jesus.

O if Jesus on the cross did but come into
our hearts,
How soon we should be learned, and how
sufficiently!

The religious that is fervent
Bears and takes well
All that is bidden him.
The careless religious, and lukewarm,
Meets trouble on trouble,
And is straitened on every side;
Because he is without interior consolation
And is forbidden to seek exterior.
The religious who lives outside his rule,
Is exposed to grievous ruin.
He who seeks ease and relaxation
Will always be in straits,
For one thing or another will displease him.

How do so many other religious get on
Close kept beneath the rule of cloister?
Coming out but now and then,
They rarely leave their cloister,

They eat food very poor,
Their dress is rough,
Their toil is great,
They speak but little,
Their vigils are long,
They rise early,
They pray long prayers,
They often read,
And keep themselves in all discipline.

Think of the Carthusians,
The Cistercians,
And the monks and nuns of various orders:
How they rise up every night
To sing their psalms to God.
And so it would be a shame
That you should be sluggish in such holy
work

When all that multitude of religious
Begin to sing in joy to God.

O that there were nothing to be done
But praise our Lord God with all our
heart and voice!

O that you never felt the need to eat or
drink, or sleep,
But could be always praising God,
And solely spend your time in spiritual
things!

Then you would be happier far than now,
When from some kind of need you serve
the flesh.

O would to God these needs did not exist!
That there were no food necessary but the
soul's —

Food which we taste, alas, rarely enough!

When man has reached this point,
That he looks not for consolation from
created things,
Then first does he begin to have a perfect
taste for God.

Then, too, will he be well content, let come
what will.

Then he will not rejoice for what is great,
Nor grieve for what is little,
But rest wholly, trustingly in God,

His all-in-all;
To Whom surely nothing perishes,
Or dies;
But all things live to Him
And at His nod without delay they serve
Him.

Ever be mindful of the end,
And remember: Time lost returns not.
Never will you get to virtue
Without care and diligence.
Once begin to cool,
You begin to be in evil way.
But, if you give yourself to fervor,
You will find great peace,
And will feel your labor less
Because of God's grace and the love of
virtue.

A fervent, diligent man
Is prepared for everything.

It is a harder thing to resist one's faults
and passions

Than to labor with the body till the sweat
pours down.

He who does not shun small faults,
Little by little slips into greater.

You will be ever glad at eventide,
If you spend your day with profit.

Watch over yourself,
Admonish yourself,

Stir up yourself;

And, whatever becomes of others,
Neglect not yourself.

The more you offer violence to yourself,
The greater will your progress be.

Amen.

Book 2

LESSONS TO DRAW US TO THE
INTERIOR LIFE

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CHAPTER 1

OF THE INTERIOR LIFE

GOD'S kingdom is within you, saith
the Lord.

With all your heart turn you to God,
Leaving this world of misery,
And your soul shall find rest.
Learn to despise exterior things,
And to give yourself to the interior,
And you shall see God's kingdom come in
you.

For the kingdom of God is peace and joy
in the Holy Ghost,
Which is not given unto the wicked,
Christ will come and bring His consolation,
If from within you have prepared a place
where He may fitly dwell.

All His glory, all His beauty lie within:
The inner life delights Him.
Frequent are his visits to the interior
man,
Sweet the talk, dear the consolation,

Great the peace,
The intimacy passing wonderful.

Ho, faithful soul, make your heart ready
for your Spouse,
That He may deign to come to you,
And in you take up His abode.
For thus He speaks:
“If any love Me, he will keep My words,
And We will come to him,
And with him will We make our dwelling-
place.”

Room, then, for Christ,
And to all others entrance be denied.
Having Him,
Then you are rich: He is enough for you.
He it is that will provide for you;
He will be your faithful steward in all,
That there may be no need to put your
hopes in men.
For men soon change and quickly fail;
But Christ abides forever,

And firmly by us stands unto the end.
We cannot put much trust in man, weak
and mortal,

Useful and beloved though he be;
Nor need we nurse sad thoughts
If now and then man thwarts us and op-
poses.

They that to-day are with us
May, on the morrow, be against us,
Shifting often like the breeze.

Put all your trust in God,
And let Him be your fear, your love.

He will answer for you:
He will do what shall be best,
And He will do it well.

Here you have no abiding city:
Everywhere you are a stranger and a pil-
grim;

Nor will you ever find rest,
Save you be intimately one with Christ.

Why here look you round,
When this is not your resting place?

Your home should be in Heaven,
And all the things of earth
Are to be looked at as a passing show.
All pass by,
And you as well as they.
See that you cling not to them,
For fear that you be caught, and perish.
Let your thought be with the Highest,
And let your prayer be ceaselessly directed
unto Christ.

If you know not how to meditate on high
and heavenly themes,
Rest in the Passion of Christ,
And love to dwell within His holy Wounds.
For if you fly devoutly
To Jesus' Wounds and to their precious
marks,
In your trials you will feel great comfort,
And will think but little of the being de-
spised of men,
And will endure with ease detracting words.
Christ, too, in the world was despised of men,

And left amid insults, in His greatest need,
By His friends and those who knew Him.
Christ willed to suffer and be despised,
And do you dare to complain of anything?
Christ had His enemies and men that
spoke against Him;
And do you want to find all friends and
benefactors?
Whence shall the crown come for your
patience,
If no cross meets you on your way?
If you will suffer nothing contrary,
How will you be the friend of Christ?
If you would reign with Christ,
Bear up with Him; bear up for Him.
Had you once wholly entered to the inner
life of Jesus,
Had you some little tasted of His glowing
love;
Then you would care nothing for your own
weal or woe,
But would rather be glad when insults
come;

Because the love of Jesus makes a man
despise himself.

He who loves Jesus and loves truth,
The man of true interior life,
And from disordered inclinations free,
Can freely turn himself to God,
And in spirit lift himself above himself,
And rest in peace, enjoying Him.

The man who judges all things as they
are,
Not as men talk of them or rate them;
He is the truly wise man,
And taught of God, rather than of men.
He who learns to walk the interior road,
And to prize exterior things but little,
Requires not set places, nor waits for
times,
To do his exercises of devotion.
The interior man soon collects his thoughts,
Because he never dissipates himself
Wholly on the outward world.

No exterior work stands in his way,
No business needful for the time;
But as things come,
He fits himself to them.
He who within is well disposed and
ordered
Cares nothing for the strange and perverse
ways of men.
The more we draw things to us,
The more are our distractions and our
obstacles.

If it were well with you, and you were
truly purified,
Everything would turn unto your good and
progress.
It is because you are not fully dead as yet
to your own self
Nor separate from every earthly thing,
That many a thing grates on you and fre-
quently disturbs your peace.
Nothing so taints the heart of man,
Nothing entangles it so much,

As a love impure for things created.
Refuse the consolations from without:
You will be able to contemplate heavenly
things,
And often rejoice within.

CHAPTER 2

OF HUMBLE SUBMISSION

TAKE not much thought who is for
you or against you,

But see to this and care for this,

That God be with you in everything you
do.

Have a good conscience,

And God will shield you well.

For him whom God will help

No man's perversity can harm.

If you can only hold your peace and suffer,

Without a doubt you shall see help from

God.

He knows when to set you free and how,

And so you ought to leave yourself to Him.

It is God's work to help,

And to set free from all confusion.

Often it aids us much to keep us in a
humbler mind,

That others know our faults and repre-
hend them.

When men are humble for their failings,
Then they easily calm others,
And lightly satisfy all that are wroth with
them.

It is the humble man that God defends
and frees;
It is the humble man He loves and comforts;
To the humble man He bends;
To the humble man He gives abundance of
His grace;
And after he is cast down, He lifts him up
to glory.
To the humble man He reveals His secrets,
And sweetly draws him to Himself, and bids
him come.
The humble man, when he has met with
shame,
Is yet well enough at peace,
Because he stands on God, not on the world.

Think not that you have profited a whit,
Unless you feel yourself lower than all.

CHAPTER 3

OF THE GOOD PEACEFUL MAN

FIRST keep yourself at peace:
Then you can bring peace to others.
The peaceful man is of more use
Than the great man of learning.
The passionate draw even good to bad,
And lightly credit evil said of other
men.

The good peaceful man
Turns everything to good.
The man who is well at peace
Suspects no one.
But the disturbed and discontented soul
Is tossed by many a suspicious thought.
He has not peace himself,
Nor suffers others to have peace.
Often he says what he should not:
Often he leaves undone what he had better
do.
Ponders what others are bound to do
And considers not what he is bound to.

Therefore, first be zealous for yourself:
And then you may be justly zealous for your
neighbor also.

You know so well how to excuse your deeds,
And throw another light on them;
And others' excuses you will not receive.
Fairer to accuse yourself
And excuse your brother.
If you would have men bear with you
Bear you with them.

Look at true charity and humility:
It knows not to be wroth nor put out,
Save with itself:
How far are you as yet from that!
Living with the good and meek is nothing
great:
That pleases every one, of course,
And every man likes peace,
And best loves those who think with him.
But a great grace it is, and worthy of all
praise,
And a manly deed

To live at peace with men who are harsh
and cross-grained, undisciplined, or
opposed to us.

Some there are who keep at peace
Both with themselves and with others.
And some who neither are at peace them-
selves,
Nor yet let others be.
A trouble unto others,
A greater trouble always to themselves.
And some keep themselves in peace,
And try to bring back others, too, to peace.

Yet in this life of misery all our peace
must rather lie in humble suffering,
And not in callousness to things that go
against us.

The man who knows how to bear suffering best
Will enjoy the greatest peace.
He is the conqueror of himself,
And lord of the world,
Christ's friend,
And heir to Heaven.

CHAPTER 4

OF A PURE MIND AND A SINGLE AIM

BY two wings man is lifted from the
things of earth:

Simplicity and purity.

Simplicity must be in his intention:

Purity in his affection.

Simplicity aims at God:

Purity seizes and enjoys Him.

If you are free within from ill-ordered
affection,

No good action will hinder you.

If your motive and your aim be naught but

God's will and your neighbor's profit,

You will enjoy inner liberty.

Were your heart right,

Then all created things would be mirrors
of life and books of holy teaching.

No created thing so small and worthless

As not to represent God's goodness.

If you were good and pure within,
You would see all things clear, nothing
between,
And you would understand all well.
A pure heart
Penetrates Heaven and Hell.

As each man is within,
So he judges that which is without.
If in the world joy anywhere exists,
It is the pure of heart that own it.
And if trouble and difficulty are anywhere,
The evil conscience knows them very well.

As iron, when thrust into the flame,
Loses its rust,
And turns to glowing white;
So he who wholly turns to God puts off his
sluggish ways,
And changes to another man.
When a man begins to cool,
He fears a little toil,
And gladly welcomes comfort from without.

But when we perfectly begin to overcome
ourselves
And walk like men upon the way of God,
Then we think less of the things
That once we felt so hard.

CHAPTER 5

OF THOUGHTS ON OURSELVES

WE cannot much rely upon ourselves,
Because God's grace and our senses
often fail us.

Our light is dim :
And even this we soon lose from neglect.
Often, too, we do not see
That we are so blind within.
Our deeds are often ill,
And our excuses worse.
Sometimes passion moves us —
And we think it zeal !
Little things we blame in other men ;
But for our greater sins — we pass them
by.
We are ready enough to feel and ponder
what we bear from others,
But thoughtless of what others suffer at our
hands.
If you would well and rightly ponder on
your own affairs,

No reason would there be for grievous
judgment of another.

The man who is interior
Puts his care of self before all other cares.
And he who diligently bends his thoughts
upon himself
Easily holds his tongue about others.
Never will you be interior and devout,
Until you keep silence about others'
business,
And look particularly to yourself.
If to yourself and to God you give your
whole attention,
All that you see abroad will little move you.

Where are you when you are not present
to yourself?
And after running everywhere,
What have you gained if negligent of self?
If you are to have peace and real union,
You must still put all aside,
And keep yourself alone before your eyes.

Great, then, will be your progress,
If you keep yourself in holiday
From all the cares of time.
You will fail badly,
If you prize anything of time.

Let naught be great or high,
Naught dear or pleasant to you,
Save it be simply God, or of God.
Think all but vanity
That comes by way of comfort from created
things.

The soul that loves God
Scorns all things less than God,
God only, everlasting and unmeasured,
Filling all the world,
The comfort of the soul, the heart's true joy!

CHAPTER 6

OF JOY IN THE CONSCIENCE THAT IS GOOD

A GOOD man's glory
Is the witness that his good con-
science bears.

With a good conscience,
You will continually have joy.
It can bear exceeding much,
And amid adversity is very glad.
But the bad conscience
Is always restless and afraid.

Sweet will be your rest,
If your heart blames you not.
Only be glad at heart
When you have done good deeds.
The bad have no true joy,
Nor feel true peace within:
"There is no peace for the wicked," saith
the Lord.
And if they say,
"We are at peace,

No evil shall come nigh us,
None will dare to hurt us,"
Trust them not,
For on a sudden the wrath of God will rise,
And their acts shall be brought to nothing-
ness,
And their thoughts shall fade away.

Glorying in trouble
Is not hard for one who loves;
For glorying thus means glorying in the
Cross of Christ.
Short-lived is the glory
Given and received of men.
Sadness ever follows in the train of worldly
glory.

The glory of the good lies in their con-
sciences,
Not in men's lips.
Of God and in God is the rejoicing of the
just,
And theirs is joy of the truth.

He who sighs for true and eternal glory,
Gives not a thought to that of time.
And he who wants the glory of time, or
does not heartily despise it,
Is proved to care but little for the glory of
Heaven.

A very quiet heart has he
Who cares for neither praise nor blame.
He will be easily content and be at peace
Whose conscience is pure.
Being praised makes you none the holier:
Being censured makes you none the worse.
What you are, you are,
Nor greater can be called than what God
sees.

If you but turn your thoughts to what
you are within,
You will not care what men say of you.
Man looks upon the face:
God on the heart.
Man considers the deeds:
God weighs the motives.

It is a sign that a man's soul is humble,
If he does always well and yet puts little
value on himself.

It is a sign of great purity and inward confi-
dence

To want no comfort from any thing created.
The man who seeks outside no witness for
himself

Has, it is clear, trusted himself wholly to
God.

“He is not approved,” says blessed Paul,
“who lauds himself,
But he whom God approves.”

Within to walk with God,
Without to have no tie to any:
This is the condition of the interior man.

CHAPTER 7

OF THE LOVE OF JESUS ABOVE ALL THINGS

HAPPY the man who knows what it is
to love Jesus,
And to despise himself for Jesus' sake!
We must leave what we love for Him we
love,
For Jesus would be loved alone and above
all.

Affection for created things is treacherous
and unsteady;
But love for Jesus, faithful and durable.
He that to the creature clings
Shall fall with what is frail:
He that throws his arm round Jesus
Shall be established forever.

Love Him, keep Him a friend to you:
He will not leave you when all others go,
Nor will He let you perish at the last.
One day you will have to part from all,
Willing or no.

In life and death keep yourself with Jesus,
And trust yourself unto His faithful care:
Who alone can help you when all others
fail.

Such is your loved one,
That He will not receive what is another's;
But alone will have your heart
And be in it like a king on His own throne.
He would willingly dwell with you,
If you could only free yourself
From all created things.

The faith you put in man, apart from
Him,
You will find it nearly all lost work.
Lean not, trusting, on the wind-swept reed,
For all flesh is grass,
And all its glory like the flower of grass will
fall!

You will be soon deceived
Looking only on the outward show of
men.

For if you seek your solace and your gain
in others,
Often, often will you feel but loss.
If in all you look for Jesus,
Of a surety you will find Him.
But if you look for yourself,
You shall also find yourself —
But to your own ruin.
For men not seeking Jesus
Do themselves more harm
Than all the world and all their foes can
do.

CHAPTER 8

OF FAMILIAR FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS

JESUS near, all is well:
Nothing seems difficult.
When He is absent,
All is hard.

When Jesus does not speak in us,
Comfort is worthless.
But if He speaks one word,
Great is the comfort felt.
Did she not rise, Mary Magdalen, from
where she wept,
At Martha's word,
"Here is the Master calling thee" ?
Happy the hour
When Jesus calls from tears to joy of spirit !
How dry, how hard you are without Him !
How empty and unwise,
If you want anything out of Jesus !
Is not this a greater loss
Than if the whole world went from you ?

What, without Him, can it give you?
To be without Jesus is a grievous Hell:
To be with Jesus, a pleasant garden.
If Jesus be with you,
No enemy can hurt you.
He who finds Jesus
Finds a good treasure —
Nay a good above all other goods!
And he who loses Him is losing, ah, so much,
And more than all the world.
He who lives without Jesus is very poor:
He who is well with Jesus is most rich.

It is a great art
To know the way to live with Jesus,
And to know how to keep Him shows great
wisdom.

Be you peaceable and humble,
And Jesus will be with you.
Be you devout and keep at peace,
And He will abide with you

You may soon drive Him off and lose
His grace,

If you will turn away unto exterior things.
And once you have driven Him off and
lost Him,

To whom then will you fly, whom will you
seek for as a friend ?

Without a friend you cannot well live ;
And if Jesus be not your friend above all
others,

You will be so sad and desolate !

Thus you are acting as a fool,

If you trust in any other or rejoice in him.

You had better choose

To have the whole world set against you
Than Jesus offended.

Of all, then, that are dear to you

Let Jesus only be your special love.

All should be loved for Jesus,

But Jesus for Himself.

He must alone be loved with an exclusive
love,

For He alone, before all other friends,

Is found both good and true.

For Him and in Him friends and foes
Must all alike be dear to you,
And for all He is to be besought,
That all may know and love Him.

Never desire exclusive praise or love:
This is the attribute of God alone,
Who has no fellow.
And never wish that any one should set his
heart on you,
Nor set your own heart upon any;
But let Jesus be in you
And in all good men.

Be pure and free within,
Untrammelled by the love of anything
created.
You must be unimpeded and bear a heart
clean towards God,
If you would be at liberty, and see
How sweet the Lord is.
And truly you will not come to this
Unless you be prevented by His grace and
drawn on,

That emptied of all things and all dis-
missed,

You may be one with Him, you alone with
Him alone.

For when God's grace comes to a man,
Then he gets able for all things,
And when it departs,

Then will he be poor and weak,
And as if left for scourging only.

Yet in this he must not be cast down,
Must not despair,

But stand with even mind to do the will of
God,

And, for the honor of Jesus Christ,
Suffer all that comes on him.

For summer follows winter,
And after night returns the day,
And after storm, great calm.

CHAPTER 9

OF THE LACK OF ALL CONSOLATION

IT is not hard to despise human consolation,
When God's is present.
It is a great
And very great thing
To be able to do without all comfort,
Human or divine,
And to be willing for God's honor to bear
up
Against this exile of the heart,
And to seek self in nothing,
And never look upon one's own deserts.

Is it so great
To be cheerful and devout when God's
grace comes to you?
This is an hour beloved by all.
He rides with pleasure enough
Whom God's grace bears!
What wonder if he feel no burden,

Carried by Almighty God,
And guided by the highest guide?

We are glad to have something to comfort us,
And man finds it hard to doff the garment
of himself.

St. Lawrence the martyr with his priest
overcame the world,
For he despised all that seemed delightful
in it,
And for Christ's love even suffered
That Sixtus should be taken from him,
Sixtus the high-priest of God, whom he
loved so much.

Thus by his love for his Creator he over-
came his love of man,
And in place of human consolation rather
chose the will of God.

And you, too, learn to leave some close and
much-loved friend, to show your love
of God;

Nor take it grievously when you are left by
one you love,
Knowing that we must all at last be
parted.

Great and long must be the conflict in a
man,
Before he learns fully to win the battle over
himself,
And draw his whole affection unto God.
When a man rests upon himself,
He lightly sinks to human consolations.
But Christ's true lover and the careful fol-
lower of virtuous ways
Hungers not for consolation,
Nor does he seek sensible sweetness such as
this,
But asks that he may rather bear hard labor
and stern trials for Christ.

Therefore, when comfort of the spirit is
given from God to you,
Take it: be thankful;

But know it is a gift of God,
And not a merit of your own.
Be not puffed up,
Do not rejoice too much nor emptily pre-
sume;
But be the humbler for the gift,
More guarded also and more timid in all
your actions;
For the hour of consolation will go by and
temptation will follow in its wake.
When consolation goes,
Do not at once despair;
But with humility and patience wait for the
coming of the heavenly One;
For God can give you back greater conso-
lation than before.

This is nothing new nor strange
To those experienced in God's ways,
For in the lives of Saints and Seers of old
Often has it been like this —
One state of soul changing for another.
Therefore one said when grace was with him :

“I said in my abundance:
I shall be never moved.”

But, when God’s favor went,
He tells us what he felt,

And says:

“Thou didst turn Thy face from me,
And I was troubled.”

Yet even so, far from despairing,

He presses on his prayer to God, and says:

“To Thee, O God, I will lift up my voice,
And to my God lift up my prayer.”

At last he brings the fruit back from his
prayer,

And witnesses that he was heard, and says:

“God heard and pitied me!

He is become my Helper.”

And how? —

“Turning my wailing into joy,
Surrounding me with gladness.”

If the great Saints have found it thus;

We, weak and poor, must not despair,

If now we fervent are,

And now are cold;
Because the Spirit ebbs and flows
At the good pleasure of His will.

Hence blessed Job has said:
“At early dawn Thou comest to him:
And on a sudden provest him.”

What, then, can I hope for,
And in what should I trust? —
In God’s great mercy alone,
And in the hope alone of heavenly grace.
For though good men be near me, pious
 brothers, faithful friends;
Though holy books or fine treatises are
 mine,
Sweet songs or hymns;
All these help me but little,
Give me but little relish,
When I am left by grace and find myself
 in my own poverty.
Then there is no better remedy
Than patience and self-denial beneath the
 will of God.

Never did I meet with man so religious,
so devout,
Who, now and then, had not had a with-
drawal of grace,
Or had not felt his fervor less.
No Saint so highly rapt, so full of light,
Who sooner or later has not been
tempted.
For he deserves not to enjoy the contem-
plation high of God
Who is not tried for God by trouble.
Temptation is wont to be the sign
Of consolation coming after.
For to men proved by trial
Is heavenly consolation promised:
“To him that overcometh
I will give for food the tree of life.”
And consolation from on high is sent
To make us strong to bear adversity.
Temptation follows,
That man may not be proud for blessings
he has had.
The devil does not sleep,

The flesh is not yet dead;
You must not, therefore, cease to prepare
 you for the fray;
For on your right hand and your left
Stand foes who never rest.

CHAPTER 10

OF GRATITUDE FOR GOD'S GRACE

WHY seek for rest,
When you are born to toil?
Set yourself for patience, rather than for
consolations;
To the bearing of the cross, rather than to
joy.

For who, of all men in the world, would
not with willingness
Receive spiritual joy and consolation,
If he could always have it?
For comfort in the spirit goes beyond
All earth's delights and all the pleasures of
the flesh.
For all the pleasures of the world
Are either vain or vile.
But only spiritual delights are good and
sweet,
The children of the virtues,
And poured down by God into pure souls.

But these consolations from on high,
No man can enjoy them always as he
would,
Because the time of temptation has no
long pause.

But visits from on high find a great ob-
stacle:
False freedom and great confidence in self.

God does well in giving the grace of
consolation ;
But man does ill, in that he does not put it
wholly down to God, and give Him
thanks for it.
And therefore gifts of grace cannot keep
flowing in on us,
For we are thankless to the Author,
Nor do we pour them back unto the foun-
tain-head of all.
Grace is always due to him who gives due
thanks for it,

And what is granted to the humble will be
taken from the proud.

I want no consolation
That takes from me compunction.
I care not for contemplation
That leads to pride.
Not all that is high is holy;
Not all that is sweet, good;
Not every desire is pure:
Not all that is dear to us is pleasing unto
God.

I willingly accept that grace
By which I shall be ever found
The humbler and less self-reliant,
And more ready to give up myself.

The man made learned by the gift of
grace, and scourged by its withdrawal
into wisdom,
Will never dare to praise himself for any
good;

But rather will confess
That he is poor and naked.
Give unto God that which is His,
And to yourself ascribe what is your own.
Give Him — the thanks due for His grace;
Yourself alone — the guilt,
And feel that worthy punishment is due
you for your guilt.

Set yourself ever in the lowest place,
And the highest shall be given you;
For the highest place stands not without the
lowest.

Saints highest in God's eyes
Are lowest in their own.
And the more their glory is
The greater is their humility.
Full of the truth and heavenly glory,
They want no empty glory.
Established and firm in God,
They can in no way be puffed up.
And they who ascribe to Him
All they have received of good,

Seek no glory from each other,
Wishing for that which comes from God
 alone;
And they would have Him praised above
 all else
In them and all the Saints,
And ever to this aim they tend.

Be thankful, then, for smallest gifts,
And you will thus be worthy of the greater.
Account the smallest as very great,
And the most worthless as a special benefit.
If you regard the dignity of Him who
 gives,
No gift seems small or cheap.
For that is not small
Which comes from highest God.
Though He send you stripes and punish-
 ment,
It should be pleasant;
For all that He allows to come to us
He always does to work the saving of our
 souls.

The man who longs to keep the grace
of God,
Let him be thankful for it when it comes,
And, when it is taken away, be patient.
Let him pray for its return;
Be careful and humble lest he lose it.

CHAPTER 11

HOW FEW THE LOVERS OF THE CROSS OF
JESUS ARE

JESUS has now many a one who loves
His heavenly kingdom,
But few that bear the burden of His Cross.
Many He has that sigh for consolation;
But few, for trouble.
Many He finds to share His table,
Few to join His fast.
All love rejoicing in His company;
Few will bear anything for Him.
Many will follow Jesus as far as the break-
ing of the bread;
Few to the drinking of the chalice of His
Passion.
Many revere His miracles;
Few follow the ignominy of the Cross.
Many love Him
As long as crosses meet them not.
Many praise and bless Him
While they receive some consolations from
Him.

But if Jesus hides Himself
And leaves them for awhile,
They fall to murmuring or too great
dejection.

But they who love Jesus for Himself,
And not for some consolation of their own,
Bless Him in all their trials and heart-
agonies, just as in the height of
consolation.

And if He never would console them,
Yet they would always praise Him,
And ever give Him thanks.
O how powerful the pure love of Jesus is,
Unmingled with self-interest or self-love!

Those that are always seeking conso-
lations,
Must we not call them hirelings?
Are those not proved to be lovers rather
of themselves than Christ
Who are ever thinking of their own ad-
vantage and their gain?

Where shall such a man be found
As is willing to serve God for nothing?
Rarely is one found so spiritual
As to be bare of everything.
For who can find the truly poor in spirit,
Stripped of all created things?
As of a thing that comes from far, from
very distant lands,
So is his value.

If a man gave all his wealth,
Yet it is nothing.
And if he did great penance,
Yet it is little.
And if he grasped all knowledge,
Yet is he far away.
And if he had great virtue
And a devotion very fervent,
Yet much is wanting to him —
One thing, namely, which he needs above
all others.
What is that?
Having left all, to leave himself,

And go out wholly from himself,
And hold back no love of self.
When all is done
That he knows he ought to do,
Let him feel he has done nothing;
Not think great what could be thought
great.
But let him call himself in truth a useless
servant,
As says the Truth:
“Having done all that is commanded you,
Say, ‘We are unprofitable servants.’”

Then can he be really poor and bare in
spirit,
And with the Prophet sing:
“I am alone and poor.”
Yet none is richer than a man like this,
None is more powerful, none is more at
liberty,
Who knows how to leave himself and all,
And put himself in the lowest place.

CHAPTER 12

OF THE ROYAL ROAD OF THE HOLY CROSS

THIS seems to many a hard saying,
“Deny thyself:

Take up thy cross,
And follow Jesus.”

But far harder will it be to hear that final
word:

“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting
fire.”

For those who gladly now hear the word of
the Cross, and follow it,

Then will not fear to hear
Eternal condemnation.

This sign — the Cross — shall be in heaven,
When the Lord shall come to judge.

Then all the servants of the Cross, who lived
as did the Crucified,

Shall come to Christ the Judge with great
confidence.

Why, then, fear to take it up?

By it you win your way into the kingdom.

In the Cross is salvation,
In the Cross is life,
In the Cross protection from our foes,
In the Cross is sweetness
Poured on us from above,
In the Cross is strength of mind,
In the Cross is spiritual joy,
In the Cross, the sum of virtues,
In the Cross is perfect holiness.
There is no saving for the soul,
No hope of life eternal,
Save in the Cross.

Take, then, your cross and follow
Jesus,
And you shall go to everlasting life.
He went His way before you,
Carrying the Cross Himself,
And died for you upon it,
That you, too, might bear your cross,
And long to die on it.
For if you die with Him,
Even so with Him shall you live.

And if you are the comrade of His suffering,
You shall share His glory too.

See — in the Cross all lies,
In death upon it all consists;
And there is none other road
That leads to life and to true peace of
soul —

None other save the Holy Cross
And daily mortification.
Walk where you will,
Seek what you will;
And you will not find a higher road above,
Nor a surer road below,
Than is the road of the Holy Cross.

Arrange and order everything to suit your
will and views,
And you will always find something you
must bear,
Either willing or not,
And so a cross you will ever find.
For either in your body you will meet with
pain,

Or in your soul will bear trouble of spirit.
Now and again God will leave you,
Now and again your neighbor will try you,
And more — you will be grievous ofttimes
to yourself,
And you will not be able to be quit of it,
Or make it lighter,
By any remedy or solace;
But so long as God wills you to bear it, you
must.
His pleasure is that you should learn to
suffer trouble unconsoled;
And wholly subject yourself to Him,
And get a humbler spirit from your trial.
Christ's sufferings are by none so keenly
felt
As by the man who has had the like to
bear.

Therefore, the Cross is always ready,
And at every turn awaits you.
Run where you please,
You cannot shun it;

For everywhere you take yourself along
with you,

And you shall always find yourself.

Above,

Below;

Within,

Without;

Turn where you will, you shall always find
the Cross,

And you must needs be patient everywhere,

If you would have peace within,

And merit the everlasting crown.

Bear the Cross willingly,

And it will carry you,

And lead you to the longed-for goal,

Where there shall be an end of suffering,

Though it will not be here.

Bear it unwillingly,

You make of it a burden for yourself,

Loading yourself the more;

And still you must bear it.

Throw one cross away,

And surely you will find another —
Perhaps a heavier one!

Think you to escape
What mortal man never has been able to
avoid?

What Saint upon the earth has been with-
out cross and trouble?

Why, even Jesus Christ our Lord was not
even for one hour free from the pain
of His Passion,

As long as He lived.

“It behoved Christ,” says He, “to suffer,
Rise from the dead,
And enter thus into His glory.”

And how do you ask for another road
Than this — the Royal road of the Holy
Cross?

All His life was a cross and martyrdom:

And do you seek rest and joy?

Wrong, wrong, if you seek anything but to
suffer tribulation;

For all this mortal life of yours

Is full of misery
And dotted round with crosses.
And the higher one advances in the spirit,
The heavier often are the crosses that he
finds;
For as his love grows greater, so grows his
pain of exile on the earth.

Yet, though a man have manifold afflictions,
He is not without the support of consolation,
For from the very suffering of his cross he
feels the greatest good accrues to
him.
For while he makes himself bow down to
it,
All the burden of his trials is turned to
trust in comfort from on high.
And the more the flesh is worn by suffering,
The more the spirit is strengthened by the
grace within.

And sometimes from the love of tribulation
and adversity,
Which springs from the love of bearing a
cross like Christ's,
A man becomes so strong
That he would not be free from pain and
trouble,
Because the more acceptable to God he
deems himself
The more and the heavier the trials
That he can bear for Him.

This is not man's virtue, but Christ's
grace,
Which can do and which does so much in
man's frail flesh
That what by nature flesh always abhors
and flees from
It undertakes and loves in fervor of spirit.
'T is not man's way to bear the Cross,
To love the Cross,
To chastise the body and keep it down in
slavery,

To flee from honors,
Willingly to bear contempt,
To look down upon himself,
And wish that others should look down on
him,
To suffer adversity and loss,
And desire no prosperity in this world.
Look to yourself;
You will be able to do none of these things
of yourself.
But trust in the Lord,
And there shall be given you strength from
heaven,
And the world and the flesh shall be
brought beneath your power.
And not even will you fear your enemy the
devil,
If you be armed with faith, and marked
with the Cross of Christ.

Then take your station as Christ's good
and faithful servant,
To bear your Lord's Cross like a man,

The Cross of Him that out of love to you
was crucified.

Be ready to endure much that will go
against you

And many inconveniences here in this life
of misery;

For so it will be with you, wherever you
are.

Hide yourself where you will,

You will find it so indeed.

It must be so;

And there is no way to shun the grief and
ills that troubles bring

But by bearing with yourself.

Drink lovingly the chalice of the Lord,

If you would be His friend and have a part
with Him.

Leave consolation unto God:

With such things let Him act as seems Him
good.

But you, set yourself to stand your tribu-
lations, and think them the greatest
consolations.

For the sufferings of this time
Are not worthy to merit the glory that
will be —
No, not though you alone could suffer all.

When you have come to this, that tribu-
lation is sweet, and, borne for Christ,
is pleasant;

Then think it well with you,
For you have found an Eden on the
earth.

So long as it is hard to suffer and you try to
shun it,

So long will you be ill at ease,
And everywhere the flight from tribulation
will follow you.

If you set yourself to what you should,
I mean, to suffer and to die,
Things will get better soon, and you will
find peace.

Though you be rapt even to the third
heaven with Paul,

You are not, therefore, sure that you will never suffer things that go against you.

Saith Jesus, "I will show him
How great the things that he must suffer for
My Name's sake."

Suffering, then, remains for you,
If you would love Jesus, and for ever be
His servant.

O would that you were worthy to endure
something for the Name of Jesus!

How great the glory would await you!

How great would be the exultation of all
the Saints of God!

How great, too, the edification to your
neighbor's life!

For all praise patience,
Though few are willing to bear the suffer-
ing.

It were only reason that you should suffer
for Christ a little,

When many suffer worse things for the
world.

Be sure of this:
That you must lead a dying life.
And the more a man dies to himself,
The more does he begin to live to God.
No one is fit to understand the things of
Heaven
Unless He brings himself to bear adversity
for Christ.
Nothing is dearer unto God,
Nothing to you more wholesome in this life,
Than willing suffering for Christ.
And if you had to make a choice,
You should choose rather adversity for
Christ
Than the refreshment that many consolations
bring;
For you would be liker Christ,
And liker unto all the Saints.
Our merit and our progress in our life
lie not
In many sweetnesses and consolations,
But rather in suffering great troubles and
afflictions.

If there were anything for man's salvation better and more useful than suffering,

Christ surely would have shown it in His words and life.

For in plain words He exhorts His followers,

And all who would come after Him

To bear the Cross, and says:

“If any man would come after Me,

Let him deny himself,

And take up his cross and follow Me.”

All, then, read and studied,

Let this be the conclusion:

That through many tribulations

We must enter the kingdom of God.

Book 3

**DEVOUT EXHORTATION TO HOLY
COMMUNION**

Book 3

COMMISSION
DEVOUT EXHIBITION TO HOLY

The Voice of Christ

“**C**OME TO ME, ALL YE THAT LABOR
AND ARE HEAVY BURDENED,
AND I WILL REFRESH YOU,”
SAYS THE LORD.

“THE BREAD WHICH I SHALL GIVE
IS MY FLESH FOR THE LIFE OF THE
WORLD.”

“TAKE YE AND EAT;
THIS IS MY BODY WHICH SHALL BE
GIVEN FOR YOU.”

“DO THIS IN COMMEMORATION OF ME.”

“HE THAT EATETH MY FLESH AND DRINK-
ETH MY BLOOD

ABIDETH IN ME,
AND I IN HIM.”

“THE WORDS WHICH I SPEAK TO YOU
ARE SPIRIT AND LIFE.”

The Voice of China

"COME to me, all ye that labour
and are heavy laden,"

And I will refresh you,"

Says the Lord.

"The tired whom I shall give

Is My power, His rest, and His

Word."

"Take ye also rest;

This is My rest which shall be

Given you."

"Do this ye comforters of men,"

"He that hath My flesh and drinketh

My blood

Abideth in Me,

And I in him."

"The house which I shall give to you

Shall be called My house."

CHAPTER 1

HOW GREAT THE REVERENCE WITH WHICH
CHRIST MUST BE RECEIVED

The Voice of the Disciple

THESE are Thy words, O Christ,
Eternal Truth,

Though not at one time given,
Nor in one place written.

Then, as they are Thy words, and true,
With thanks and faith all are to be received
by me.

Thine are the words, and Thou didst utter
them;

And they are my words too,
For to my salvation Thou didst utter them.

Willingly I take them from Thy lips
To fix them closer in my heart.

Words of such goodness rouse me,
Words filled with sweetness and love!

But my own sins frighten me,
And my foul conscience beats me back
From receiving Mysteries like these.

The sweetness of Thy words beckons me

on:

The number of my evil deeds weighs me
down.

Thou biddest me come to Thee with
trustful heart,

If I would have part with Thee,

And take the food of immortality,

If I would get eternal life and glory.

“Come to Me,” thus run the words,

“All ye that labor and are burdened,

And I will refresh you.”

O word sweet and loving in a sinner’s ear,

That Thou, my Lord and God,

Invitest poor and needy me

To the Communion of Thy holy Body!

But who am I, O Lord,

To dream of coming unto Thee?

Behold the heaven of heavens holds Thee

not,

And yet Thou sayest, “Come to Me, come

all!”

What means this devoted condescension?
What means this friendly call?
How shall I dare to come —
I, that know no good in me, whereon to
lean?
How shall I bring Thee to my home —
I that so often have offended Thy most
kindly face?
Angels and Archangels reverence,
The Saints and holy men do fear,
And yet Thou sayest, “Come to Me, come
all”?
And were it not Thou, Lord, saying this,
Who would take it to be true?
Were it not Thou that biddest,
Who would attempt to come?
Lo, the just Noah, building the Ark,
Worked for a hundred years,
That with a few he might be saved;
And I, how can I in one hour prepare me
To receive with reverence the Builder of
the world?

Moses, Thy great servant and special
friend,
Made an Ark of undecaying wood,
Clothing it with spotless gold,
Wherein to put the tables of Thy Law;
And I, a being of decay,
Shall I so lightly dare to receive Thee,
The Founder of the Law, the Giver of life?

Solomon,
The wisest of all Israel's kings,
Built for seven years a gorgeous temple
To the honor of Thy Name,
And for eight days held its dedication
feast,
Offering a thousand victims for peace,
And with the blare of trumpets and with
joy,
In all solemnity, brought to its destined
place the Ark of the Covenant;
And I,
Unhappy, poorest among men,
How shall I bring Thee to my home?

I that scarce know how to spend devoutly
half an hour —
And would that even once I could spend
duly near as much !

Oh my God, how hard they strove to
please Thee !

Ah, how little is all I do !

How short a time I take,

When I prepare for my Communion !

Rarely are my thoughts collected quite,

Very rarely am I free from all distractions,

And yet I know

That when Thy saving Deity is near me,

No unbecoming thought should come to
me,

And no created thing should hold my mind ;

For I am to welcome to my inn

No Angel, but the Angels' Lord !

Yet there is a distance very great

Between the Ark and all its relics

And Thy pure Body with its nameless
powers ;

A distance very great
Between those victims of the Law,
The signs of things to be,
And the true victim of Thy Body,
The accomplishing of all the ancient
offerings.

Why, then, do I not glow more at Thy
venerated presence?

Why do I not with greater care prepare me
to receive Thy sacred gift,

When holy Seers and Patriarchs of old,
And kings and chiefs and all the people of
the land

Showed such fervor of devotion to the
worship of God?

Before the Ark of God,
King David, pious king, danced with all
his might,

Mindful of the benefits of old given to his
fathers.

Organs he made of various sort.

He wrote psalms,

And set the land with joy to sing them;
And often to the lyre himself he sang,
Filled with the Holy Spirit's grace.
He taught his people Israel
To praise God with all their heart,
And every day with voices joined to bless
Him and tell His deeds.

If in those days devotion flourished thus,
And thus the praise of God was called to
mind,
Before the Ark of the Covenant,
How great in me and all the Christian
world
Should now the reverence and devotion
be,
When the Blessed Sacrament is here,
When we receive the all-surpassing Body of
Christ!

Many run here and there to see the relics
of the Saints:
And, hearing their deeds,

Admire the spacious buildings of the
churches.
They look upon and kiss their sacred bones,
Wrapped up in silk and gold.
And lo, Thou art here with me on the Altar,
My God, the Holy of Holies,
Creator of men and Lord of angels!

Often in seeing such things
There is but curiosity of men,
And the novelty of what has not yet been
seen ;
And little fruit of improvement
Do men bring back with them,
Especially when without true contrition
they run so lightly here and there.
But in the Sacrament of the Altar Thou
art wholly present,
My God, Christ Jesus, Man !
There too, abundant fruit is reaped,
Salvation everlasting,
As oft as Thou art worthily and piously
received.

Unto this shrine no man is drawn
By light, sensual, or curious thoughts,
But by firm faith, by hope devout, by char-
ity sincere.

O God, the invisible Maker of the world,
How wondrously Thou dealest with us!
How gently and how graciously Thou dis-
posest with Thy chosen ones,
Putting Thyself before them to be received
in Thy Sacrament!

For this outruns all understanding;
This above all draws pious hearts to Thee,
and kindles love.

For Thy true faithful ones,
Who all their lives give themselves up
Unto the mending of their faults,
From this most worthy Sacrament often
receive

The great grace of devotion and the love
of virtuous ways.

O sacramental grace secret and won-
derful!

Known only to the faithful ones of
Christ,

Men without the faith and slaves of sin
can know thee not.

In this Sacrament is spiritual grace be-
stowed;

In it the virtue that was lost is in the soul
repaired;

And beauty, fouled by sin, returns to her.

Sometimes this grace is such

That, from the fulness of devotion granted,

Not the mind only,

But the feeble body, too,

Feels fuller power bestowed on it.

Yet we must weep much and wail

That we are lukewarm and neglectful,

That with no greater love we are drawn

Christ to receive,

Christ, the whole hope and merit of those
that will be saved.

For He it is Who is our sanctification and
redemption;

He, our comfort on our journey, and the
Saints' eternal joy!

Weep, then, weep that many pay so little
heed unto this saving Mystery,
Which makes Heaven glad,
And keeps in being the universal world.

Blind, blind and hard are human hearts,
That think not more upon a gift whose
worth cannot be told,

And from daily custom even heedless grow.
For if this Holy Sacrament were celebrated
in one place alone,

And by one priest alone in all the world
were Consecration done;

How men would long, think you, for that
one place, and for such a priest of
God,

To see him celebrate the Mysteries divine!
But now are many priests,
And Christ is offered up in many places,
That God's grace and His love to men
May be seen to be the greater

The farther Holy Communion
Is scattered through the earth.

Thanks be to Thee, Jesus, good shepherd
 everlasting,
That with Thy precious Body and Blood
 hast deigned to feed us,
Exiles and in poverty,
And call us to receive this Mystery with
 words of Thy own mouth.
“Come to Me,
All you that labor and are burdened,
And I will refresh you!”

CHAPTER 2

GREAT IS GOD'S GOODNESS, GREAT HIS
CHARITY, SHOWN IN THE BLESSED
SACRAMENT TO MAN

The Voice of the Disciple

IN Thy goodness and great mercy trust-
ing, O my Lord,
Sick — I come unto my Saviour,
Hungry and thirsty — to life's Fountain,
Poor — unto the King of Heaven,
A slave — unto my Master,
A creature — unto my Creator,
A soul in desolation — to my kindly Com-
forter.

But whence is this,
That Thou shouldst come to me?
What am I,
That Thou shouldst give Thyself to me?
How dares a sinner to appear before
Thee?
And Thou, how deignest Thou to come to
a sinner?

Thou knowest Thy servant,
And knowest that he has nothing good in
him
That Thou shouldst give him this.

Wherefore I confess my vileness;
I recognize Thy goodness;
I praise Thy tender mercy;
And give Thee thanks for Thy exceeding
charity.

For Thou dost this for Thyself,
Not for any merit of mine,
That Thy goodness may be better known
of me,
Thy charity more fully brought to me,
Thy humility more perfectly borne in on me.
So, forasmuch as this is pleasing unto Thee,
And Thou hast willed it should be so,
Thy condescension also pleases me,
And oh that no unrighteousness of mine
stand in the way!

Sweetest and kindest Jesus,
How great the reverence,

The thanks,
The never-ceasing praise,
Due to Thee for the receiving of Thy
sacred Body!

No man is found who can unfold its great-
ness worthily.

But what shall I think when I come in this
Communion to my God —

My God, Whom worthily I cannot rever-
ence,

And yet long devoutly to receive?

What better, what more healthful thought
to me,

Than wholly before Thee to humble self,
And raise high over me Thine unbounded
goodness?

I praise Thee, O my God, and extol Thee
evermore:

I despise myself and lay me low before
Thee in the depths of my vileness.

Holy of Holies, Thou —
And I, the scum of sinners!

Thou bendest down to me,
Who am not fit to look at Thee!
Lo, Thou dost come to me,
Thou wouldst be with me,
Thou callest me to Thy feast,
Thou wouldst give me heavenly food
And Angels' bread to eat —
No other than Thyself,
The living bread
Who camest down from heaven,
And givest life to the world!

See whence love comes!
What condescension shines from Thee!
How great the thanks and praise owed
Thee for this!
How salutary and useful was Thy plan,
When Thou didst institute this Sacrament!
How sweet and pleasant is the feast,
When Thou hast given Thyself for food!

How wonderful Thy working, O my
God!

How strong Thy power!
Infallible thy truth!
For Thou didst speak and all was made,
And this was done that Thou didst
 bid.

Wonderful, worthy of belief,
And outstripping human understanding,
That Thou, my Lord God,
True God and man, art contained entire
In a small form of bread and wine,
And eaten by him who Thee receives, and
 yet art unconsumed!

Thou God of all the world,
Thou that needest nothing,
Didst will by this Thy Sacrament to dwell
 in us.

Keep my heart and body pure,
That often,
With conscience clean and joyful,
I may celebrate Thy Mysteries
And receive them to my salvation ever-
 lasting.

Thou hast appointed and instituted them
chiefly to Thy honor,
And in memory of Thee for ever.

Rejoice, my soul, and give thanks to
God
For such a noble gift, for such a special
comfort
Left thee in this vale of tears!
For every time that thou renewest this
Mystery
And receivest Christ's Body,
So often thou workest the work of thy
redemption,
And art made to share in all the merits
of Christ.
Christ's charity is never lessened,
And the great river of His propitiation is
never dried.

Therefore, ever with renewal of mind
Thou shouldst dispose thyself for this,
And ponder with thought intent
On the great Mystery of salvation.

It should seem as great, as new, as sweet
to thee,

When you celebrate or hear Mass,
As if the same day Christ,
Descending into the Virgin's womb,
Were first become man,
Or, hanging on the Cross,
Suffered and died
For man's salvation.

CHAPTER 3

THAT IT IS A USEFUL THING TO RECEIVE
COMMUNION OFTEN

The Voice of the Disciple

SEE, I am coming to Thee, Lord,
That by Thy gift it may be well with
me,

And I may be joyful in Thy holy feast,
Which Thou, God, hast prepared

In Thy sweetness for the poor.

Lo, in Thee is all I can or should desire,

My salvation and my ransom,

My hope, my strength,

My glory and my honor!

Rejoice, then, to-day Thy servant's soul,
For to Thee, Lord Jesus, have I lifted up
my soul!

Now devoutly and reverently would I re-
ceive Thee.

I would bring Thee to my home,

And, with Zacchæus, win a blessing of
Thee,

And be reckoned among Abraham's sons.
My soul longs Thy Body to receive,
My heart would be made one with Thee!
Give me Thyself and it is enough,
For, without Thee, no comfort can avail.

Away from Thee I cannot be:
Without Thy visiting me I cannot live.
Hence, I must often come to Thee,
And receive Thee for the medicine of my
salvation,
That I fail not in the way,
If I be robbed of my heavenly food.
For so Thou, Jesus most merciful,
When preaching to the crowds, and curing
various ills,
Didst once say:
"I will not send them fasting to their
homes,
For fear they faint upon the road."
Deal in like manner, then, with me,
Thou that in the Blessed Sacrament hast
left Thyself

For the comfort of the faithful.
For Thou art the soul's sweet food,
And he that worthily has eaten Thee
Will be sharer and heir of Thy eternal
glory.

Needs must I, who slip and sin so often,
Who sluggish grow and fail so soon,
Needs must I, by many prayers and many
a Confession,
And by the holy receiving of Thy Body,
Renew, and purify and fire myself,
Lest, keeping long away from Thee,
I slip back from my holy resolution.
For from the days of youth
The sense of man is prone to evil,
And, if the medicine of God comes not to
help him,
Man soon slips into what is worse.
So Holy Communion
Draws man back from what is ill,
And strengthens him in what is good.
For if I am so often now lax and tepid

When I celebrate or receive,
What would it be
If I took not the remedy, and sought not
a help so great?
And though I am not every day fit or well
disposed to celebrate,
Yet will I do my best, at seasonable times,
To receive the Sacred Mysteries,
And make myself partaker of so great a grace.
For this is one chief comfort of the faithful
soul,
While it is in exile from Thee in its mortal
frame,
That often, mindful of its God,
She should receive her Loved One with a
mind devout.

Wondrous the condescension of Thy
goodness towards us!
That Thou, the Lord our God, Creator and
Life-giver of every spirit,
Dost deign to come to the poor little soul,
Filling the hungry void

With all Thy Godhead and Thy Man-
hood!

Happy the mind and blest the soul
Worthy to take Thee in, its Lord and God,
And, in the taking of Thee in, to be filled
full with spiritual gladness!

O how great the Master it receives!
How loved the Guest it leads within!
How sweet the Fellow that it welcomes home!
How true the Friend it harbors!

How noble and how beautiful
The Spouse it takes into its arms,
To be loved before all cherished ones, and
all it can desire!

Heaven and earth and all their ornament —
Silent let them lie before the face of Thee,
My best beloved!

For all the praise and all the comeliness
they have

Come from Thy condescending bounty,
Nor will they ever reach the beauty of Thy
Name,

Whose wisdom is untold!

CHAPTER 4

THAT MANY GOOD THINGS ARE GIVEN TO
THOSE WHO COMMUNICATE WITH DEVOTION

The Voice of the Disciple

O LORD my God,
Go Thou before Thy servant with
the blessings of Thy sweetness,
That I may worthily and devoutly come to
Thy grand Sacrament!

Rouse my heart to Thee,
And pull me out from my dull sloth!
Visit me with Thy saving power,
That in the spirit I may taste
The sweetness that is Thine,
Which in this Sacrament lies hid in all its
fulness,
As water in the spring.
Lighten, too, my eyes that they may gaze
upon a Mystery so great,
And strengthen me to believe that Mystery
with an unfailling faith.
For it is Thy doing,

And no human power;
Thy holy institution,
And no man's invention.
For no man is found able in himself to
take in and understand these Myste-
ries,
Which pass the keenness of even an Angel's
thought.

What, then, can I, unworthy sinner,
Dust and ashes as I am,
Trace out and grasp of so deep a holy
secret?

My Lord, I come to Thee with simple heart,
At Thy command,
With good firm faith,
With hope and reverence,
And of a truth believe
That Thou art here present in the Sacra-
ment, God and man.

Therefore Thou wouldst have me Thee
receive,
And make myself one with Thee in love.

So, I pray Thy mercy,
And implore
That special grace be given me for this,
That I may wholly melt in Thee
And flow over with love,
And never more bring outside consolation
in to me.
For this, the highest and the worthiest Sac-
rament,
To soul and body is salvation,
The medicine to all the weakness of the spirit,
In which my faults are cured,
My passions curbed,
Temptations beaten down,
Or weakened,
A greater grace poured in on me,
Virtue begun increased,
Faith made firm,
Hope made strong,
The flame of charity lighted and enlarged.

For many good things
Thou hast given, and still dost often give,

In Thy Sacrament,
To Thy loved ones who communicate de-
voutly,
My God,
Who takest up my soul,
Strengthenest man's weakness,
And givest all interior consolation.
For much the consolation Thou dost pour
on them against many a tribulation;
And from the depths of their dejection
Thou dost raise them to hope in Thy protection,
And with a new grace Thou dost cheer
and lighten them within,
So that those who felt themselves before
Communion
Anxious, and loveless towards Thee,
Refreshed with food and drink divine,
Find themselves changed to better.

Thou dealest so with Thy elect, arrang-
ing well for them,

That they may truly know and clearly feel
the weakness in themselves,

The goodness and the grace they gain from
Thee.

For cold are they in themselves, and hard,
and wanting in devotion :

But fervor, eagerness, and devotion they
gain from Thee.

For who can humbly come to a fount
of sweetness,

And not bring back some taste of sweet-
ness ?

Or who can stand before a blazing fire,
And feel no touch of heat ?

And Thou art a fountain ever full and
overflowing,

A fire that always burns,

And never cools.

So if I may not drink from the fulness of
the fountain, and drink to satiety,

Yet will I put my mouth unto the opening
of the heavenly reed,

That I may get never so small a droplet to
refresh my thirst,
And that I may not wholly wither.
And if I cannot be as yet all heavenly,
And aflame like Cherubim and Seraphim,
Yet I will try to press on my devotion, and
prepare my heart,
That I may gather some small flash of fire
divine,
From receiving humbly the life-giving
Sacrament.

All that is lacking in me,
Good Jesus, holiest Saviour,
Thou of Thy kindness and Thy grace sup-
ply for me,
Thou, Who didst deign to call all to Thee
and say:
“Come to Me,
All you that labor and are burdened,
And I will refresh you.”
I labor, and the sweat is on my brow!
Torn with sorrow of heart am I,

Laden with sin,
Tossed by temptations,
Entangled and oppressed with many an evil
passion :

And there is none to help me,
None to free and save me,
But Thee, Lord God, my Saviour !
To Thee I trust myself and all I have,
To keep and lead me to eternal life.
Receive me to the praise and glory of Thy
Name,
Thou that didst prepare Thy Body and
Thy Blood
As meat and drink for me.
Grant, O Lord God, my Saviour,
That, often drawing near unto Thy Mys-
tery,
The fire of my devotion may increase.

CHAPTER 5

OF THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE DIGNITY OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

The Voice of the Beloved

WERE you as pure as are the Angels,
Holy as St. John the Baptist,
Yet would you not be worthy to handle or
receive this Sacrament.

For this is not a debt due to the merits of
man,

That man should consecrate and handle
Christ's Sacrament

And receive for food the Bread of Angels!

Lofty is the ministry,

Great the dignity, of priests,

To whom is given what has not been
granted to the Angels.

For only priests that duly in the Church
have been ordained

Have power to celebrate and to consecrate
the Body of Christ.

A priest, indeed, is minister to God,
Using the word of God, God bidding and
appointing him.

But God is there chief Author, Worker
invisible.

All that He wills bows down to Him:

All that He bids obeys Him.

So, in this Sacrament most excellent

You should trust more to God omnipotent

Than to your own senses

Or to any sign that you can see.

With fear and reverence, then,

Come to an act like this.

Turn to yourself,

And see whose service has been given to you.

By the bishop's laying hands on you.

Lo! you were made a priest

And consecrated to celebrate:

Take heed, now, that you faithfully and
piously

Offer the Sacrifice to God at fitting times,

And be yourself a blameless man.
You have not made your burden lighter,
But have bound yourself by closer bonds
of discipline,
And are bound to holiness more perfect.
A priest should be adorned with every virtue:
And give an example of good life to others.
His goings are not with the crowd, nor in
the common walks of men,
But with the Angels in Heaven,
Or with the perfect on earth.

A priest in sacred vestments clad acts in
the place of Christ,
Praying for himself and all, a humble sup-
pliant to God.
Before him and behind him is the sign of
the Lord's Cross,
To bring Christ's Passion ever to his mind;
Before him on the chasuble,
That he may with diligence look on Christ's
footprints,
And strive to follow Him with fervor:

Behind him he is signed with the Cross,
That he may meekly bear for God with
any troubles set on him by others.

Before he bears the Cross
That he may mourn for his own sins;
Behind,
That he may weep for others' sins in pity,
And know that he is there to stand between
God and the sinner,
Never growing dull in prayer, nor in the
holy offering,
Till he be given to win God's pity and His
grace.

When the priest celebrates,
He honors God,
He makes the Angels glad,
He builds the body of the Church,
He helps on those that live,
Gives rest unto the dead,
And makes himself a sharer in all things
that are good.

CHAPTER 6

A QUESTION — WHAT SHOULD BE THE EXERCISE
BEFORE COMMUNION?

The Voice of the Disciple

PONDERING, O Lord, Thy greatness
and my worthlessness,
I shudder greatly,
And am confounded in myself!
For if I come not,
I shun life;
If I intrude unworthily,
I do Thee offence.
What, then, shall I do, my God,
My Helper and my Counsellor in times of
need?

Teach me Thou the right way;
Put some short exercise before me
Fitting Holy Communion.
For it is good to know
How I ought devoutly and reverently to
make my heart ready for Thee,

Thy Sacrament to receive unto my health
of soul,
Or also to celebrate a Sacrifice so great
and so divine.

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CHAPTER 7

OF THE EXAMINATION OF OUR CONSCIENCE AND PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Voice of the Beloved

THE priest of God should, above all,
 approach
Most humble of heart and reverently sup-
 pliant,
In full faith and with a holy motive of
 honoring God,
When he comes to celebrate, handle,
And receive this Sacrament.

Examine carefully your conscience:
Cleanse it the best you can and make it
 pure,
By real sorrow and humble Confession,
That you may have naught grievous
And know of naught to bring remorse
And stop your free approach.
Be displeased for all your sins in general,
And mourn and wail

More especially for your daily faults.
And, if time permit,
Confess, in the secret of your heart, to God
All the miseries of your passions.
Grieve and lament
That still you are so worldly,
Such a lover of the flesh,
So unmortified in passions,
So full of movements of concupiscences,
So careless in the watch over your outward
senses,
So oft entangled by many empty fancies,
So much inclined to things that are without,
So negligent of those within;
So ready to laugh and for dissipation,
So hard to turn to tears and compunction,
So prepared for easier things and con-
veniences of the flesh,
So slow to fervor and austerity;
So anxious to hear the news and see the
beautiful,
So remiss in taking up whatever is humble
and abject;

So longing to get,
So stingy in giving,
So tenacious in holding;
So careless in talk,
So unable to rein yourself to silence;
In character so undisciplined,
In action so over-ready;
So eager at food,
So dull at God's Word;
So swift to rest,
So slow to toil;
So wakeful at a story,
So sleepy at your holy vigils;
So hurrying to the end,
So wandering in attention;
So careless in your saying of the Hours,
So tepid in celebrating,
So dry in Communion;
So soon distracted,
So rarely fully recollected;
So quickly moved to anger,
So apt to take offence of others;
So eager to judge,

So stern to condemn;
So merry in prosperous days,
So weak in adversity;
So often making many good resolves,
And carrying little to effect.

And when you have confessed and wept
For these and your other failings,
With grief and great disgust at your own
weakness,
Set before you a firm plan to mend your
life from day to day
And go better on your road.

Then with full resignation and all your
will
Offer yourself upon the altar of your
heart,
As a burnt-offering that will last for ever,
Unto the honor of My Name;
That is, by trustfully committing to My
care body and soul,
That thus you may be deemed worthy

To come and offer sacrifice to God,
And receive the Sacrament of My Body
wholesomely.

For there is no offering worthier,
No satisfaction greater to wash away your
sins,
Than, with the offering of Christ,
To offer yourself purely and wholly unto
God

In Mass and in Communion.

If man does what he can,
And of a truth is penitent;
As often as he comes to Me for grace and
pardon,

“I live,” saith the Lord,

“Who desire not the death of the sinner,
But rather that he be converted and live;
For I will no more think upon his sins,
But all shall be forgiven him.”

CHAPTER 8

OF THE OFFERING OF CHRIST UPON THE
CROSS AND THE RESIGNATION OF
OURSELVES

The Voice of the Beloved

AS I, with Hands outstretched on the
Cross, and Body naked
Offered myself to God My Father
Freely for your sins,
So that there was nothing left in Me,
Which did not wholly pass into a sacrifice,
appeasing God;
So in the Mass, you too, should give your-
self willingly to Me
For a pure and holy offering every day,
with all your powers and affections,
As interiorly as you can.
What more do I ask of you
Than to try to give yourself entirely up to
Me?
What you give Me else I care not:
I do not ask your gifts, but you.

Just as it would not be enough for you if
you had all but Me,
So Me it cannot please, whatever you give,
if you offer not yourself.

Offer yourself to Me

And give your whole self for God:

The offering will be taken.

Lo, I for you gave all Myself up to the
Father,

All my Body, too, and Blood I gave for
food,

That I might be all yours

And you remain Mine.

But if you stand upon yourself, and do not
freely offer yourself unto My will,

The offering is not full,

Nor will there be full union between us.

So, there must be before your every work
The willing offering of yourself into the
hands of God,

If you would get freedom and the grace of
God.

This is the reason why so few are really
enlightened and made free within :

They cannot wholly deny themselves.

Firm is My word :

“Unless a man giveth up all,

He cannot be a follower of Mine !”

So, would you be one,

Offer yourself to Me, and all your heart.

CHAPTER 9

THAT OURSELVES AND ALL WE HAVE WE
OUGHT TO OFFER UP TO GOD, AND WE
SHOULD PRAY FOR ALL

The Voice of the Disciple

LORD,
All is Thine
In heaven and on earth.
I long to give myself to Thee,
A free-will offering,
And stay for ever Thine.
Lord, in my simple heart I offer Thee my-
self to-day to be Thy servant ever,
Thee to obey, and be a sacrifice of everlast-
ing praise.
Receive me with this holy offering of Thy
precious Body,
Which I offer this day to Thee
In the presence of the Angels standing by
unseen :
To be for my own salvation and that of
all Thy people.

Lord, I offer up to Thee,
Upon Thy shrine that makes amends for
all,
All my misdeeds and sins,
Which I have done before Thee and Thy
holy Angels
From the day I first could sin even till
now:
That Thou wouldst burn them all alike,
And with the fire of Thy love consume
them,
And wipe away the spots of all my evil
acts,
Clearing my conscience clean of every sin,
And give back to me Thy grace, which I
have lost by sin,
Granting me full indulgence,
Taking me up with mercy for the kiss of
peace.

What can I do for my sins
But humbly confess and mourn for them,
And without ceasing pray Thy mercy?

I pray Thee, hear me in mercy,
Where I stand before Thee, my God!
All my sins very much displease me.
I never will again commit them;
But I grieve, I shall grieve for them all my
life,

Ready to do penance,
And to give satisfaction as I can.
Forgive me, O God, forgive me my sins,
For Thy holy Name.

Save my soul, which Thou hast redeemed
with Thy precious Blood!

I commit me to Thy mercy;
I resign me to Thy hands:
Do with me as Thy goodness wills, not after
my malice and iniquity.

I offer, too, to Thee all the good things
in me,
Very slight and imperfect though they be;
That Thou mayst improve them and make
them holy,
Pleasing and unto Thee acceptable;

Ever drawing them to better,
And lead me — useless, slothful weakling
 though I be —
Unto a blessed and praiseworthy end.

I offer, too, to Thee
All the holy longings of the devout;
All that my parents need,
Friends, brothers, sisters,
And all that are dear to me,
And all who for Thy sake have benefactors
 been to me or others,
And all who have wished and asked
me
For prayers and Masses to be said for
them and all of theirs,
Whether they yet live in the flesh or
 have already died to the world:
That all may feel the help of Thy
 grace,
The aid of consolation,
Protection from peril,
Salvation from punishment,

And that, saved from every evil,
They may joyfully give exceeding thanks
to Thee.

I offer, too, to Thee
Prayers and victims to appease Thee
For those in special who have injured
me in aught,
Saddened me, or reviled me,
Or brought some loss or trouble on me;
And for all those whom I have ever
saddened,
Disturbed, grieved, or scandalized,
By word or deed, knowingly or in igno-
rance;
That Thou wouldst pardon all our sins
alike
And all our evils done to one another.

Take from our hearts, O Lord,
All suspicion, anger, heat, dispute,
All that can injure charity
And lessen love fraternal.

Pity, pity those, O Lord,
That ask Thy pity!
Give grace to those that need it!
Make us such
That we be worthy to enjoy Thy grace,
And go forward to eternal life!
Amen.

CHAPTER 10

THAT HOLY COMMUNION SHOULD NOT
LIGHTLY BE FORBORNE

The Voice of the Beloved

OFTEN you must run unto the fount
of grace
And of mercy divine,
To the fount of goodness and of perfect
purity,
If you would be cured of passion, cured of
evil ways,
And made stronger and more watchful
To meet the devil's wiles and all tempta-
tions.

The enemy, who knows the good and
the very great remedy
That lies in Holy Communion,
In every way,
At every time,
Tries to hinder and draw back all he can
The faithful and the devout.

For when some try to fit themselves for
Holy Communion,
They suffer worse attacks of Satan.
The evil spirit himself,
As says the book of Job,
“ Comes among the sons of God,”
That with his wonted wickedness
He may disturb them,
Or make them over timid and per-
plexed,
To lessen their love, or take away their
faith by his assaults,
If, may be, they will either let Communion
wholly go,
Or receive with tepidity.

But we must not care a whit about his
wiles and fancies,
However base and horrible they be;
But all his fancies must be thrust back
upon his head.
The wretched one is to be mocked and
spurned;

And never for assaults of his, nor for the
storms he raises,
Are we to pass Holy Communion by.

Often, too, this hinders —
Excessive care to have devotion,
And an anxiety about going to Confession.
Do as the wise would have you do.
Lay scruple and anxiety aside;
It stops the grace of God:
It ruins devotion of soul.

You are slightly disturbed or troubled? —
Leave not your Holy Communion for that;
But go the sooner to confess,
And from your heart
Forgive all others their offences.
But if you have offended any one,
Humbly ask forgiveness,
And God will readily forgive you.

Why delay Confession long;
Or why put Holy Communion off?

As soon as may be, cleanse yourself:
Be swift to spit the poison forth.
Hurry to get the remedy:
You will feel better than if you long delay.
Suppose you leave it for one cause to-day,
Perchance to-morrow something greater
will occur.
This way you might be long kept from
Communion,
Becoming more and more unfit.
Fast as you can, shake yourself free from
your present sloth and heaviness;
What is the use of long anxiety, passing
long days in trouble?
Why keep yourself from heavenly things
because of daily hindrances?
Nay, it is very hurtful to put Communion
off and off:
For grievous sloth, too, is brought on so.

How sad it is that certain lukewarm
souls and frivolous
Are glad to make delays in their Confession;

And for this reason would defer Communion,

That they may not be bound to keep a closer watch upon themselves.

Ah, how small their charity, how weak their soul's devotion

Who so easily put off Communion!

How happy he, how dear to God
Who lives a life so good, and keeps so pure
his conscience

As to be ready and well disposed
To receive Communion every day,
If it were allowed him,
And if he could unmarked of others.

If now and then a man keeps back out
of humility,

Or some good reason hindering him,
Praise him for his reverence.

But if sloth creeps across his path,
He should arouse himself, and do what in
him lies:

God will be present to his desire for his
good will,

Which He specially regards.

But when he is duly hindered,

He will ever have good will

And the pious intention to communicate,

And so he will not miss the fruit of the

Sacrament.

For any devout soul may every day,

Ay, every hour,

With profit to himself and unforbidden,

Come to a spiritual communion with

Christ.

And yet on certain days and at the ap-
pointed time,

He should receive with loving reverence

The Body of his Redeemer sacramentally;

And rather aim at praising and at honoring

God,

Than at seeking consolation for himself.

Oft as he thinks upon the mystery of Christ
made man,

And dwells upon the Passion piously,

And is fired with love of Him,
So often he communicates in mystic wise,
And is refreshed invisibly.

But he who only makes him ready
When festal days are on, or custom drives
 him,
Will be often unprepared.

Blest is the man who offers himself a
 holocaust unto the Lord,
As often as he celebrates or receives.

When you celebrate, be neither slow nor
 fast,
But keep the good and ordinary way
Of those with whom you live.
You should not trouble others or weary
 them;
But go the common way according to the
 appointment of superiors,
And look rather to what helps the rest
Than to your own devotion or feeling.

CHAPTER 11

THAT CHRIST'S BODY AND THE HOLY SCRIPTURES ARE VERY NEEDFUL TO THE FAITHFUL SOUL

The Voice of the Disciple

SWEETEST Lord Jesus,
How great Thy sweetness to the pious
soul,
Banqueting with Thee at Thy feast,
Where none other food is put before it
Save Thee, its only loved one,
Longed for past all the longings of its heart !
Sweet were it for me,
When Thou art there,
To pour a flood of tears out from my
inward love
And with holy Magdalene wash Thy feet
with tears !
But where is this devotion to be found ?
Where is the flowing river of holy tears ?
I know that in Thy sight,
And in Thy holy Angels' sight,

All my heart should burn
And weep for joy.
For I have Thee truly present in Thy Sacrament,
Hidden though Thou art beneath another form.
For were I to see Thee in Thy own, Thy divine brightness,
My eyes could not endure it;
Nor could even the whole world stand
In the splendor of the glory of Thy majesty!
So, Thou providest for my weakness in this,
That Thou dost hide Thyself beneath the sacramental veils.
I truly have, I worship Him
Whom Angels worship in Heaven;
But I as yet meanwhile in faith:
They by sight and without veil!

I must be content with the light of true faith,
And walk in it,

Until the day of everlasting brightness
dawns,
And the shadows of figures fade!
But when that which is perfect comes,
The use of Sacraments shall cease;
For the Blessed in heavenly glory
Need no sacramental healing,
Rejoicing endlessly in sight of God,
Gazing on His glory face to face!
Changed from their brightness to another,
The brightness of the unfathomable Deity,
They taste the Word of God made flesh,
As it was from the beginning, and remain-
eth evermore!

When I remember these marvels,
Even every comfort of the soul
Becomes a weariness and burden to me;
For while I do not plainly see my Lord in
His glory,
I count as nothing all
That in the world I see and hear.
Thou art my witness, O my God,

That nothing else can comfort me,
No creature give me rest,
Save Thee, my God, Whom I long to con-
template eternally.

But this I may not do
While in this mortal life I live.
So I must set myself to bear and bear,
And bow myself in all my longing unto
Thee.

For thy Saints, too, O Lord,
Who now rejoice with Thee, in the king-
dom of Heaven,

Waited the coming of Thy glory
While they lived, believing, very patiently.
What they believed in, I believe in;
What they hoped for, I hope for;
Whither they came,

Thither I trust that through Thy grace I
shall come.

Till then I will walk in faith, strengthened
by the example of the Saints.

I shall also have the Holy Books to com-
fort me and be a mirror for my life;

And, above all these things,
Thy most holy Body,
My haven and my special cure.

For two things in this life
I feel are very, very needful to me,
Without which I could not bear this life
of misery.

Here, in the prison of the body held,
I know it, I need two things:
Food and light.

Therefore Thou hast given me in my
weakness

Thy sacred Body to refresh my mind and
body,

And Thou hast set Thy Word a lantern
for my feet.

Without these two, I could not well live,
For my soul's light is God's Word:

And Thy Sacrament, the bread of life.

I may call these the tables two, one here,
one there,

Set in the treasure-house of holy Church.

One is the table of the holy Altar,
Having the holy bread, — the precious
Body of Christ;
The other is the table of the law of Heaven,
With its sacred teaching,
Teaching faith aright,
And leading with steady hand unto the
inner veil,
Where the Holy of Holies lies.

Thanks be to Thee, Lord Jesus, Light of
light eternal,
For the table of Thy holy teaching,
Thy table served to us by servants of Thine,
Prophets and Apostles,
And others of Thy teachers.

Thanks be to Thee, Creator and Re-
deemer of mankind,
That Thou, to show Thy charity to all the
world,
Madest a great supper,
Wherein before us for our food

Thou placedst, not the lamb, the type of
Thee,
But Thine own most holy Body and Blood,
Making all the faithful joyful by Thy sacred
feast,
And drunken with the cup of salvation,
Wherein are all the joys of Paradise,
And (though with happier sweetness),
The holy Angels share the banquet with us.

O how great, how honorable the office
of the priest,
To whom is given to consecrate the Lord
of majesty with sacred words,
With his lips to bless Him,
In his hand to hold Him,
To receive Him with his own mouth,
And to the rest to minister !

O how clean should be those hands !
How pure that mouth,
How holy the body,
How spotless shall the priest's heart be.

To whom the Author of purity so often
comes !

From the priest's mouth no word should go,
But what is holy, useful, good :

So often does he the Sacrament of Christ
receive.

His eyes should simple be, and modest,

That are wont to look upon Christ's Body.

His hands should be pure and raised on
high

That are wont to handle Him Who made
the heavens and the earth.

To priests, above all others, it is written in
the Law :

“Be ye holy,

For I, the Lord your God, am holy.”

O God Almighty, let Thy grace assist us ;
That we who have received the priestly
office,

Worthily and devoutly,

With conscience good and in all purity
may serve Thee !

And if we cannot pass our lives in all the
innocence we should,
Grant us at least to moan with worthy
penitence over the evils we have done,
And with a humble spirit and the purpose
of a good will
Henceforth to serve Thee with more fervor.

CHAPTER 12

THAT HE WHO IS TO COMMUNICATE SHOULD
WITH GREAT CARE PREPARE HIMSELF FOR
CHRIST

The Voice of the Beloved

I AM a lover of purity,
And giver of all holiness.
I seek a clean heart,
And there is My resting-place.
Prepare for Me a large dining-room fur-
nished,
And I and My disciples will make our
pasch with you.
If you will that I should come to you,
And stay with you,
Purge the old ferment out,
And make clean the habitation of your
heart.
Bar out all the world and all the tumult
of your evil ways;
Sit like the sparrow lonely on the housetop;
And ponder on your sins in bitterness of
soul.

For every one that loves
Makes ready for his dear lover a very
good and beauteous place,
For by this is known the love of one re-
ceiving his beloved.

But know
That not by merit of your act
Can you make this preparation good
enough,
Though you should spend a year to get you
ready,
Thinking all the while of nothing else.
It is only My devoted love and grace that
suffers you to draw near to My table;
As though a beggar were invited to some
rich man's feast,
And he had nothing else to give him for
his benefits .
But humility and thanks.

Do what in you lies, and diligently do it;
Not that it is the custom, not that you are
bound,

But with fear and reverence,
And lovingly receive the Body of your
beloved Lord God,
Who deigns to come to you.
I am He that called you;
I have bidden it be done;
I will fill up what lacks in you:
Come, and receive Me!

When I give you the grace of devotion,
Give thanks unto your God;
Not that you are worthy:
But that I pitied you.

If you have it not, but are rather dry,
Continue still in prayer,
Lament and knock upon the door,
And stop not till you win a drop or crumb
of saving grace.
You are in want of Me,
Not I of you.
You do not come to make Me holy:
I come to make you holy and to better
you.

You come for sanctity to Me, to be made
one with Me,

To get fresh grace from Me,
And be inflamed anew unto a better
life.

Do not neglect this grace;
But with all care prepare your heart,
And bring your Loved One home.

Nor only before Communion should you
prepare you for devotion,
But carefully preserve it in you when you
have received:

Not less are we required to keep it after
Than devoutly to prepare for it before.
For a good guard kept afterwards
Is the best of ways to get a greater share
of grace another time.

And thoughts straightway much scattered
to the comforts from without
Make men exceeding indisposed.

Beware of talking much;
Stay by yourself:

Enjoy your God.
For you have One
Whom all the world cannot take from
you.
It is I,
To Whom you must give all yourself;
No longer in yourself to live,
But — all care set aside — in Me.

CHAPTER 13

THAT THE PIOUS SOUL SHOULD IN THE BLESSED
SACRAMENT LONG WITH ALL ITS HEART
TO BE UNITED WITH CHRIST

The Voice of the Disciple

I WOULD that one would grant me,
O my Lord,
To find Thee only, and open all my heart
to Thee,
And enjoy Thee as my soul does long to do;
That none may now look down on me,
And no created thing may move me or
regard me;
That Thou alone wouldst speak to me and
I to Thee,
As a lover talking to his loved one,
A friend at table with his friend!

This is my prayer, my longing;
To be made wholly one with Thee,
And to draw my heart away from all
created things,

And learn to relish more
Eternal and heavenly things
By Holy Communion and frequent celebra-
tion.

Ah, my Lord God,
When shall I be quite one with Thee,
drawn in to Thee,
And utterly forgetful of myself?
Thou in me, I in Thee,
Grant us to stay thus — one.

Thou truly art my Loved One, chosen from
thousands,

In Whom my soul hath been well-pleased
to dwell all the days of its life.

Thou truly art my peace-maker,

In Whom my greatest peace, my true rest
lies;

Apart from Whom it is but toil and grief
and endless misery.

Thou truly art a hidden God,

And Thy counsel is not with the wicked:

Thy talk is with the simple and the
humble.

How kind Thy Spirit, oh my Lord !
To show Thy sweetness towards Thy sons
Thou deignest to refresh them with deli-
cious bread that comes from Heaven.

No other nation is in truth so great that
it should have gods near to it
As Thou, our God, art near to all Thy
faithful souls !
Thou givest Thyself to them to be eaten
and enjoyed,
To be their daily comfort and lift their
hearts to Heaven.
For what other nation is so famous as the
Christian people ?
What thing beneath the sky so loved as is
the soul devout ?
God enters into it, to feed it with His
glorious Flesh.

O grace beyond the power of speech !
O condescension wonderful !
O love beyond all measure, spent alone on
man !

But for this grace what shall I render to
the Lord,
For charity so excellent? —
Nothing more grateful can I offer
Than wholly to give up my heart to
God,
Joining it closely unto His.

Then all my inward self shall leap for
joy,
When my soul shall wholly united be with
God!

Then shall He say to me:
“If thou wilt be with Me,
I will to be with thee!”
And I shall answer:
“Deign, O Lord, to stay with me:
I will gladly be with Thee.
This is all my desire,
That my heart be one with Thee.”

CHAPTER 14

OF THE STRONG DESIRE OF SOME DEVOUT SOULS
TO RECEIVE THE BODY OF CHRIST

The Voice of the Disciple

O HOW great, O Lord, is the multi-
tude of Thy sweetness
Which Thou hast hidden away for those
that fear Thee!

When I remember some of the devout,
O Lord,
That come with the greatest piety and love
unto Thy Sacrament,
I am confounded often in myself and
blush
That to Thine Altar and Thy Holy Table
of Communion I come so cool — so
cold,
That so dry I stay and so feelingless,
That I am not all aflame before Thee, O
my God,
Nor so fiercely drawn to Thee and touched
As many devout souls have been,

Who in their great desire for Communion,
And in the sensible love of their heart
Could not restrain themselves from tears,
But body and soul alike,
To Thee, O God, the living fountain,
From their being's inmost depths they
panted for Thee!

They could not stay nor stop their hunger
But by reception of Thy Body
With all sweetness and eagerness of soul!

O, true and burning was their faith —
A strong presumption of Thy sacred
presence.

For they do truly know their Master in the
breaking of the bread

Whose heart so greatly burns within them
Because of Jesus as He walks with them.
Devotion and affection such as this,
Love and fervor so vehement,
Are often far from me.

Be merciful to me, O Jesus, sweet and
kind and good!

And grant me, Thy poor suppliant, to feel
 in Holy Communion,
If only now and then,
Some little hearty love of Thee!
So shall my faith stronger grow,
My hope increase, because Thou art so good,
And charity, once kindled perfectly,
And having experience of the heavenly
 Manna,
Shall never fail.

Thy mercy in its power can give the
 grace I long for,
Can visit me most graciously with fervor of
 soul
In the day of Thy good pleasure.
For, though I burn not with the great desire
Of Thy own so specially devoted souls,
Yet, by Thy grace, I long for that great
 burning longing;
Praying and sighing for a place among
 such fervent lovers,
And to be counted in their holy company.

CHAPTER 15

THAT THE GRACE OF DEVOTION IS GAINED BY
HUMILITY AND BY SELF-DENIAL

The Voice of the Beloved

YOU must seek earnestly the grace to
be devout,
Beg for it fervently, wait for it with trust
and patience,
Receive it with thanks,
Keep it in humility,
Work with it zealously:
Leaving to God the visitation — its length,
its fashion — until it comes.

When inwardly your devotion is slight or
none,
Best to humble yourself.
But do not be too much cast down,
Nor be inordinately sad.
In one short moment God will often give
What in long lapse of time He has denied.
Sometimes He gives us at the end

What He put off giving when our prayers
began.

If grace were always granted soon,
Were always ready when we wished,
It would not be easy for weak men to
bear it.

Therefore with good hope and with humble
patience
You must await the grace of devotion.

Yet, when it is not given,
Or is taken from you in some hidden way,
Impute it to yourself and to your sins.
Sometimes it is a little thing that hinders
grace and hides it from us —

If we may call it little and not rather
great

That stops a boon like this.
And if you take away and fully vanquish
This little or great hindrance,
Then you shall have what you have sought.
For, as soon as you have given yourself to
God with all your heart,

Seeking neither this nor that for your
pleasure or your will,
But wholly laying down yourself in Him,
You will find you are one with Him, and
be at peace;
For nothing will taste so sweet, nothing
will please so much
As the good pleasure of the divine will.

Whoever, then, has raised his intention
with simple heart up to God,
And freed himself from all ill-ordered love,
Or from dislike of aught created,
He will be the fittest to receive the grace of
God
And worthy of the gift of devotion.
For God gives His blessing there
Where He finds an empty vessel.
And the more perfectly a man
Renounces things below,
And dies unto himself the more through
self-contempt,
The quicker grace comes,

Enters in more abundance,
And lifts the free heart higher up.

Then shall he see and abound,
His heart shall marvel and expand in
him,
Because God's hand is with him,
And he has wholly placed himself within
the hollow of His hand for ever!

Lo, thus shall he be blest,
Who seeks God with all his heart,
And receives not his soul in vain.
He, when he receives the Holy Eucharist,
Merits the great grace of union with God;
Because he regards not his own devotion
And consolation;
But above all devotion and consolation,
The glory and honor of God.

CHAPTER 16

THAT WE OUGHT TO OPEN OUR NECESSITIES
TO CHRIST AND ASK HIS GRACE

The Voice of the Disciple

O MOST sweet and loving Lord,
Whom now I long devoutly to
receive,

Thou knowest how weak I am, the needs I
suffer from,

The evils and the faults I lie bound in,
Weighed down how often, tempted, dis-
turbed, and stained!

For remedy I come to Thee:

To Thee I pray for comfort and for help!

I speak to Him that knows all things,

To Whom all my inner self is plain,

And Who alone can perfectly console and
aid me.

Thou knowest what good I need before all
other goods,

And how poor I am in virtues.

Asking for grace, I stand, imploring pity,

Naked, a beggar, before Thee!

Refresh Thy hungry suppliant !
Kindle my coldness with the fire of Thy
love !
Throw light upon my blindness by the
brightness of Thy presence !
Turn all the things of earth into bitterness
for me,
All that is grievous and adverse into pa-
tience,
All low and created things into oblivion
and contempt !
Raise up my heart to Thee in heaven,
And send me not away to wander on the
earth !
Now and for ever do Thou alone
Grow sweet and sweeter to me ;
My only food, my only drink,
My love, my joy,
My sweetness, all my good !

O that Thou wouldst inflame me wholly
with Thy presence,
Consume and change me into Thee,

That I be made one spirit with Thee
Through the grace of inner union
And the melting influence of burning love!
Suffer me not to go from Thee hungered
and athirst,
But do with me of Thy mercy
As Thou hast often done with Saints of
Thine so wondrously.
What wonder if I wholly grew on fire from
Thee,
And died out myself;
Seeing Thou art a fire that ever burns
and never fails,
A love that makes hearts pure
And throws a flood of light upon the
mind!

CHAPTER 17

OF BURNING LOVE AND VEHEMENT DESIRE
TO RECEIVE CHRIST

The Voice of the Disciple

WITH the greatest devotion and burn-
ing love,
With my whole heart's affection and with
fervor
I long to receive Thee, O my Lord,
As many Saints and many pious souls
Have longed to receive Thee in Com-
munion,
Men that have pleased Thee most by sanc-
tity of life,
Men that have been most fervent in de-
votion.
My God, eternal love, all my good, and
happiness unending!
I would receive Thee
With the most vehement longing and the
most fitting reverence
That any of Thy Saints has ever had or
could feel.

And though I am unworthy to have all
those sentiments of devotion,
Yet I offer all my heart's affection unto
Thee:

As if I alone
Had all those most grateful burning
longings!
Nay, all that the pious soul can conceive
and wish,
All this with deepest veneration and with
inner favor
I lay before Thy feet and offer Thee.
I would keep nothing for myself,
But freely and most willingly
I sacrifice myself, my all to Thee!

Lord God, my Maker and Redeemer,
As Thy most holy Mother, the glorious
Virgin Mary,
Received and longed for Thee,
When to the Angel bringing her the tidings
of the Mystery of the Incarnation
She humbly and devoutly answered:

“Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it
done to me according to thy word!”

So, with sentiments like hers,
With honor, praise, and reverence like hers,
With gratitude and worthiness and love
like hers,

With faith and hope and purity like hers,
I would to-day receive Thee.

And as Thy blessed Precursor,
John the Baptist, most excellent of the
Saints,

Glad at Thy presence, exulted in the Holy
Spirit's joy,

While yet enclosed within his mother's
womb;

And, afterwards, seeing Jesus walking
among men,

Humbled himself greatly, and with devout
affection said:

“The bridegroom's friend, who stands and
hears him,

Rejoices exceedingly for the bridegroom's
voice;”

So I, too, would be afire with great and
holy longings,
And would present myself to Thee with all
my heart.

Therefore I offer unto Thee and lay
before Thee
The mighty joy of all devoted hearts,
The burning love,
The mental raptures,
The supernatural lights
And heavenly visions,
With all the virtues
And with all the praises from all created
things in heaven and earth,
Praises that have been and that shall be
sung for me and for all others
Commended to my prayers;
That Thou by all mayst worthily be
praised
And be for ever glorified!

Accept my wish, O Lord my God, and
my desire

Of praise to Thee without end,
And of blessings to Thee without measure,
Justly due to Thee

For Thy untold greatness in its many
ways!

All this I give Thee, and would give Thee
Every single day and every moment,
And with my prayers and desires invite
and beg

All the Spirits of Heaven and all Thy
faithful

With me to give Thee thanks and praises!
May all peoples, tribes and languages
praise Thee,

And magnify Thy honey-sweet and holy
Name,

With devotion ardent and utmost jubilation!

And they who celebrate Thy loftiest
Sacrament with reverence and piety,
And with full faith receive It,
May it be given them to find with Thee
grace and mercy,

And pray their suppliant prayers for me, a
sinner.

And when they shall have gained the devo-
tion that they longed for,

And the joyful union,

And, well consoled and wondrously fed,
have departed from the heavenly Holy
Table,

Let them deign

To think upon poor me.

CHAPTER 18

THAT A MAN MUST NOT BE A CURIOUS
SEARCHER INTO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT,
BUT, HUMBLY IMITATING CHRIST, HE MUST
SUBMIT HIS OWN THOUGHTS TO THE HOLY
FAITH

The Voice of the Beloved

BEWARE of curious and useless search-
ings

Into this Sacrament most deep,
If you would not be plunged into the gulf
of doubt.

The searcher of majesty
By its glory will be crushed.

God can do more
Than man can understand.

A devout and humble search into the truth
is allowable,

Ever ready to be taught,
And seeking to walk in the right words
of the Fathers.

Blest the simplicity
That leaves the thorny ways that questions
lead to,

And goes upon the plain and firm path of
God's Commandments.

Many have lost their devotion
In wishing to investigate the greater depths.
Faith and a guileless life are required from
you,
Not depth of thought, nor skill about the
mysteries of God.
If you cannot understand, nor grasp what
lies below you,
How will you grasp what is above?
Bow down to God, humble your sense
before your faith,
And light of knowledge shall be given you,
as it shall be good and needful for
you.

Some are greatly tempted over the Sacra-
ment and faith;
Yet this is not to be put down to them, but
rather to the enemy.
Take you no care,

Dispute not with your thoughts,
And give no answer to the doubts suggested by the devil;
But trust the words of God, and trust His
Saints and Prophets,
And the wicked enemy will flee away.

Often it profits much the servant of God
To have to bear such things.
For the enemy attacks not sinners and the
faithless;
Them he has securely in his power:
But the devout faithful he tempts and
vexes many ways.
Go on, then, with simple and undoubting
faith;
Approach the Blessed Sacrament with
suppliant reverence;
And, what you cannot understand,
Leave without care to God all-powerful.

God deceives you not;
He deceives himself who trusts himself too
much.

God walks with simple men,
Shows Himself to humble men,
Gives understanding to the little ones,
Opens His meaning to the pure of
mind,
And hides His grace from the inquisitive
and proud.
Human reason is weak, and it may be de-
ceived:
But true faith cannot be deceived.

All reason and all natural questioning
Should follow faith,
Not go before nor weaken it.
For here faith and love are foremost,
And work in hidden ways in this most
holy and surpassing Sacrament.

The Eternal God, past measure, infinite
in power,
Does great things that we cannot search
into
On earth and in the heavens,

And there is no searching of His wondrous
works.

If the works of God were such

That human reason could easily under-
stand them,

No need to call them wonderful, ineffable.

Book Four

OF INTERIOR CONSOLATION

CHAPTER 1

OF THE INTERIOR WORDS OF CHRIST UNTO
THE FAITHFUL SOUL

I WILL hear what the Lord God says
in me!

Blest is the soul that hears its Lord's voice
speaking within it

And takes the word of consolation from
His lips!

Blest are the ears that catch the throbbing
whisper of the Lord,

And turn not to the buzzings of this
world!

Blest indeed the ears that listen not to
voices from without,

But within to truth which teaches!

Blest are the eyes

That, shut to outer things,

Are busied with the inner life!

Blest are they who penetrate within,

And more and more by daily exercises

Strive to prepare themselves

To understand the heavenly secrets !
Blest are they who are glad to give their
 time to God,
And shake them free from every hin-
 drance of the world.

Take heed to this, my soul,
And shut the doorway of thy senses,
That thou mayst hear
The words of thy Lord God within
 thee.

Thus saith thy Beloved:
I am thy salvation,
Thy peace, thy life !
Keep thee near me
And thou shalt find rest.
Away with all passing things:
Seek the everlasting.
What are all temporal things
But guides to lead men wrong ?
And what can all creation help thee,
If thou be left by the Creator ?

Come, then, leave all,
And give thyself up, faithful and pleas-
ing,
To thy Creator,
To gain true bliss.

CHAPTER 2

THAT TRUTH SPEAKS INTERIORLY WITHOUT
DIN OF WORDS

“**S**PEAK, Lord,
For Thy servant heareth !”

Thy servant am I :

Give me understanding, that I may know
Thy teachings.

Incline my heart to the words of Thy mouth,
And let Thy words drop on me as the dew !

In olden days the sons of Israel said to
Moses :

“Speak thou to us and we will hear ;
Let not God speak to us,
Lest perchance we die.”

Not thus, not thus, pray I ;
But rather, with the prophet Samuel,
Humbly, longingly I beg :

“Speak, Lord ; for Thy servant heareth !”
Let not Moses nor any of the prophets
speak to me,
But rather Thou, Lord God,

That didst send light and inspiration on
them all;
For Thou alone without their help canst
fill me fully:
They, without Thee, will make no progress.

They can sound out the words,
But the spirit they give not.
Fair is their speech:
But they set no heart aflame, if Thou art
silent.

They hand the books to us:
Thou openest the meaning.
They put the mysteries before us:
Thou openest the understanding of what
is sealed.

They utter the commandments:
Thou givest help to keep them.
They point the way:
Thou givest strength unto the journey.
They only deal with us without:
Thou art the guide and lantern for men's
hearts.

They pour on us the water from without:
Thou givest us the increase.

They cry aloud:

Thou givest understanding to our ears.

Therefore, let no Moses speak to me,
But Thou, O Lord my God, Eternal Truth;
For fear I die and be found fruitless,
If I be only warned without, and not fired
within;

For fear the word rise up to judge me —
The word I heard, — but did not do;
The word I knew, — but did not love;
The word I believed, — but did not ob-
serve.

Speak, then, to me, O Lord; for Thy
servant heareth;

For Thou hast the words of life eternal!
Speak Thou to me, in some way comforting
my soul and improving all my life:
Speak to Thy praise and glory and ever-
lasting honor!

CHAPTER 3

THAT THE WORDS OF GOD ARE TO BE HEARD
WITH HUMILITY — THAT MANY WEIGH
THEM NOT AT ALL

HEAR, My son, My words, words
most sweet,

Surpassing all the knowledge of philoso-
phers

And wise men of this world.

My words are spirit and life,

And are not to be weighed by human sense.

In them you must not seek an empty satis-
faction.

They should be received in silence,

Taken with all humility and great love.

And I said:

Blest is the man Thou trainest, Lord,

And teachest of Thy law,

To make the evil days less hard to him,

And that he may not be desolate on earth.

I, saith the Lord, taught the Prophets
From the beginning of the world,

And to this day I cease not speaking unto
all:

But many to My voice are deaf and hard.
Many would rather hear the world than God;
Go more readily after fleshly appetites
Than God's good pleasure.

The world promises things of time, small
things,
And with great eagerness men make them-
selves its slaves:
My promise is of things eternal, mighty
things:
And yet the hearts of men are dull to Me!
Who serves Me and obeys Me in all with
the care
With which men serve the world and the
masters of the world?
Blush, O Sidon, says the sea.
And if you ask the reason, hear why.
To get a small preferment, men run far:
But for eternal life
Many scarce lift a foot once off the ground.

Men look for worthless gains.
They sometimes basely quarrel at the law
 over one coin,
And, for some empty trifle, or some little
 promise,
They fear not weariness both day and
 night;
But (shame on them!) to win a boon un-
 changeable,
A prize above all value,
The greatest honor, glory without end,
They are too lazy to undergo never so
 little weariness!
Blush then, servant slow, complaining,
That they are found readier for perdition
Than you for life,
Happier in the race for vanity
Than you for truth.

Yet they sometimes fail of their hopes:
My promises fail none,
And send away none empty that puts his
 trust in Me.

What I have promised I will give;
What I have said I will fulfil —
If, that is, one will but continue faithful to
the end in My love.
I give rewards to all the good,
And keenly test all the devout.

Write in your heart My words; weigh
them with care,
For in temptation's hour they will be very
needful to you.

What you grasp not when you read,
You will know in the day of visitation.
My visits to my chosen ones are two:
Of trial, and of consolation.
I read two lessons to them every day;
One, when I lash their faults:
One, when I cheer them on to grow in
virtues.

The man that has My words and spurns
them
Makes for himself a judge at the Last
Day.

A PRAYER TO IMPLORE THE GRACE OF
DEVOTION

Lord my God, my all Thou art!
And who am I to dare to speak to Thee?
I am the poorest little slave of Thine,
And an abject little worm:
Poorer far, far more contemptible,
Than I know and dare to say!

Yet think on me, O Lord,
For I am nothing,
Have nothing,
And am powerless!
Thou only art just, good, and holy;
The All-powerful,
Giving all, filling all.
Leaving only sinners empty.
Remember Thy mercies,
And fill my heart with Thy grace:
Thou wouldst not that Thy works should
be in vain.
How can I bear me in this life of
misery,

Unless Thou strengthen me with mercy
and Thy grace?

Turn not Thy face from me!
Delay not long Thy visitation!
Take not away Thy consolation,
Lest my soul become a thirsty land to
Thee!

Lord, teach me how to do Thy will:
And to walk worthily and humbly before
Thee.

Thou art my wisdom; Thou dost really
know me:

Thou knewest me before the world was
made, or ever I was born in it!

CHAPTER 4

HOW WE OUGHT TO WALK IN TRUTH AND
HUMILITY BEFORE THE EYES OF GOD

SON,
Walk in My sight in truth,
And seek Me always with a simple heart.
He that walks in My sight in truth
Will be safe from evil assaults,
And the truth shall make him free
From all that lead him wrong,
And from the slanders of the wicked.
If the truth has made you free,
You shall be free indeed
And reckon not of the empty words of men.

Lord, it is true!
I pray that it should be to me
As Thou sayest.
Let Thy truth teach me,
Guard me,
And keep me, till I be in safety at the last.
Let it free me from every evil feeling and
all ill-ordered love:

And I shall walk, in great liberty of heart,
with Thee.

I will teach you, says the Truth,
What is right
And pleasing in My eyes.

Think on your sins with much displeas-
ure and with grief,
And never fancy you are anything for
your good works.

Indeed, indeed you are a sinner,
Tangled in and subject to many a passion.
Ever of yourself you tend to nothing,
Soon slipping,
Soon vanquished,
Soon disturbed,
Soon unnerved.
Nothing to boast of in you;
Much to make you think how vile you are;
For you are far weaker than you can con-
ceive.

Then let naught seem great to you of all
you do,
Naught grand, naught wonderful, and
precious,
Worthy of fame,
Naught high, naught truly worth a word of
praise, naught worth a wish
Save the eternal!
Let truth eternal please you above all,
And your own utter worthlessness ever dis-
please you.
Fear, blame, and shun nothing so much
As your faults and sins:
They should displease you more than any
loss of things.

Some do not walk before Me with a
heart sincere,
But, led by a certain curiosity and pride,
They wish to know My secrets
And understand the deep things of God —
With never a thought unto themselves,
Nor to their own salvation.

These often fall into great temptations and
sin

From their pride and prying ways,
I opposing them.

Fear God's judgments;

Be afraid of the Almighty's wrath;

But question not the works of the Most
High,

But examine your own iniquities,
And see how greatly you have sinned,
And how much good you have passed by.

Some carry their devotion only in books,
Some in pictures,
Some in outward signs and shapes.
Some have Me on the lip,
But little in the heart.

Others there are who, with enlightened
understanding and affections purged,
Pant ever for the eternal,
Listen unwillingly to earthly things,
And with sorrow serve nature's needs:

These perceive what the Spirit of truth
Speaks in them ;
Because He teaches them to scorn the
things of earth
And love the things of Heaven,
To set the world at naught
And ever, day and night, to long for
Heaven.

CHAPTER 5

OF THE WONDROUS WORKING OF THE LOVE
OF GOD

FATHER of heaven, I bless Thee,
Father of Jesus Christ, my Lord,
That Thou hast deigned to think of poor
me!

Father of mercies, God of every consolation,
Thanks be to Thee,
Who, now and then, with Thy consola-
tion

Refreshest me, unworthy of all comfort!
I bless Thee always, and I give Thee
glory

With Thy only begotten Son,
And the Holy Ghost the Comforter,
World without end!

Ah, Lord God, my holy Lover,
When Thou comest to my heart,
All my interior being shall be rejoiced!
Thou art my glory
And He that maketh glad my soul;

Thou my hope, my haven,
When I am in trouble.

But since I am weak as yet in love,
and of imperfect virtue,
I need to be consoled and comforted by
Thee.

Therefore come often to me;
Instruct me in Thy holy rules;
Free me from evil passions,
And heal my heart from all ill-ordered
loves;

That being in health within and well
purged
I may be fit to be a lover,
Brave to be a sufferer,
Firm to go on unto the end!

Great is love,
A blessing very good,
The only thing that makes all burdens
light,
Bearing evenly what is uneven.

For carrying a weight, it feels it not,
And makes all bitterness sweet and savory.
The noble love of Jesus drives men on to do
 great deeds,
And rouses them to always long for what is
 better.

Love would be lifted up,
Not held by any low thing.
It would be free,
A stranger to the affection of the world,
Lest its view within be hindered,
Or it get into the nets of temporal con-
 venience,
Or for some inconvenience lie down and die.

Nothing is sweeter than love,
Stronger,
Broader,
Higher,
More pleasant,
Fuller,
Or better in the heavens or on the earth!
For love is the child of God,

Nor can it rest except in God
Above all created things.
The lover flies and runs and is alive with
joy;
Free and unrestrained;
Gives all for all;
Has all in all;
For in One Highest Being it rests above all,
From Whom all goodness flows and comes.
It looks not to gifts,
But turns unto the Giver above all things
good.

Love often knows no limit:
It glows above all measure.
Love feels no weight,
Makes light of toil;
Would do more than it can;
Pleads no impossibility;
Because it thinks it can and may do all.
So it is able for anything,
And fulfils many things
And brings them to effect,

Where he that loves not faints and fails.
Love keeps vigils, and when it sleeps it
 slumbers not ;

Wearied, it is not worn ;

Bound, it is not confined ;

Frightened, it is not disturbed ;

But like a living flame, a burning torch,
It bursts on high, and safely goes through
 all.

If any loves,

He knows what these words mean !

It is a great cry in the ears of God,

That fierce heart's love

That says :

“My God, my love,

Thou art all mine,

And I all thine !”

Enlarge me in love ;

That I may learn to taste with the inner
 lips of the heart

How sweet it is to love,

And to melt and swim in love !

May I be holden by it,
Going above myself for great fervor and
for wonder.

Let me sing a song of love,
I will follow Thee, my Beloved, to the deep!
Let my soul faint in praise of Thee,
Jubilant for love.

Let me love Thee
More than I love myself!

Let me not love myself
Except for Thee!

Let me love all in Thee —
All, who truly love Thee,
As love's law bids me,
That takes its light from Thee.

Love is swift, sincere,
Pious, pleasant, and delightsome,
Brave, patient, faithful,
Prudent, long-suffering, manly,
Never seeking its own good.
For where a man seeks himself
There he falls away from love.

Love is careful, humble, and upright,
Not soft, not light, aiming not at empty
things,
Sober and chaste, firm and quiet,
With all the senses guarded well.

Love is subject and obedient to super-
riors,
Mean and despised in its own eyes,
Devoted and pleasing to God,
Trusting and hoping ever in Him,
Even when he has no taste for God.
For without grief, there is no living in love.
The man that is not ready to suffer all
And stand to do the loved One's will
Is not worthy to be called a lover.
A lover should embrace all that is hard
and bitter
Willingly for Him he loves,
And not be turned away from love
For any crosses that may come.

CHAPTER 6

OF THE PROOF OF A TRUE LOVER

MY son,
Your love is not strong as yet,
nor prudent.

Why, O Lord?

Because for little opposition
You leave off what you have begun,
And are too eager after consolation.
One that is strong in love stands firm in
times of trial,
And trusts not the crafty persuasions of
the enemy.
As I please him when things go well,
So I displease him not when they are ill.
The prudent lover does not think so much
About the lover's gift
As of the giver's love.
Not to the value does he turn, but to the
loving heart,

And above all the gifts he puts the loved
one.

The noble lover rests not in the gifts,
But, above every gift, in Me.

All is not therefore lost,
If now and then you feel less kindly than
you would
Of Me or of My Saints.

That good and sweet affection which you
sometimes feel

Comes from grace present with you,
And is a foretaste of the heavenly country.
You must not rest in it too much:

It comes and goes.

But to strive against the evil movements
of the mind,

And spurn the suggestion of the fiend,
Is the mark of virtue and great merit.

Then let no foreign fancies trouble you,
Born of whatever cause they be.
Keep strong your resolution

And your intention straight to God.

It is no illusion to be sometimes rapt into
a sudden ecstasy

And soon return to the old follies of the
heart.

These follies you unwillingly endure

Rather than cause,

And as long as they are displeasing to
you, and you strive against them,

It is a merit and no loss.

Know this: the old enemy is bent on

stopping your longings for the good,

And keeping you far from every holy
exercise;

From reverencing the Saints,

From the pious remembrance of My Pas-
sion,

From useful recollection of your sins,

From the watch upon your heart,

And from your strong resolve to make
progress in virtue.

Many an evil thought he suggests,

To make you weary and frighten you,
To call you from prayer and holy reading.
Humble Confession displeases him,
And, if he could,
He would make you stop Communion.

Trust not his words, and take no heed
of him,
Often though he throw deception's nets
around you.
To him ascribe it,
When he puts evil and impure things
within you.
Say to him:
"Go, foul spirit;
Blush, thou wretch;
Very impure thou art
That bringest thoughts like this into my
ears!
Depart from me, thou vile seducer!
No part in me thou shalt obtain;
But Jesus shall be with me like a warrior
brave,

And thou shalt stand confounded.
Rather would I die and meet with any pain
Than consent to thee!
Hold thy peace; be dumb!
I will not hear thee more,
Though thou plan more troubles still upon
me.

The Lord is my light and my salvation:
Whom shall I fear?
If camps rise up against me,
My heart shall not be afraid!
God is my helper
And my Redeemer!"

Fight like a soldier true;
And if from frailty you sometimes fall,
Put on a strength greater than before,
Trusting in My fuller grace,
And beware, beware of vain complacency
and pride.
Thus it is that many are led wrong,
And now and then into a blindness fall
almost past cure.

Let this falling of the proud,
And of those who in their folly lean upon
themselves,
Be to you a warning and constant matter
for humility.

CHAPTER 7

OF HIDING GRACE UNDER THE GUARDIANSHIP OF HUMILITY

MY son,
It is better and safer for you
To hide the grace of devotion,
And not to raise yourself on high,
Nor speak much of it, nor to weigh it
much;
But rather to look down upon yourself,
And fear the gift of it to one unworthy as
you are.

Not too closely must you cleave unto
this feeling:

Too soon it may be changed to the oppo-
site.

Think in grace

How weak and poor you are wont to be
without grace.

You do not get so very far upon the
spiritual path

When you have the grace of consolation ;
But when you humbly and patiently and
with self-denial

Bear its withdrawal.

And grow not dull then in earnestness of
prayer,

Nor let your other usual works slip wholly
by you ;

But willingly do all that in you lies

As best you can and know,

And do not yourself wholly neglect,

Because your mind is anxious or your
soul is dry.

For many there are

Who, when it goes not well with them,

Forthwith grow impatient or lazy.

For a man's path lies not always in his
power ;

But it is God's to give and comfort when
He will,

And to what extent He will, and whom
He will,

As His good pleasure is and no more.

Some imprudent men have destroyed
themselves by reason of devotion's
grace :

They wished to do more than they could,
Weighing not the measure of their littleness,
But rather following the feeling of the heart
than the judgment of the reason.

And because they presumed more than
was pleasing unto God,

So they soon lost grace.

They became poor and were left wretched,

They that had built a nest in Heaven ;

To learn, impoverished and humbled,

Not to fly with their own wings,

But under Mine to hope.

They that as yet are new, and unskilled
in the way of the Lord,

Unless they rule themselves by the advice
of the discreet,

Easily may be deceived and hurt.

But if they wish to follow their own paths

Rather than trust experienced guides,

Their going out will be perilous,
If, that is, they refuse to be brought back
from their own thoughts.

Rarely do men wise in their own esteem
Humbly let themselves be ruled by others.

Better it is to know but little
With humility and little understanding
Than to have stores of sciences with vain
conceit.

Better have less
Than much
To puff you up with pride.

He acts not very wisely
That gives himself quite up to joy,
Unmindful of his want in earlier days
And of the pure fear of God,
Which is afraid to lose the grace that has
been given.

Nor is his wisdom virtuous enough
Who in the time of trouble or any heavi-
ness
Carries himself too unhopefully,

And thinks and feels less trustfully of Me
Than he ought to do.

He that would be too secure in time of
peace

Will oft be found too downcast and too fear-
ful in the days of war.

Could you be always humble and modest,
And bridle in and rule your spirit well,
You would not fall so soon a prey to danger
and offences.

It is a good counsel
That, when the spirit of fervor is conceived,
You should think how it will be when the
light is gone.

And when this comes,
Bethink you that the light can yet return.
I have withdrawn it for a time to warn
you,

And to glorify Myself.
Probation such as this is better frequently
Than if you always had your will of prosper-
ous days.

For a man's merits are not to be weighed by
this,
That he sees full many a vision, or conso-
lations has,
Or that he is skilled in Holy Scripture,
Or is set in lofty seats;
But if he is set upon the rock of true
humility,
And filled with the charity of God:
If he seeks God's honor always purely
and entirely;
If he deems himself as nothing,
And in truth despises himself,
And rather rejoices to be looked down on
by others, too,
And to be humbled
Than to be honored.

CHAPTER 8

OF VALUING OURSELVES AT NOTHING BEFORE
THE EYES OF GOD

I WILL speak unto my Lord,
Dust and ashes though I am!

If I think any better of myself,
Behold, Thou standest over against me,
And my wickedness gives testimony true,
Nor have I anything to say.
But if I make myself as vile,
And bring myself to nothing,
Give up all thoughts of self,
Bruise myself to dust (I am but dust);
Thy grace shall be kind to me,
Thy light come near my heart,
And self-esteem, never so little though it be,
Shall be sunk low in the valley of my
nothingness and die for ever.

There Thou showest me to myself,
What I am and have been,
And what I have become;
For I am nothing, and I knew it not!

If I am left to my own self,
See, there is nothing there; all is weakness.
But if Thou suddenly dost look on me;
At once I am made strong,
And filled with a fresh joy.
And it is very wonderful
That I so quickly am raised up,
So kindly taken to Thine arms —
I who of my own weight am always sink-
ing to the depths.

Thy love does this, freely preventing me,
Helping when I so often am in need,
Guarding me also from great perils,
Saving me from unnumbered — yes, un-
numbered — ills.

By the wicked love of self I lost myself,
And found both Thee and me by only seek-
ing Thee and purely loving Thee,
For love bringing myself to deeper nothing.
For Thou, O sweetest Friend, dost with me
More than all that I deserve,
And more than I dare hope or ask.

Blessed be Thou, my God !
Because, though I be unworthy of all
good,
Thy nobility and infinite goodness
Never cease to benefit
Even those that are ungrateful and turned
far away from Thee.

Turn us to Thee,
To make us thankful, humble, and devout ;
For Thou art our salvation,
Our courage, our strength !

CHAPTER 9

THAT ALL THINGS MUST BE REFERRED TO
GOD AS TO THE FINAL END

M^Y son,
I ought to be your chief, your final
end,

If you would be truly happy.
With this before your mind your love shall
be made pure,
Which is often bent upon itself
And wrongly turned unto created things.

For if you seek yourself in aught,
At once you fail within you, and become
dry.

Refer, then, everything to Me as to a be-
ginning,
For I gave you all.
Look upon everything
As flowing from the highest good:
To Me, then, as its source everything must
be brought back.

From Me the little and the great,
The poor and the rich,
As from a living fountain draw the living
water;

And those who serve Me freely and willingly
Shall receive grace for grace.

But he who will glory apart from Me,
Or will delight himself in any private good,
Shall not be firmly established in real joy,
Nor be enlarged in heart,
But many ways entangled and hemmed in.

Therefore, ascribe no good unto yourself,
Nor virtue unto any man;
But give all to God,
Without Whom man has nothing.

I gave all:
I will have all given back to Me:
And I shall ask for thanks, —
And very strictly ask for them.

This is the truth
By which vainglory is put to flight.

And if the grace of heaven and true charity
have entered once,
There shall be no envy,
And no narrowness of heart;
And no self-love shall hold you.
For the charity of God conquers all,
And widens all the powers of the soul.

If you are really wise, you will rejoice in
Me alone,
In Me only will you hope;
For none is good save only God,
Who is above all to be praised, and in all to
be blessed!

CHAPTER 10

THAT IT IS SWEET, DESPISING THE WORLD,
TO SERVE GOD

NOW again, Lord, will I speak,
And will not hold my peace.
I will say it in the ears of my God,
My Lord, my King,
Who is on high.

O how great is the multitude of Thy
sweetness, O Lord,
Which Thou hast hidden for those that
fear Thee!
But what art Thou to those that love
Thee!
What to those that serve Thee with all their
heart!
The sweetness they have that gaze on
Thee
Cannot indeed be told.
This Thou givest to them that love Thee!
In this chiefly Thou hast shown to me
The sweetness of Thy charity,

That, when I was not, Thou didst make
me,

And when I wandered far from Thee,
Thou didst bring me back to serve Thee,
And didst bid me love Thee.

Oh fount of everlasting love!
What shall I say of Thee?
How can I forget Thee,
Who hast deigned to think of me,
Even when I had wasted all away and
died?
Past all hope Thou hast shown mercy to
Thy servant;
Past all desert Thou hast given me Thy
grace and friendship.

What shall I give Thee for this grace?
For it has not been given to all
To give up all, renounce the world,
And take religious life on them.
Is it a great thing for me to serve Thee,
Whom all creation is bound to serve?

It ought not to seem great to me to serve
Thee,

But this seems great and wonderful to me,
That Thou deignest to take to serve Thee
One so poor and so unworthy,
And to make me one with Thy beloved
servants!

See, all is Thine:

All that I have and serve Thee with.

And yet contrariwise Thou art more my
servant than I am Thine!

Heaven and earth are ready to Thy
hand,

Which Thou madest to minister to man:

And they do daily whatever Thou hast
bidden.

And even this is little,

For Thou hast made the Angels minister
to him.

But it surpasses all of this

That Thou Thyself hast deigned to be a
servant unto man,

And hast promised Thou wouldst give
Thyself to him!

What shall I give Thee for all these Thy
thousand kindnesses?

Would that I could serve Thee all the
days of my life!

Would that even for one day I rendered Thee
A service that is worthy!

Truly, Thou art worthy of all service,
All honor and eternal praise!

Thou art indeed my Lord,

And I Thy poor slave,

Bound to serve Thee with all my strength:

And I ought never to grow weary in Thy
praise.

This I wish; this I do desire:

And all that is wanting in me,

Deign Thou to supply.

Great the honor, great the glory to serve
Thee,

And to despise all else for Thee.

For they shall have great grace

Who willingly bow down unto Thy most
holy service.

They shall find the most sweet consolation
of the Holy Spirit,

They who for Thy love

Have thrown all carnal pleasure away.

They shall gain great liberty of mind

Who enter on the narrow path for Thy
Name's sake,

And put aside all worldly care.

O pleasant and delightful servitude of
God,

By which a man is truly rendered free and
holy!

O sacred state of service in religion,

That makest man equal to the Angels,

Makest him pleasant to God,

A terror to the fiends,

Commendable to all faithful souls!

Oh service to be taken and for ever chosen,

By which the greatest good is merited,

And joy unending gained!

CHAPTER 11

THAT THE HEART'S DESIRES ARE TO BE
SCANNED AND LIMITED

MY son,
You have still much to learn
That yet you have not fully learnt.

What is it, Lord?

To bend your wishes wholly to My
will,
And not to be a lover of yourself;
But to be always wishing to work out My
pleasure.

Longings often fire you and fiercely
drive you on,
But think you whether you are moved
For My honor or your own advantage.
If I am your motive,
You will be well content
However I ordain.
But if there lurk something of seeking
after self,

This is the thing that hinders you and
weighs you down.

Take heed, then, not to rest too much
Upon a thought of your own heart,
Conceived without consulting Me;
For fear you afterwards be sorry or dis-
pleased

At what first pleased you and you showed
zeal for as the better way.

For not every feeling that seems good
Must be followed up at once;
And not every opposite feeling
Is at first sight to be shunned.

Even in our good pursuits and longings
sometimes the rein is needed,
For fear by eagerness of mind you run into
distraction,

And by your want of discipline bring
scandal upon others,

Or even, when others cross you, you be
on a sudden disturbed and fall.

But now and then you must use violence,

And manfully oppose the wishes of the
senses,
Caring not what the flesh desires or not,
But dwelling more on this,
That it be made a subject of the spirit,
Willingly or no.
And it must needs be punished,
Compelled to be obedient,
Till it be ready to do all;
And learn to be content with little,
And to delight in what is simple,
And not mutter against anything that suits
it not.

CHAPTER 12

OF THE LESSON OF PATIENCE AND THE WRESTLING AGAINST THE PASSIONS

LORD GOD, I see
That patience is indeed very needful
to me,
For much in this life goes contrary.
For whatsoever plan I make for my
peace,
My life cannot be spent without war and
pain.

It is even so, My son.

But I would have you not seek a peace
That lacks temptation or never meets a
cross.

I would have you think
That peace is also found
When you are exercised with many tribula-
tions,
And proved by many an opposition.

If you will say you cannot suffer much,
How will you bear the flames of Purgatory?

Choose the lesser evil always.
Try then, to bear the evils of to-day
With even-mindedness for God,
To escape the future pains that shall not
end.

Think you that worldly men suffer
nothing or but little?
Ask the question even of the softest:
You will not find it so!
But, say you, they have many a delight,
And follow after their own wills:
And so they count their tribulations light.
Let it be so:
They have whatever they desire.
But how long, think you, will it last?
See! like smoke they that are abundant in
the world shall fade
And record of their past joys there shall be
none!
Nay, even while they yet are in this life,
They rest not in them without bitterness,
and weariness and fear.

For that same thing from which they get
delight

Brings on them sorrow often for its punish-
ment.

And justly so,

That, as they seek and follow after de-
lights inordinately,

They should not enjoy them but with
confusion and bitterness of heart.

Oh how short,

How lying,

How ill ordered and how base all these
pleasures are !

Yet for drunkenness and blindness men
perceive it not,

But, like dumb animals,

For trifling pleasure in a life that fades

They incur the death of the soul !

You, then, My son, follow not your
passions,

And turn away from your own will.

Delight you in the Lord,

And He will give you what your heart desires.

For if you truly wish to have joy
And to be more copiously consoled by
Me,

In despising all things worldly,
In cutting off all low delights,
Shall your blessing be;

And plenteous consolation will be given to
you.

And the more you take yourself away from
all comfort of creatures,
The sweeter and the stronger consolations
shall you find in Me.

But at the first you will not gain all
this

Without some sorrow and the toil of the
struggle.

The rooted habit will stand up against you,
But will be conquered by a better one.

The flesh will mutter ever and again,
But will be bridled by the spirit's fervor.

The old serpent will sting and harass
you,

But he will be put to flight by prayer.

And, moreover, one of his wide entrances

May be blocked up by useful work.

CHAPTER 13

OF A HUMBLE SOUL'S OBEDIENCE UNTO OTHERS,
AFTER THE PATTERN SET BY JESUS
CHRIST

MY son,
The man who strives to slip from
his obedience
Slips from grace, too.
And he who looks for private things
Loses what belongs to all.

He who does not submit himself to his
superior willingly and freely,
It is a sign he is not yet the master of his
flesh,
But it often kicks against the goad and
mutters.
Learn, then, this lesson soon:
Bow down to him who is above you,
If you would bring your flesh under the yoke.
For, if the interior man be not laid waste,
The outer foe is sooner overcome.
There is no foe so harsh, so harmful

As you are to yourself,
When your spirit and you are not at one.
But you must wholly put on true self-con-
tempt,
If you would win against your flesh and
blood.
Because you love yourself too much as yet,
You are afraid to give yourself unto the will
of others.

But what fine thing is it,
If you, who are dust and nothingness,
Submit yourself to man for God's sake,
When I, the Almighty and the Highest,
That made all things from nothing,
Humbly was a servant unto man for you?
I became humblest of the humble,
Lowliest of the lowly,
For you to conquer your pride by My
humility.
Learn to obey, dust!
Learn to be humble, earth and clay,
And bend beneath the feet of all!

Learn to break your own will down,
And yield yourself to all subjection.
Be zealous against yourself,
Let not the tumor of pride live in you;
But show yourself so subject and little
That all may walk above you,
And stamp upon you like street mire!

Empty man, what can you complain
about?

Foul sinner, what can you reply,
When men upbraid you?
You that so often have offended God,
And many times deserved Hell?
But My eye spared you;
Because your soul was precious in My sight:
That you might learn My love and live to
thank Me for My kindnesses;
And give yourself up constantly
Unto true subjection and humility,
And bear patiently contempt of you.

CHAPTER 14

THOUGHTS ON GOD'S SECRET JUDGMENTS
THAT WE BE NOT ELATED IN GOOD
THINGS

THOU thunderest Thy judgments on
me, O Lord;

With fear and dread Thou shakest all my
bones,

And my soul is greatly terrified!

I stand in dumb amazement, and bethink
me

That in Thy sight the heavens are not clean!

If in the Angels Thou didst find out wick-
edness

And didst spare them not,

How shall it be with me?

Stars fell from heaven;

And how can I, that am but dust, presume?

Men whose deeds seemed full of praise

Have fallen to the lowest depths.

Men that ate the food of Angels

I have seen delighted with the husks of
swine!

Therefore holiness is none,
If Thou, O Lord, drawest Thy hand away;
Wisdom worthless,
If Thou keep not the helm;
Courage of no avail,
If Thou preserve us not!
No chastity is safe,
If Thou protect it not.
No self-watching is any good,
If Thou keep not Thy sacred vigil near us.
For left to ourselves, we sink, we die:
When Thou art near, we rise, we live.
Unstable we are, but by Thee made strong:
Lukewarm,
But set on fire by Thee.

With what humility and lowliness I
ought to think of myself!
How I should weigh as nothing any good
I seem to have!
How deep I ought to put myself under Thy
unfathomable judgments,
Where I find that I am nothing else

But nothing, nothing!
How past all measure is the weight;
How past all crossing is the ocean;
Where I find nothing in myself
But entirely nothing!

Where, then, may glory find a place to
hide in,
Or where confidence in fancied virtue?
In the depths of Thy judgments over me
Swallowed is all empty glorying!
What is all flesh before Thee?
Shall clay boast itself against its moulder!
How can a man rise high through empty
speech
Whose heart is of a truth bowed down to God?
The whole world cannot raise him
Whom Truth has made subject to herself.
Unshaken by praise from all men's lips is he
Who has rooted all his hope in God.
The very men that speak,
See, they are nothing, all of them,
For they shall fade even as the voices fade;
But God's truth lasts for aye!

CHAPTER 15

HOW WE SHOULD STAND, WHAT WE SHOULD
SAY, WHEN WE WISH ANYTHING

MY son,
Say this in everything:
“Lord, if it be Thy will,
Let it be so!
Lord, if it be Thy glory,
So be it in Thy Name!
Lord, if Thou seest it is well for me,
And approvest it as useful,
Then give it me to use it for Thy honor!
But if Thou knowest it will be harmful
And is of no profit to the saving of my soul,
Then take from me the longing.”

For not every wish is of the Holy Spirit,
Good though it seem to a man, and right.
It is hard to tell in truth
Whether a good spirit or another
Moves you to long for this or that,
Or even your own spirit leads you on.
Many have been deceived at the last

Who seemed at first to have a holy spirit for
their guide.

Whatever, then, crosses the mind
As something to be wished for,
See that the longing and prayer
Be with fear of God and lowliness of heart:
And, above all, renouncing self,
Leave all to Me,
And say:
“Lord, Thou knowest
In what way it is better:
Let this or that be, as Thou wilt.
Give what Thou wilt,
As much as Thou wilt,
And when Thou wilt.
Do with me as Thou knowest,
And as it better pleases Thee,
And is Thy greater honor.
Put me where Thou wilt:
Deal freely with me in every thing.
In Thy hand I am:
Wheel me and turn me back again.

See, I am Thy servant,
Ready for everything;
For I would not live unto myself, but unto
Thee —
I wish I may worthily and perfectly !”

A PRAYER FOR THE FULFILLING OF THE
GOOD PLEASURE OF GOD

Grant me Thy grace, kindest Jesus,
To be with me and work with me,
And stay with me unto the end !

Give me ever to long for that and will
that
Which is more pleasing and more dear to
Thee.

Thy will be mine:
And my will ever follow Thine, and agree
with it excellently.

Let me will and not will the same with
Thee,

And be unable to will or not will other
Than what Thou willest and willest not.

Grant me to die to everything on earth;
Here in the world, for Thee,
To love to be despised and unknown;
High above all my longings to rest in Thee,
And in Thee to lull my heart to peace.

Thou art the heart's true peace, its only
rest:

Apart from Thee all is but harsh and rest-
less!

In this peace,
In Thee (I mean), the one eternal good,
I will sleep and rest!

Amen.

CHAPTER 16

THAT TRUE COMFORT MUST BE SOUGHT IN
GOD ALONE

ALL that I can desire or think of to my
comfort,

I look for it not here,

But hereafter.

For if I had alone all the comforts of the
world,

And could taste of all delights,

Assuredly they could not last for long.

Thus, my soul,

There is no complete refreshment,

No full consolation for thee

Save in God, Who takes the humble up,
and consoles the poor.

Wait but a little while, my soul;

Wait for God's promise:

And you shall have an abundance of all
good in Heaven.

If you long too eagerly for these things
you see,

You will lose the things of Heaven and
what lasts for ever.

Use what is temporal:

But long for the eternal.

You cannot be satisfied by any temporal
good,

For you were not made to take delight in
them.

Even if you had all created goods,

You could not be happy and blest;

But in God, Who made them all,

Your blessedness and happiness all con-
sist —

Not the blessedness seen and praised by
the foolish lovers of the world;

But such as Christ's good faithful ones are
waiting for,

Such as the spiritual and clean-hearted

Taste now and then before the time,

Whose life is in Heaven!

Empty and brief is every human com-
fort!

Blessed and true the solace
Got from the truth within !

The pious soul takes Jesus, his consoler,
everywhere with him,
And says to Him:
“Be with me, Lord Jesus, in every place and
time !

This let my comfort be,
To be content to be devoid of every human
consolation !

And if Thy comfort fail me,
May Thy will and this just trial of me
Console me more than all.
For thou wilt not be always angry,
Nor threaten for ever !”

CHAPTER 17

THAT ALL OUR CARE SHOULD BE RESTED
ON GOD

MY son,
Let Me do with you what I will:
I know what is the best for you.
Your thoughts are human thoughts;
You judge in many things as human feeling
moves.

Lord, what Thou sayest is true.
Thy thought for me is greater
Than all my care for my own self could be.
A man stands too dangerously,
If he throws not all his care on Thee.

Let but my will remain straight and fixed
to Thee, Lord,
And do with me what Thou wilt.
For what Thou doest with me
Cannot be but good.
If Thou wilt have me in darkness, blessed
be Thou !

And if Thou wilt have me in light, blessed
again be Thou!

If Thou deignest to give me consolation,
Be Thou blessed:

If Thou wishest me to be in tribulation,
None the less, blessed be Thou, blessed be
Thou!

Son,

Thus must you stand,
If you would walk with Me,
Ready for suffering
As for joy;
As willing to be poor and moneyless,
As to be full and rich.

Lord,

Willingly for Thee will I suffer
All Thou wishest to come on me!
With indifference, I wish to receive from
Thy hand
Good and evil, sweet and bitter, gladness
and sorrow:
And to thank Thee for all that comes to me!

Guard me from all sin,
And death and Hell shall never fright me.
Only, cast me not away for ever!
Blot me not from the Book of Life:
And then whatever tribulation comes shall
harm me not.

CHAPTER 18

THAT THE MISERIES OF TIME ARE TO BE
BORNE WITH EVEN MIND; CHRIST SHOWED
US HOW

MY son,
I came down from Heaven to save
you.

I took your miseries on Me, not that I had
to do it, but love drew Me;

That you might learn patience,
And might bear the ills of time without a
murmur.

For from the hour of My birth
To My death on the Cross
The suffering of pain was not wanting to
Me.

Great was My want of temporal things;
Many the complaints about Me I often
heard;

Confusion and reproach I meekly bore;
Ingratitude for kindnesses,
Blasphemy for miracles,
Blame for teaching.

O Lord,
Because Thou wast patient in Thy life,
In this above all doing Thy Father's
will,
Right it is that I, poor wretched sinner,
Should bear myself patiently according to
Thy will,
And carry for my salvation,
As long as Thou dost please,
The burden of decaying life.
For if it feels a heavy weight, this present
life,
Yet it is made now through Thy grace very
meritorious,
And through Thy example, and from the
footprints of Thy Saints,
It is more bearable and brighter for the
weak;
Nay, and far more consoling is it
Than once it was, in the Old Law,
When Heaven's gate remained shut,
And even the path to Heaven seemed not
so clear.

Then so few cared to seek the kingdom of
Heaven,
Nor could those who then were just and to
be saved
Enter the heavenly kingdom
Before Thy Passion
And until the debt was paid by Thy sacred
death.

O how great the thanks I am bound to
give to Thee
That Thou didst deign to show me and all
faithful souls
A straight way and a good to Thy eternal
kingdom!
For Thy life is our way,
And by holy patience we press on to Thee,
our crown.
Hadst Thou not gone before and taught us,
Who would care to follow?
Ah, how many men would stay far and
behind,
Did they not look on Thy bright example!

See, we still are cool,
After so many wonders told us, after so
much teaching heard;
What would it be
If we had not a light like this to follow Thee !

CHAPTER 19

OF BEARING INJURIES—AND WHO IS PROVED
A TRULY PATIENT MAN

MY son,
What is it you are saying?
Stop your complaints:
Look on My sufferings and the sufferings of
the other Saints.
You have not yet resisted unto blood.
Little enough is all you suffer
Set against those that have endured so
much,
Have been so greatly tempted,
So grievously afflicted,
So many ways proved and exercised.
You should bethink you, then, of the
greater sufferings of others,
That you may more lightly bear your very
trifling ones.
And if they seem not very trifling to you,
See that it is not your impatience that
has this effect.
Yet, small or great,

Try to bear all patiently.

The more you set yourself to suffer,
The wiser is your act, the more your merit;
You will bear more easily, too,
Your mind and ways diligently prepared
for it.

And say not,

“I cannot suffer this at that man’s hands.
I ought not to endure this sort of thing,
For he has done me a great wrong,
And charges me with what I never dreamed
of:

But from another I would gladly hear it
Just as I ought.”

These are silly thoughts,
And look not to the virtue of patience,
Nor think by Whom it shall be crowned;
But rather consider the persons,
And dwell on the insults offered us.
He is not the really patient man
Who would only suffer as much as suits
him,

And from whom he pleases.
The really patient man looks not from
whom he suffers,
Whether it be his superior,
Or some equal or inferior:
Whether he be tried
By a good and holy man,
Or by a worthless and perverse one;
But with indifference
He receives from every creature's hand
As heavy crosses and as frequent crosses as
may come,
And all with gratitude to God, thinking
them great gain.
For nothing, little though it be,
If only suffered for God,
Can pass without merit with God.

Therefore be ready for the battle,
If you would win the day.
Without a fight,
You cannot gain the crown of patience.
And, if you will not suffer,

You refuse the crown.
But if you want it,
Strive like a man:
Bear patiently.
Without toil you are not on the road to
rest,
And without fighting you do not come to
victory.

Be that within my power, O Lord, by
grace
Which seems impossible to me by nature.
Thou knowest that I can bear little;
That I am soon cast down,
When a slight opposition rises.
Let every trying trouble
Be made lovely and desirable to me, for
Thy name's sake!
For to endure and to be tried for Thee
Is very healthful to my soul.

CHAPTER 20

OF THE CONFESSION OF OUR WEAKNESS; AND
OF THE MISERIES OF THIS LIFE

I WILL confess against myself how far
from just I am:

I will confess my weakness, Lord, to Thee.

Often a trifle

Casts me down and saddens me.

I purpose to act with courage;

But in a slight temptation

Great is my strait.

Often a very mean thing

Brings a grievous trial.

And, thinking I am somewhat safe,

Perceiving not the trouble,

I find my bark nigh wrecked sometimes by
a slight gust of wind.

Look, Lord, upon my low estate and
frailty,

Known every way to Thee.

Pity and draw me from the mire,

That I stick not fast in it,
And stay not cast down forever !
This often drives me back,
And confuses me before Thee :
I am so frail, so weak,
In fighting with my passions.
And if I do not wholly yield,
Yet even their coming after me troubles and
distresses me,
And I grow very weary of this life of daily
struggle !
I know my weakness well from this,
That the ever abominable phantoms
Rush in more easily than they depart.

O God of Israel most strong,
Zealous lover of the faithful soul,
Look down upon Thy servant's toil and
grief !
Help him in all his goings !
Strengthen him with courage from Heaven,
Lest the old man, the wretched flesh, pre-
vail and lord it over me,

The flesh, not yet subdued unto the spirit.
Against this flesh I needs must fight
As long as in this most wretched life I
 breathe.

Oh what a thing is life!
Troubles and miseries fail not in it,
And everywhere lie foes and snares.
For, as one trouble or temptation goes, an-
 other comes —
Yes, while the battle with the first still rages,
Others we thought not of throng on in
 crowds!

How can we love life
Full of such bitterness as this,
Subject to calamities and miseries so many?
How, too, call it life,
Fertile mother of plagues and deaths?
Yet it is loved,
And many seek delight in it!
Men often blame the world as deceitful and
 vain,

And yet they leave it with a struggle,
Because the passions of the flesh rule too
much.

Some things make men love it:

Some, despise it.

The concupiscence of the flesh,

The concupiscence of the eyes,

The pride of life

Draw men to its love.

But the penalties and miseries

That justly follow in their train

Make men hate it, make men sick of it.

But, sad it is, wicked delights still rule the
world-given soul,

And the soul thinks it sweet to lie on
thorns;

Because it never saw nor tasted God's
sweetness

And the interior pleasantness of virtue.

But they who perfectly despise the
world

And try to live to God under holy rule,

They know full well the heavenly sweetness
Promised to them that truly give up all.
They see with brighter eyes
How grievously the world goes blundering
on, and is variously deceived.

CHAPTER 21

THAT ABOVE ALL GOODS, ALL GIFTS, OUR
REST MUST BE IN GOD

ABOVE all, in all, thou, my soul,
Shalt always rest in God,
For He is the Saints' eternal rest.

Grant me, most sweet and loving Jesus,
In Thee to rest above all created things;
Above all health and beauty,
Glory and honor,
Power and dignity,
Knowledge and cleverness,
Riches and arts,
Joy and gladness,
Fame and praise,
Sweetness and consolation,
Hope and promise,
Merit and longing:
Above all gifts and presents Thou canst
give and pour on me;
Above all joy and jubilation
That my mind can take and feel:

In fine, above Angels and Archangels,
And all the army of the heavens,
Above all that can be seen or not,
And above all that Thou art not, my
God!

For Thou, O Lord my God, art best
above them all!
Highest alone, alone most powerful,
Alone most able to satisfy,
Fullest of all,
Sweetest alone,
Alone most comforting,
Most beautiful, most loving,
Noblest and most glorious;
In Whom all good together is, and perfectly,
Is and ever was and shall be!
And therefore anything Thou givest me,
apart from Thee,
It is too little for me, and satisfies me not.
And anything Thou showest me of Thee or
promisest,
Is not enough, if Thou art still unseen,

And not entirely gained by me.
For my heart cannot truly rest, nor wholly
 be content,
Except it rest in Thee,
And passes above all gifts
And all created things.

O my most beloved spouse, Jesus Christ,
My purest lover,
Lord of the whole creation !
Who would give me wings of true liberty
To fly to Thee and rest in Thee ?
O when shall it be given me
To be fully free,
And see how sweet Thou art, O Lord
 my God ?
When shall I to the full gather me to
 Thee,
And for love of Thee lose sense of self,
And feel Thee only, above every sense and
 limit,
In a manner not known to all !
But now I often groan,

And carry my unhappiness in grief.
For much comes on me in this vale of
 misery
That often troubles, clouds, and saddens me;
Often hinders and distracts,
Allures and entangles me;
So that I cannot with freedom come to
 Thee,
And enjoy the sweet embraces
Which are ever ready for the blessed
 spirits.

Let my sighing move Thee, and my
 varied desolation upon earth,
Jesus, the splendor of eternal glory,
The comfort of the wandering soul!
My mouth is voiceless before Thee,
And my silence speaks to Thee.
How long delays my Lord His coming?
Let Him come to me, poor weakling,
And make me glad!
Let Him put out His hand
And save a wretch from every trouble.

Come, oh come!
For without Thee no day, no hour will
be happy.

For Thou art my joy,
And without Thee my table empty lies.

I am poor, and in a way imprisoned and
bound down by fetters,

Until Thou refresh me with the light of
Thy presence, and grant me liberty,

Showing me Thy friendly Face.

Let others seek instead of Thee
Whatever they will:

Me, nothing meanwhile pleases or shall
please

Save Thee, my God, my hope,
Salvation everlasting!

I will not keep silence;

I will not cease to pray to Thee,

Until Thy grace return to me,

And Thou speakest to me interiorly.

See, I am here!

I come to you

Because you called on Me.
Your tears, the longing of your soul,
Your humbleness, the sorrow of your heart,
Have brought Me down, have led Me to you.

And I said:
“Lord, I did call on Thee,
I wished to enjoy Thee,
Ready to cast out all for Thee.
Thou didst urge me
To seek Thee.
Blessed, then, be Thou, O Lord,
Who hast done this kindness to Thy
servant,
According to the multitude of Thy mercy!
What can Thy servant say more in Thy
presence
But exceedingly humble himself before
Thee,
Mindful ever of his iniquity and vileness?
For there is none like Thee
In all the wonders of the heavens and the
earth!

Thy works are very good,
Thy judgments true,
And by Thy providence all is ruled.
Praise, then, to Thee and glory,
O Wisdom of the Father!
Bless and praise Him, O my lips,
My soul and all things together that are
made!"

CHAPTER 22

OF CALLING TO MIND THE MANY BENEFITS
OF GOD

O PEN my heart, O Lord, in Thy law,
And teach me to walk in Thy com-
mandments.

Give me to understand Thy will,
And with great reverence and diligent pon-
dering

To call to mind Thy benefits
In general and in particular,
That thinking on them I may worthily give
thanks to Thee.

But I know it, I confess it,
That I cannot pay the debt I owe for the
least jot of all.

Less am I than all the good things given me.
I think on Thy nobility,
And my heart faints before its greatness.

All that we have, body and soul,
Outside, within, from nature or from grace,
Is all Thy bounty.

All shows Thee devoted, good and bounteous,

From Whom all blessings come.

And if one gets more, another less,
Yet all is Thine:

And apart from Thee the smallest good
cannot be had.

He that has received the greater good may
not boast him of his merit,

Nor be raised over others,

Nor exult above the lesser one;

For he is greater, he is better

Who ascribes less to himself,

And is more pious and humble in giving
thanks.

And the man who holds himself viler than
all, unworthier than all,

Is fitter to receive the greater blessing.

Yet he who gets fewer gifts

Must not be sad nor angry,

Nor envy the more enriched;

But rather look to Thee, and praise Thee
most highly for Thy goodness:
Because in such abundance,
So freely and so willingly,
Without regarding persons,
Thou bestowest Thy blessings.

All comes from Thee:
Therefore in all Thou must be praised.

Thou knowest what it is well to give to
each;
And why one has less, another more
Not ours to see this, but Thine,
With Whom each man's merits are defined.

Wherefore, Lord God, I even think it a
great blessing
Not to have much which seems worthy of
praise and glory,
Outwardly and as men judge.
So that when a man thinks on his poverty
and low estate,

He should not be weighed down, or sad, or
dejected,

But consoled rather and very joyful:

For Thou, God, hast chosen for Thy ser-
vants and familiar friends

The poor and humble, and those whom this
world despises.

Witness Thy very Apostles,

Whom Thou madest princes over all the earth.

They passed their lives without complaint,

So lowly and simple,

Free from all malice and guile,

As even to be glad to endure contempt for

Thee,

And with great love to embrace what the
world hates.

Naught, therefore, should so make Thy
lover glad

And him who knows Thy goodness to him

As Thy will worked out in him, and the

good pleasure of Thy eternal plan.

This ought so to please and console him

That he would be as glad to be the least
as one would be to be the greatest;
As restful and content in the last as in the
highest seat:
As willing to be despised and abject,
No name, no glory his,
As if he were more honorable
And greater in the world than others.
For Thy good will, and love of Thy honor
should outweigh all,
Console and please him more
Than any good that has been or will be
given him.

CHAPTER 23

OF FOUR THINGS THAT BRING GREAT PEACE

MY son,
Now will I teach you what the
way is
To peace and true liberty.

Do, Lord, as Thou sayest,
For this is sweet to me to hear.

Try, My son, to do another's will rather
than your own.
Choose ever to have less rather than more.
Look ever for the lowest place,
And to be subject to all.
Wish always and pray
That God's will may be wholly done in you.
Behold, a man like this enters the land of
peace and rest.

These words of Thine O God, are few,
Yet much perfection in them lies;
Short to be said,

But full of meaning, rich in fruit.
For if they could be kept faithfully by me,
Disturbing thoughts would not so lightly
 rise.

For, when I am not at rest and heavy,
I find I have gone back from this Thy
 teaching.

But Thou that canst do all, and ever lovest
 the profit of the soul,
Add greater grace to me:
That I may fill the measure of Thy words,
And perfect my salvation.

A PRAYER AGAINST EVIL THOUGHTS

Lord my God, go not far from me!
Look on me to my help!
For many thoughts and great fears have
 risen upon me,
Afflicting my soul.
How can I pass through unhurt?
How break their bond?

I, saith He, will go before you:
And will lay low the boasters of the earth.

I will open the prison doors,
And lift for thee the veil from secret mys-
teries.

Do, Lord, as Thou sayest,
And from Thy Face fly every evil thought.
My hope, my only consolation, is,
To fly to Thee in every trouble,
To trust in Thee,
To call upon Thee from my inmost heart,
And patiently to wait Thy consolation.

A PRAYER FOR LIGHT TO BE THROWN ON THE
MIND

Enlighten me, good Jesus, with the
brightness of interior light,
And from my heart's cell drive away all
darkness.

Bridle my many wandering thoughts,
And crush the temptations that violently
assault me.

Fight mightily for me and conquer the evil
beasts —

Enticing passions, I mean —

That in Thy strength there may be peace,
And the abundance of Thy praise may re-
sound

Within Thy holy temple —

A conscience that is pure.

Command the wind and the storm;

Say to the sea, “Be still!”

And to the north wind, “Breathe not!”

And there shall be a great calm.

Send out Thy light and truth, to shine
upon the earth!

For I am earth, empty and void

Till Thy light shine on me.

Pour out Thy grace upon me from above;

Pour on my heart the dew of heaven;

Serve me with streams of piety,

To water the face of the earth,

To bring the good and excellent fruit to
birth.

Raise my mind, sunk beneath the weight
of sin;

Fasten all my longings on heavenly things,

That, tasting of the sweetness of the bliss
supernal,
It may be irksome to me to think upon the
things of earth.

Draw and hurry me away from all fleet-
ing creature-comfort,
For no created thing can fully quiet my
desires and console me.
Join me to Thee in the indissoluble bond
of love;
For Thou art alone enough for him that
loves Thee,
And all things apart from Thee are empty!

CHAPTER 24

AVOID A CURIOUS GAZE INTO THE LIVES OF OTHERS

MY son,
Be not curious;
Carry not empty cares about with you.
What is this or that to you?
Follow thou Me!
For what is it to you, be your neighbor this
or that;
Or if that other does or speaks thus and
thus?
You are not bound to answer for another:
You will have your own account to give.
Why, then, yourself entangle?
I know all men,
And all that is done beneath the sun I see;
I know how it is with each,
What he thinks,
What he wishes,
And to what end his motives run.
Then all must be entrusted to My hand:
You — keep yourself in good peace,

And let the busy man be busy as he will.
All he has done, all he has said, shall come
upon him :

There is no deceiving Me.

Have no care for the shadow of a great
name,

Seek not familiar friendship with many,
Nor personal love.

For these things bring distractions,
And deep, dark shadows in the heart.

I should be glad to speak My word to
you

And lift the veil from hidden things,

If you would carefully watch for My
coming,

And open to Me the gate of your heart.

Be provident;

Watch and pray;

And humble yourself in all.

CHAPTER 25

IN WHAT FIRM PEACE OF HEART AND REAL
PROGRESS CONSISTS

MY son, I have said,
“Peace I leave with you;
My peace I give unto you!
Not as the world giveth do I give unto
you.”

Peace all long for,
But not all care for what belongs to peace
that is real.

My peace is with the humble and the meek
of heart.

Yours shall be in great patience.
If you hear Me and follow My voice,
You can have deep peace.

What must I do, then?

In everything look to yourself: see what
you do or say;
And direct your every intention to this,
To please Me only.
Apart from Me wish nothing or seek
nothing.

And pass, too, no rash judgments on your
neighbor's words or deeds,

And tangle not yourself in what is not
entrusted to you.

Then you will be able to be rarely or but
little troubled.

But, never to feel any disturbance,
Never to suffer trouble of heart or body;
This belongs not to this present time,
But is the state of everlasting rest.

Think not, therefore, you have found
true peace, if you feel no heavy weight.
If you find no man against you,
Think not that all is well.
Think not it is perfection,
If all goes according to your will;
And fancy not yourself some thing great,
Or specially loved,
If you are in a great devotion and sweet-
ness.
For not in those things is the true lover of
virtue known,

Nor does progress and perfection consist
in them.

In what, then, Lord?

In offering yourself with all your heart
unto God's will,
Not seeking what is yours, little or great,
In time or in eternity;
But ever giving thanks with one set face
In happy days and when things go
wrong,
Weighing all in an equal balance.
If you are so brave and so long-suffering
in hope
That, when interior consolation is with-
drawn,
You prepare your heart to suffer even
worse,
And do not justify yourself
As if you ought not to suffer these things
or things so great,
But in all My arrangements

Justify Me and praise Me as holy —
Then you are walking in the true, right way
of peace:

And there is hope past doubt,
That you shall see My face again with
jubilation.

But if you come entirely to despise yourself,
Be sure you then shall enjoy abounding
peace,

As far as it is possible for your sojourn.

CHAPTER 26

OF THE HEIGHT FROM WHICH A FREE MIND
GAZES DOWN — A MIND GAINED MORE BY
HUMBLE PRAYER THAN BY READING

ONLY a perfect man, O Lord,
Can never let the mind relax
From pressing onward to the things of
Heaven,
And pass through many cares as if without
a care,
Not like a sluggard,
But by a privilege of the free mind,
Cleaving with ill-ordered affection unto
no created thing.

I pray Thee, my God compassionate,
Keep me from this life's cares,
That I be not too much entangled in them;
From the body's many needs,
That I be not captured by pleasure;
From all hindrance of the soul,
That I be not cast down and disheart-
ened with troubles.

I do not mean from the things which
worldly vanity with all its heart goes
after;

But from the miseries,
Due to the common curse of man,
Which weigh upon him for punishment
And impede Thy servant's soul,
And keep it from entering into the freedom
of the Spirit
As often as it would.

O my God, sweetness past all speech,
Turn to bitterness for me
All carnal comfort that draws me from the
love of the eternal,
And wickedly allures me to itself by
showing me some present charming
good!
Let it not conquer me, my God,
Let it not conquer me,
My flesh and blood!
Let not the world and its brief glory cheat
me!

Let not the devil and his cunning trip me
up!

Grant me courage to stand,

Patience to bear,

Constancy to persevere.

For all worldly consolations

Give me the most sweet unction of Thy

Spirit,

And for the love of flesh infuse the love of

Thy Name!

See, food and drink and raiment,

And the other instruments that serve to

support the body,

Are burdens to the fervent spirit.

Grant me to use such comforts moderately,

And not be entangled by too great desire

of them.

I may not cast all off,

For nature must be supported.

But Thy holy Law forbids me to ask super-

fluous things,

Or things that rather please:

Else, the flesh would rise in pride against
the spirit.

In the midst of these things, I pray,
Let Thy hand guard and teach me
To avoid excess.

CHAPTER 27

THAT SELF-LOVE ESPECIALLY KEEPS PEOPLE
BACK FROM THE SOVEREIGN GOOD

MY son,
You must give all for all,
And not belong at all to self.
Know that your self-love harms you more
Than any thing of the world.

All more or less cleaves to you
According to the love and feeling you
bear for it.

If your love be pure and simple and well-
ordered,

You will not be the slave of things.

Desire not

What you are not allowed to have.

Have not

What can impede your steps and rob you
of interior liberty.

Strange that you will not trust yourself
to Me

From the very bottom of your heart
With all that you can wish or have.
Why so torn with empty sorrow?
Why so wearied with superfluous cares?
Stand by My good pleasure:
You shall feel no loss.

If you seek this or that,
And would be here or there,
To get more your own advantage and your
own will,
You will never be at rest,
Nor free from care;
Because in everything some flaw will be,
And everywhere some one will oppose
you.

It does not help you, then, to gain or
multiply outward things,
But rather to despise them and cut them
off at the root from the heart.
Not only money-gathering do I mean, and
wealth;

But the hunt for honor and the love of
empty praise:
And which pass with the world.

Place protects you little,
If the spirit of fervor is not there.
The peace you look for out of you will not
last long,
If the heart lacks true foundation.
I mean, unless you stay in Me,
Change yourself you may;
Better yourself you cannot.
For if the occasion come and you allow
it,
You will find what you fled from — ay, and
more!

A PRAYER TO PURGE THE HEART: A PRAYER
FOR HEAVENLY WISDOM

Strengthen me, O God, by Thy Holy
Spirit's grace!
Grant me strength to be made firm in the
inner man

And free my heart from every useless care
and distress;

And let me not be drawn away with many
a desire of aught, be it valueless or
precious;

But let me look at all as passing shows,
And myself to pass as well!

For nothing stays under the sun,
Where all is vanity and trouble of spirit.
O, wise is he who sees life thus!

Grant me, Lord, heavenly wisdom,
That I may learn to seek and find Thee
above all;

To relish and love Thee before all:

And to understand all things as they are
according to the order of Thy wis-
dom.

Grant me to turn away in prudence from
him that flatters me;

And patiently to bear with him that op-
poses me.

For this is the great wisdom,

Not to be moved with every wind of words,
 Not to give ear unto the siren wickedly
 enticing us:

For so will our steps securely lead the way
 we have begun.

CHAPTER 28

AGAINST THE TONGUES OF SLANDERERS

MY son,
Take it not ill if some think badly
of you,
And say what you dislike to hear.
You should think worse things of yourself,
And believe none weaker than you.

If you walk within,
You will think little of flying words.
It is no small prudence to be silent in the
evil time,
And inwardly to turn to Me,
And not to be disturbed by what men think.

Your peace should not rest in the tongues
of men.
For whether they interpret you well or ill,
You are not therefore another man.

Where is true peace and real glory?
Is it not in Me?

He who cares not to please mankind,
And fears not their displeasure,
Shall enjoy deep peace.
From love ill-ordered and from empty fear
Arises all unquietness of heart
And all distraction of the senses.

CHAPTER 29

THAT WHEN TRIBULATION COMES, GOD
SHOULD BE CALLED UPON AND BLESSED

THY name, O Lord, be blest for ever,
Who hast willed that this tempta-
tion and trouble should come on me!

I cannot get away from it;
But I must needs fly unto Thee,
To help me and to turn it unto good for me.

O Lord,

Now I am in trouble,
And with my heart it is not well,
But I am much worried by my present
suffering.

And now, dear Father, what am I to say?
I am caught in narrow places:
Save me from this hour!

But for this cause I am come unto this
hour,

That thou mayst be glorified,
When I am greatly humbled and by Thee
delivered.

Be pleased, O Lord, to draw me forth !
For I am poor ; what can I do ?
And where shall I go, apart from Thee ?
Give patience, Lord,
This time also.
Help me, my God,
And I shall not fear, however great the
burden !

And now in this what can I say ?
“Lord, Thy will be done !”
I have well deserved the trouble and the
burden :
Surely, I must bear them.
O for patience,
Until the storm pass and things be
better !
For Thy almighty Hand can take even this
temptation from me ;
And lessen its force, so that I yield not
wholly,
As Thou hast often done before with
me,

My God, my mercy !
And the harder it is to me,
The easier it is to Thee —
This changing of the right hand of the
most High.

CHAPTER 30

OF ASKING FOR HELP DIVINE; OF THE TRUST
THAT WE SHALL GET GOD'S GRACE BACK
AGAIN

MY son,
I am the Lord that comforts in
time of trial.

Come unto Me
When it is not well with you.

This it is that most of all stands in the
way of heavenly comfort,
That you turn so slowly to prayer.
For before you ask Me earnestly,
In the meantime you seek many a solace,
And recreate yourself in things external.
Therefore all is little use to you,
Until you mark that I am He Who save
those who hope in Me,
And outside Me is no availing help,
No useful counsel,
And no lasting cure!

But now the storm is gone; take breath
again,

And in the light of My mercies come back
to health.

For I am near, saith the Lord,
Making all things wholly right again,
Nay, even increasing them, and adding
unto them.

Is aught hard to Me?
Am I like one that speaks and will not do?

Where is your faith?

Stand firm,

And persevere!

Be longsuffering,

Be brave:

Consolation will come to you in its own
time.

Wait for Me, wait for Me:

I will come and heal you.

What harasses you is temptation:

It is empty dread that makes you fear.

What matters anxiety about things that
may come some day?

It only brings scrow on sorrow.

Let the day's trouble be enough for it!
It is a vain and useless thing to be dis-
turbed about things to come,
Or congratulate oneself on them.
May be they will never come!
But it is like man to be deceived by
fancies such as this.
It is the mark of minds yet small
So lightly to be led at the suggestion of the
enemy.
For he cares not whether he deludes and
deceives you
With false things or with true;
Whether he lays you low with love of things
present,
Or with fear of things to come.
Let not, then, your heart be troubled,
Neither let it be afraid.
Believe in Me,
And in My mercy trust.
When you fancy you are far from Me,
Often I am then the nearer.
When you think that well-nigh all is lost,

Then oftentimes a greater gain of merit is
at hand.

All is not lost

When things go contrary.

Judge not according to your present
thought.

Receive not, cling not unto any trouble

Whencesoe'er it comes,

As though all hope were gone of rising from
the wave.

Think not that you are abandoned wholly,

Though for a time I may have sent you some
tribulation,

Or taken away the consolation that you
longed for.

For thus men pass unto the kingdom of the
skies.

And it is better, without doubt, for you

and the rest of My servants

To be tried by crosses

Than to have all things as you wish.

I know your thoughts in secret.

For it is good for your salvation
Now and again for you to be left without
relish;
Lest perhaps you be puffed up in good
success,
And take some pleasure in yourself that
you are what you are not.
All that I gave I can take back,
And, when I will, restore it.
When I give it, it is Mine,
When I withdraw it, I have not taken
yours.
For every good gift is Mine,
And every perfect gift.
And if I send a trouble to you, or some
contradiction,
Be you not angry:
Lose not heart:
I soon can raise the weight from you,
And turn all burdens into joy.
Indeed, indeed, I am just,
And greatly to be praised,
When thus I deal with you.

If you think rightly and look at things
in truth,
You should never be so sad and so cast
down for adversities,
But rather be glad, and give thanks,
Nay, think this a peculiar joy
That I strike you with the blow of sorrow,
and spare you not.
“As the Father loved Me,
I too love you,”
I said it to My dear disciples,
Whom of a truth I sent
To great strife, not to temporal joys;
Not to honor,
But contempt:
To work, and not to ease;
To bear much fruit in patience,
Not to rest.
Remember these My words, My son.

CHAPTER 31

OF NEGLECT OF EVERY CREATURE THAT THE
CREATOR MAY BE FOUND

O LORD,
I sorely want grace yet greater,
If I am to come thither,
Where none can hinder me, no creature
hold me back.

For, as long as anything holds me,
I cannot freely fly to Thee.
He wished to freely fly
Who said:
“Who will give me wings like a dove,
And I will fly and be at rest?”
What more quiet than the single eye?
And what more free
Than he who longs for nothing on earth?
So must I pass all creation by, and wholly
desert self,
And stand in ecstasy of mind, and see
That Thou, Creator of all, hast in Thee
nothing like Thy creatures.

And if one be not set loose from all crea-
tion,
He cannot freely aim at things divine.
For therefore few souls are found contem-
plative,
For there are few that know how
Fully to seclude themselves from creatures
and beings that will perish.

For this great grace is wanted
To lift up the soul,
And carry it beyond itself.

And, save the man be lifted up in spirit,
And freed from all the world and wholly
united unto God,
All he knows,
All too he has,
Is of little weight.
He will long be little and lie low
Who values aught as great
Except the one only, immeasurable, eter-
nal good.

And all that is not God
Is nothing,
And must be held for nothing.

There is great difference
Between the wisdom of a devout enlight-
ened soul
And the knowledge of a studious lettered
cleric.
Far nobler is the teaching that flows from
the influence divine
Than learning painfully acquired by human
wit.

Many are found to desire contemplation,
But do not try to practise what is needed
for it.

It stays us much that we should rest
In wonders and in sensible things,
And have so little perfect mortification.

I know not what it is,
Or by what spirit we are led,
And what we mean, who seem to have the
name of spiritual men,

That we should spend such toil,
And greater care,
On things that pass and are of little worth,
And scarcely even now and then
Gather our senses wholly up,
And think upon our interior life.

Oh it is sad! After a little recollection,
at once we break away,
And never put our works into the scale and
mark them carefully.

We care not where our love is,
And weep not that everything is so impure.
Because all flesh had corrupted its way,
The great Flood followed.

Thus when our inward love is much corrupted,

It must needs be

That the act which follows,

Which is the sign how much we lack interior strength,

Should be corrupted too.

From a pure heart proceeds the fruit of
a good life.

We ask how much a man has done;
But with what virtue it is done,
We weigh not that so carefully.
Was he brave, rich, fair,
A ready or a good scribe,
A good singer,
A hard worker?
All this we ask:
But how poor he was in spirit,
How patient and meek,
How pious and interior —
Most hold their tongues on this.
Nature looks at the outward show of man:
Grace turns its glance within.
The former often is deceived:
The other, not to be deceived, puts all her
 hope in God.

CHAPTER 32

OF DENYING SELF AND GIVING UP ALL COVET-
OUS WAYS

M^Y son,
You cannot have perfect freedom
Except you wholly deny self.

Self-seekers and self-lovers are all bound
in fetters,
Covetous, curious, wandering like a rolling
wheel,
Ever seeking ease, never the things of Jesus
Christ,
Often imagining and putting together
things that will not stand.
For all shall perish
That has not its source in God.

Keep in your memory a short and perfect
saying:
“Let go all and you will find all:
Cease your longings and you will find
rest.”

Think well on this:
And when you have fulfilled it, you shall
understand all.

Lord,

This is no one day's work!

This is no child's play —

Nay, in this brief word all the perfection
of religions lies!

My son, you should not turn away,
Nor be at once cast down,
When hearing of the pathway of the perfect.
You should rather be spurred to higher
flights;

Or, at least, sigh and long for them.

I would it were thus with you and that
you had come to this,
To be no lover of yourself,
But to stand simply at My beck,
And the beck of the father I put over you.
Then you would please Me very much,

And all your life would pass in peace and
joy.
You have much still to leave;
And if you do not give it all to Me,
You will not get what you ask.

I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried
by fire,
To make you rich
I mean, heavenly wisdom,
That treads under foot all that is low.
Put earthly wisdom by,
And all complacency with men and self.

I have told you to buy the more value-
less,
Leaving the precious and the lofty among
human things.
For true wisdom from on high seems very
valueless and small,
Well nigh given over to oblivion,
Thinking no high things of self,

Nor seeking to be made much of on the
earth.

How many preach this with their lips,

But are far from it in their lives!

Yet it is the pearl of price, hidden from
many.

CHAPTER 33

OF THE WAVERING OF THE HEART AND OF
HAVING GOD FOR FINAL INTENTION

MY son,
Trust not your present feelings:
They will soon change.
As long as you live, you are subject to
change,
Even though you wish it not;
Now glad, now sad;
Now restful, now disturbed;
Now devout, now indevout;
Now zealous, now slothful;
Now grave, now light.

But high above these things that
change
Stands the man
Who is wise and well taught in spirit,
Who cares not what he feels,
Nor from what quarter blows the shifting
breeze,
If but the whole motive of his mind

go onward to the due and longed-
for end.

For thus will he be able to remain the same
and unshaken,

Pointing the simple eye of intention

Through many changing chances unceas-
ingly at Me.

The purer the eye of intention is,
The straighter sails the vessel through the
many storms.

But the eye of pure intention is dim in
many,

For men soon look aside at anything
delightful that occurs.

For rarely is one found quite free from the
self-seeking stain.

So in old days the Jews had come to
Bethany,

To Martha and Mary,

Not for Jesus only,

But to look on Lazarus too.

Therefore, the eye of intention must be
cleansed,
That it be single and right,
And, beyond all that lies between, be
directed at Me.

CHAPTER 34.

THAT THE ONE WHO LOVES RELISHES GOD
ABOVE ALL AND IN ALL

LO, my God, my all!
What wish I more;
What happier thing can I desire?
O sweet and tasteful word!
But to him who loves the Word,
And not the world and all that is therein.

My God, my all! —
Enough for him that understands:
Sweet for the lover to say it over often.
For in Thy presence all is sweet:
When Thou art gone,
All things cause loathing.
Thou makest the heart quiet; Thou makest
great peace
And festal joy.
Thou makest it think well of all and
praise Thee in all.
Nothing can please it long apart from Thee;
But if aught is to be grateful and savory,

Thy grace must be there too,
And it must be seasoned with the seasoning
of Thy wisdom.

He who relishes Thee,
What will not have for him the proper
relish?

And what can give him pleasure,
With whom the taste of Thee is not?

But the world's wise men
And they that relish the flesh
Fail in Thy wisdom.
For there is many a vanity,
And here death is found.
But they who follow Thee,
By contemning worldly things, and mortifying
the flesh,
Are known to be wise indeed,
Because they go from vanity to truth, from
flesh to soul:
God tastes sweet to them;
And all the good they find in His creation
They put down to its Creator's praise.

Wide, wide apart the savor of Creator and
created,

Of eternity and time,
Of a created and the uncreated beam !

O blaze that shines for ever,
High above all the fires of earth '
Lighten in flashes from above,
Finding a way into all the secret chambers
of my heart !

Make pure,
Make glad,
Make clear,
Make quick my spirit and its powers:
To cleave to Thee in wild excess of
joy !

O when shall come that blest, that longed-
for hour,

When Thou wilt feed me with Thy pres-
ence,

And be all in all to me !

Till this be given to me ;

My joy will not be full.

Sad, sad ! — yet still the old man lives in
me.

He is not wholly crucified;
He is not perfectly dead;
He fiercely lusts against the spirit still;
He stirs the war within;
He will not let the kingdom of the soul be
quiet.

But Thou,
Lord of the mighty sea, smoother of the
heaving waves,
Arise and help me !
Scatter the people that delight in war;
Bruise them in Thy power;
Show, I pray, Thy mighty deeds;
And let Thy right hand be crowned with
glory !
For there is for me no hope, no haven,
Save in Thee, O Lord, my God !

CHAPTER 35

THAT THERE IS NO SAFETY FROM TEMPTATION
IN THIS LIFE

M^Y son,
You are never safe in life,
But as long as you live you need spiritual
arms.

You are ever amid foes,
And assaulted right and left.

If, then, you do not use the shield of
patience everywhere,
You will not stay unwounded long.
Again, unless you put your heart in Me and
keep it there,
With single wish to suffer all for Me,
You will not keep that ardor up,
Nor win the palm-branch of the blest.
You ought, then, to pass through all things
like a man,
And use a powerful hand against opposi-
tion.

For unto him that overcometh manna is
given,
And to the sluggish is left deep misery.

If you look for rest in this life,
How, then, will you come to the eternal
rest?
Lay not yourself out for much rest,
But to be very patient.
Seek true peace in Heaven, not on earth;
Not among men, nor in the rest of the
creation,
But in God alone.

For God's love you ought willingly to
undergo all,
Toil, namely, and pain,
Temptations, worries, anxieties and needs,
Weaknesses,
Injuries and evil words,
Blame and humiliations,
Confusion, correction and contempt.
These are aids to virtue;
These prove the novice of Christ;

These weave the heavenly wreath,
I will give back eternal pay for your brief
toil:

For the passing confusion, infinite glory!

Think you you will always have spiritual
consolations as you desire?

My Saints did not;

They had many troubles and various
temptations,

And great desolation.

But they kept patient throughout all,

And trusted God rather than themselves,

Knowing that the sufferings of this pres-
ent time

Are not worthy to merit future glory.

Would you have that now

Which many men have scarcely gained
with floods of tears and after weary
toil?

Wait, then, for God and play the man;

Be comforted;

Do not despair;

Do not desert;
But for God's glory expose with constancy
body and soul.

I will pay back all the debt most fully:

I will stand in every trial at your side.

CHAPTER 36

AGAINST MEN'S VAIN JUDGMENTS

MY son,
Rest your heart firmly in the Lord,
And fear not the judgment passed by
men,
If your conscience tells you you are innocent
and good.

It is a good, a blessed thing to suffer
thus:
And it is not hard to the heart that is
humble
And trusts in God rather than in itself.
Many talk much,
And therefore little faith is to be placed in
them.
And to content all
Is impossible.

Even though Paul tried hard to please all
men in God,
Becoming everything to every man,

Yet he thought it very unimportant
That he was judged at the judgment-bar
of man.

He did enough, all that he could, to edify
others and to save their souls;

But he could not prevent

His being judged at times by others

And despised by them

Therefore he trusted all to God,

God that knew all,

And in patience and humility maintained

his cause against lips that spoke ini-
quity,

Or even their empty and lying thoughts,

And the words they hurled upon him as
they pleased.

Yet he did answer now and then,

That the weak should not take scandal if
he held his peace.

And who are you

That you should fear a mortal man?

To-day he is:

To-morrow he is not seen !
Fear God,
And you will not shudder at the terrors
from men.
What can man do to you by words or
injuries ?
He hurts himself rather than you ;
Nor can he, be he who he may, escape
God's judgment.
You keep God before your eyes,
And contend not with complaining words.
And if just now you seem to be brought low.
And to be suffering a confusion that you
did not merit,
Be not angry,
Take not a flower from your wreath by your
impatience ;
But rather look to Me in Heaven,
For I can save you out of all confusion
and injury
And give to every man according to his
deeds.

CHAPTER 37

OF A PURE AND ENTIRE RENUNCIATION OF
SELF TO GET FREEDOM OF HEART

MY son,
Leave self,
And you shall find Me.
Be without device and all proprietorship,
And you shall always gain,
For fuller grace shall be bestowed on you
The moment you renounce yourself,
If you keep so.

Lord, how often shall I renounce myself:
And in what leave myself?

Always, in every hour,
As in small things, so and in great.
I except nothing:
But would have you found bare in all things.
Else how can you be Mine, or I be yours;
Unless you be rid within, without, of all
self-will?
The sooner you do this, the better it will
be for you;

The more fully and sincerely you do it,
The more you will please Me,
And the greater will your profit be.

Some renounce themselves,
But with some exception;
For they do not wholly trust in God,
So they busy themselves with providing for
themselves.

Some offer the whole at the very start,
But afterwards, when assaulted by tempta-
tion, return unto their own;

So they make no way at all in virtue.

These will never get to the pure heart's
true freedom

And to the grace of My close and pleasant
friendship,

Save by making first a perfect renunciation
and by a daily sacrifice of themselves.

Apart from this no union of enjoyment
Stands or can last.

I have very often said to you,
And now again I say it:

Leave yourself;
Renounce yourself:
You shall enjoy great interior peace.
Give all for all;
Seek nothing for it;
Ask for nothing back;
Stand purely and undoubtingly in Me:
You shall possess Me.
You shall be free in heart,
And the darkness shall not tread you down.
Strive for this;
Pray for this;
Long for this:
That you be rid of all self-seeking, a naked
soul following Jesus naked,
To die unto yourself,
And live for ever unto Me.
Then shall all vain fancies vanish,
Evil disturbances,
And superfluous cares.
Immoderate fear, too, shall go away,
And ill-ordered love shall die.

CHAPTER 38

OF A GOOD RULE IN EXTERNALS AND OF
RECOURSE TO GOD IN DANGER

MY son,
You should aim carefully at this,
In every place, action, or exterior occupa-
tion
To be free at heart and master of your-
self.

All is to be under you, not you under it,
And you the lord and ruler of your actions,
No slave nor chattel;
But rather free and a true Israelite,
Passing to the lot and liberty of the sons of
God,
Who stand above things present
And gaze on the eternal;
Looking on passing things with the left
eye, and with the right on God.
The things of time draw them not on to
cleave to them;
They rather draw these things into a goodly
service,

As they were ordained of God and ap-
pointed
By the head Workman,
Who has left nothing unordered in His
creation.

If, too, in every chance
You stand not in the external appear-
ance,
Nor look with the eye of flesh on what you
see and hear;
But soon, whatever be the affair,
Enter with Moses to the tabernacle
And there take counsel of the Lord,
Sometimes you will hear the heavenly
answer,
And will go home learned in much that is
and much that is to be.
For Moses always hurried there to solve his
doubts and questionings,
And fled unto the help of prayer
To lessen perils and to bear the wickedness
of man.

So you too must hurry to the secret chamber
of your heart,
Imploring aid from Heaven with earnest-
ness.

It was for this that Josue and Israel's
sons
Were deceived, we are told, by them of
Gabaon,
Because they did not first ask of the lips of
God;
But, too credulous of dulcet words,
They were deceived by a false piety.

CHAPTER 39

THAT A MAN MUST NOT BE TOO EAGER IN
HIS AFFAIRS

MY son,
Ever trust your case to Me:
I will arrange it in its time.
Wait for My ordering of it,
And you will feel the profit.

Lord, quite willingly I entrust all things
to Thee,
For my own thoughts can make little
progress.
I would I clave not much to future happen-
ings,
But offered myself, all hesitation gone, to
Thy good will.

My son,
A man often eagerly pursues some thing
he longs for;
But when he comes to it,
He begins to be of another mind.

For his affections do not always circle round
the same,

But rather drive him from one unto
another.

No trifle is it, then, even in trifles to
abandon self.

Man's real progress

Is in self-denial,

And a self-denying man

Is very free and safe.

But the old enemy, opposing all good,
never stops tempting us,

But day and night sets his strong snares,
To try and make the careless stagger into
the net of deception.

“Watch ye and pray,” saith the Lord,

“That ye enter not into temptation.”

CHAPTER 40

THAT MAN HAS NO GOOD OF HIMSELF, AND
CAN BOAST OF NONE

LORD, what is man, that Thou art
mindful of him;

Or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?

What has man merited,

That Thou shouldst give Thy grace to him?

Lord, how can I complain, if Thou desert
me,

Or what can I put justly forward if Thou
dost not what I ask?

This indeed may I in truth think and say:

Lord, I am nothing;

I can do nothing,

Have nothing good of myself,

But fail in all,

And ever tend to naught.

And if I am not helped and inwardly in-
structed by Thee,

I become wholly cool and lax.

But Thou, O Lord, art always the same
And remainest forever

Always good and just and holy:
Well, justly, and in holy ways performing all,
And disposing all in wisdom!
But I, who am readier to fall away than
go forward,
Never last in one condition;
For seven times change over me.
Still, it grows better soon, when it is Thy
will,
And Thou hast stretched Thy hand to help
me.
For Thou alone canst help without a word
from man,
And canst strengthen me so much
That my face shall no more turn to different
things,
But that to Thee alone my heart shall turn,
and be at rest.

Wherefore, if I knew well how to cast
aside all human consolation —
Either to gain devotion,
Or for the need that forces me to seek Thee,

Because there is no man to console me —
Then I could really hope for Thy grace,
And exult in the gift of a fresh consolation.

Thanks be to Thee, from Whom all
comes,
As often as it goes well with me !

But I am vanity and nothing before
Thee,

A man inconstant and weak.

What, then, can I boast of,

Or why seek to be thought much of ?

Is it for my nothingness ? —

This also is most vain.

Truly vainglory is an evil pest,

The chief of vanities ;

For it draws us from the glory that is
true,

And robs us of the grace of heaven.

For while a man pleases himself, he dis-
pleases Thee :

Gaping to swallow human praise,
He is stripped of real virtues.

It is true glory and holy exultation
To glory in Thee and not in self;
In Thy name to rejoice,
Not in one's own virtue;
And in no created thing to take our pleasure,
unless for Thee.

Praise to Thy name,
Not mine!
Thy work be glorified,
Not mine!
Thy holy Name be blessed,
And nothing of the praise of man set down
to me!

Thou art my glory, Thou the exultation of
my heart;
In Thee I will exult and boast myself the
livelong day;
But in myself for nothing,
Save for my weaknesses.

Let Jews seek the glory given by men to
one another:

I will ask that which comes from God alone.
All glory from man,
All temporal honor,
All lofty places of the world,
Set over against Thy everlasting glory,
Are but vanity and folly !
My Truth and Mercy, my God, O Blessed
Trinity,
To Thee alone be praise and honor, virtue,
glory
Through the unending ages of the ages !

CHAPTER 41

OF THE CONTEMPT OF ALL TEMPORAL HONOR

M^Y son,
Take it not to heart
When you see others honored and raised
on high,
While you are despised and humbled.
Lift up your heart to Me in heaven,
And man's contempt on earth will not
make you sad.

Lord, we are in blindness,
And soon are led away by vanity.

If I am just and look within me,
Never has wrong been done to me by any-
thing created:
So I have no just complaint against Thee.
But, as I frequently and grievously have
sinned against Thee,
All creation is in arms against me; and I
merit it.

To me, then, the just due is shame and
contempt,
But to Thee praise, honor, and glory!

And if I do not make myself ready for
this
Willingly to be despised and left by all
created things,
And to seem wholly nothing,
I cannot inwardly attain a peaceful and
steady mind:
Not be illumined in the spirit,
Nor fully united to Thee.

CHAPTER 42

THAT PEACE IS NOT TO BE PUT IN MEN

MY son,
If you put your peace with any one
Because you live with him and think as
he does,

You will be changeable and entangled.
But if you betake yourself unto the truth
that ever lives and remains,
Then partings or the death of friends shall
not sadden you.

Love for your friend should have its root in
Me;

And it is for My sake
That every one that seems good to you
And very dear in this life
Should be loved.

Apart from Me friendship avails not and
will not last;

And there is no true and pure love
Where I join not the lovers.

So dead you should be unto such affec-
tions for beloved ones

That you should wish to be without all
human companionship

As far as it pertains to you.

The farther a man goes back from every
earthly solace

The more the man draws near to God.

The deeper a man goes down into him-
self

And the more despicable he grows in his
own sight

The higher he goes up towards God.

But he who puts down any good to self

Hinders the grace of God from coming into
him;

For the Holy Spirit's grace always seeks a
humble heart.

If you could wholly bring yourself to
nothing,

And free yourself from all created love,

Then would I drop the dews of great grace
on you.

When you glance back upon creatures,

You lose the sight of the Creator.

Learn in all things to overcome yourself for
the Creator's sake,
And then you will be able to reach unto
the knowledge of God.

If you love and look upon a thing exces-
sively,

However small it be,

It keeps you back from what is high and
spoils you.

CHAPTER 43

AGAINST VAIN AND WORLDLY KNOWLEDGE

SON,
Let not men's fair and subtle speech
move you.

God's kingdom is not in talk,

But in virtue.

Hark to My words,

For they set hearts on fire and flood the
mind with light.

They make men have compunction,

And bring various consolation.

Never read a word

To seem more learned or wise.

Try to mortify your evil ways.

For this will avail you more than if you
knew many hard questions.

When you have read much and learned
much,

Yet you must always come to one begin-
ning.

It is I
That teach man knowledge,
And give a clearer understanding to the
 little ones
Than can be taught by man.
To whom I speak, he will soon be wise,
And will makes much progress in spirit.
Woe unto them who ask of men their curi-
 ous questions
And care but little for the way of serving
 Me!
A time will be when Christ shall come,
The masters' Master and the Angels' Lord,
To hear all men their lesson: —
I mean, to examine the consciences of all —
And then will He search Jerusalem with
 lanterns,
And the secrets of the darkness shall be clear,
And wrangling tongues shall cease.

It is I that lift even in a flash the humble
 mind
To understand more of the eternal truth

Than if a man had studied in the schools
ten years.

I teach without the buzz of words,
Without the confusion of opinions,
Without the pride of honor,
Without the strife of arguments.

It is I that teach men to despise the things
of earth,
To loathe the present things,
To seek the eternal,
To relish the eternal,
To fly from honors,
To suffer scandals,
To put all hope in Me,
To want nothing beyond Me,
And above all to love Me ardently.
For one learnt the things of God,
And spoke wondrous things,
By intimate love of Me.
He gained more by leaving all
Than in the study of subtleties.

But unto some I speak words common
to all:

To others special words.

To some I sweetly show Myself in signs
and figures:

To some I reveal mysteries in floods of
light.

There is one voice in books, and yet they
inform not all men equally;

Because I am within them,

The Teacher, the Truth,

The Searcher of hearts,

The Discerner of thoughts,

The Promotor of action,

Dealing to each as I deem fit.

CHAPTER 44

OF NOT DRAWING TO OURSELVES EXTERIOR
THINGS

MY son,
In much you must be ignorant,
And count yourself as dead upon the earth,
And one to whom all the world is crucified.
Much, too, you must pass by with a deaf
ear,
And rather think
On what is for your peace.
Better for you to turn your eyes away
From things you do not like,
And let each have his own opinion,
Than be the slave of quarrelling words.
If you stand well with God,
And regard His judgment,
You will more easily endure defeat.

O Lord,
To what pass are we come?
See how men moan about a temporal loss,
And for a trifling gain work and run about,

But the soul's loss they pass by and forget,

And come back late, if at all.

That which is of little use,

Or of no use,

Men give attention to,

And that which over all is necessary

They pass by without care:

Because man's being flows all away to the
external.

And if he do not quickly come to himself,

He is content to lie immersed in exterior
things.

CHAPTER 45

THAT NOT ALL MEN MAY BE BELIEVED AND
HOW EASILY WE SLIP IN TALK

GRANT me help, Lord, from trouble:
Vain is the help of man!

How often have I found no faith

Where I thought I should:

And found it

Where I less expected it!

Vain, then, is hope in man;

But in Thee, Lord, is the safety of the
just.

Blessed be Thou, O Lord my God

In all that happens unto us!

We are weak and unsteady:

We are soon deceived and change.

What man is he

That can so carefully and cautiously in all
things guard himself

As not sometimes to meet with some deceit
or tangle?

But he who trusts in Thee, O Lord,

And seeks Thee with a simple heart,
Falls not so easily.
And if he does fall into some trouble,
However he may get involved,
Soon shall he be drawn out by Thee,
Or by Thee be consoled ;
Because Thou wilt not abandon
The man that hopes in Thee unto the
end !

Rare is the faithful friend,
Holding on in all a friend's adversities.
Thou, Lord,
Thou art the only one,
Most trusty in all,
And besides Thee there is no other
such !

O how wise that holy soul was
Who said :
"My mind is firmly founded
And rooted in Christ !"
If it were so with me,

The fear of man would not so easily make
me anxious,
Nor would the javelins of words move me.

Who can see all beforehand?
Who can guard against coming woes?
If the ills we foresee often hurt us,
How can the unforeseen ones but grievously
strike us?
But why have I not provided better for
miserable me?
Why, too, have I so lightly trusted others?—
Well, we are men,
Naught but frail men,
Though many think us Angels — ay, and
call us so!

Whom may I trust, O Lord?
Whom,
Save Thee?
Thou art the truth,
Who deceivest not
And cannot be deceived.

And again — every man is lying,
Weak,
Unstable,
So ready, in his words especially, to slip;
So that what sounds right on the face of it
Ought scarce to be believed at once.

How wisely hast Thou warned us to be-
ware of men,
And that a man's foes are his own house-
hold,
And that we must not believe when they say,
“See, He is here; see, He is there!”

I have learned the lesson to my loss,
And may it be to greater care, and not to
folly!
“Take care,” one says, “take care:
Keep to yourself what I tell you!”
And, while I hold my tongue and think the
secret kept,
Not even he can keep what he asked me to
keep:

But straightway betrays himself and me, —
and off he goes !

From such tales and from such un-
guarded men,
Deliver me, O Lord,
That I fall not into their hands,
Nor ever do the like !
Give me a true word and a firm one on my
lips,
And take from me a cunning tongue.
For what I would not have done unto me
I ought in every way to shun.

How good it is, what peace it brings,
To keep silence about others,
And not to credit everything alike,
Nor lightly to speak out,
To reveal oneself to few,
To seek for Thee that gazest deep into the
heart,
And not to be blown about with every wind
of words,

But to desire that all our inner and our
outer course
May be fulfilled according to Thy will.

How safe it is, if we would keep God's
grace,
To shun the sight of men,
And not to seek what seems to bring ad-
miration from without;
But with all carefulness to follow after
What gives fervor to life and betters it.
How many have been hurt when men have
got to know their worth
And praised them over-hastily!
How many have been profited by grace in
silence kept in this frail life,
This life, called temptation all and war.

CHAPTER 46

OF THE TRUST WE OUGHT TO HAVE IN GOD
WHEN WEAPONS OF THE TONGUE RISE UP
AGAINST US.

MY son,
Stand firm and hope in Me!
For what are words but words?
They fly through air,
But do not hurt a stone.
If you are guilty,
Think, you would wish to mend yourself.
If you are conscious of no wrong,
Think, you would willingly bear this for
God.

Little enough for you to bear words now
and then:

You cannot yet stand sturdy stripes.

And why do such small things pierce you
to the heart,

Unless because you are still of the flesh,
And think of men more than you should?
For as you are afraid to be despised,
You do not want blame for your faults,

And seek the shadows of excuses.
But look within you deeper still,
And you will see the world yet living
there,
And the vain love to please men.
For as you shun to be brought low
And put to shame for your defects,
It is quite clear you are not truly humble,
Nor really dead to the world,
Nor the world crucified to you.

But hear My word
And you will not heed ten thousand words
of man.
Think, if all were said against you that
could most maliciously be invented,
What would it hurt you,
If you let it all go by,
And cared not a straw for it?
Could it even pull one hair from you?

But he who has not his heart within,
and has not God before his eyes,

Is easily moved with words of censure.
While he that trusts in Me,
And does not seek to stand by his own
 opinion,
Shall be free from fear of man.
For I am judge of all
And I know all secrets.
I know how the thing was done:
I know the one who did the wrong,
And him that suffered it.
It was from Me that word went forth:
It was with my permission this happened,
That thoughts in many hearts might be
 revealed.
I will judge the guilty and the innocent:
But I have wished to prove them both
 before by secret tests.
Man's evidence often misleads:
The sentence that I pass is true.
It shall stand, and shall not be over-
 thrown!
It is mostly hidden, and is not known in
 all respects but unto few.

Yet it is never wrong, and never can be,
Though it may seem so to the eyes of
fools.

To Me, then, you must run in every
judgment:

You must not lean on what you think.
For the just man will not be troubled
Whatever comes to him from God.

And though an unjust charge be brought
against him,

He will not care much.

Nor will he shout in empty joy,

If others reasonably excuse him.

For he considers how that I am He that
looks into the heart and reins,

And that I judge not by the face or human
appearance.

For often in My eyes that is found blamable
Which men think fit to praise.

Lord God, just Judge, strong and pa-
tient,

Who knowest the frailty and wickedness of
men,

Be my strength and all my trust;

For my conscience is not enough for me!

Thou knowest what I do not know:

Therefore, whenever blamed, I should have
humbled self and borne it meekly.

As often as I have not,

Pardon me in Thy mercy:

And give me grace again to bear more
suffering!

For Thy abundant mercy gives me more
hope for pardon

Than the justice which I imagine in myself
for the defence of my hidden conscience.

And if I am conscious of nothing,

Yet in that I cannot justify myself,

Because, without Thy mercy, none that
lives shall be justified before Thee.

CHAPTER 47

THAT ANY GRIEVOUS THING MUST BE BORNE
FOR EVERLASTING LIFE

MY son,
Be not broken by the toils taken
up for Me,
Nor cast down wholly by tribulations,
But always strengthened and consoled by
My promise.
I can repay beyond all limit and measure!

You shall not toil here long,
Nor always be weighed down with grief.
Wait awhile:
You will soon see an end of evils:
An hour will come,
And all the work and noise shall stop.
What passes by with time
Is small and brief!

Do what you have to do;
Work faithfully in My vineyard:
I will be your wages!

Write, read, sing,
Groan, keep silence, pray,
Bear crosses bravely:
Eternal life is worth all these and greater
battles!
Some day peace shall come; God knows
how soon.
And then neither day nor night shall be,
such as now are,
But light eternal and infinite brightness,
Firm peace, and rest secure.
You shall not then say,
“Who shall deliver me from the body of
this death?”
You shall not cry,
“Woe is me, that my sojourning is pro-
longed!”
For death shall be thrown down,
And there shall be health that cannot
fail;
No anxiety,
Blessed joy,
Sweet, comely company.

O, had you seen the everlasting wreaths
worn by the Saints in Heaven,
And how gloriously, too, now they shout
for joy;
Who once were thought contemptible to
this world and, as it were, unworthy
of life,
You would, I know, straightway humble
yourself even to the earth,
And rather wish to be below all, than to
be lord of one:
You would not long for joyful days of this
life;
But would rather be glad to be tried for
God,
And think it mighty gain to be accounted
nothing among men!
O, if all this touched you and went deeply
to your heart,
How would you dare even once to com-
plain?
Are not all toilsome things worth bearing
for eternal life?

It is no little thing
To win or lose God's kingdom !

Then lift your eyes on high !
See,
I and all my Saints with Me,
Who in this world have had great strife !
Now they are glad ;
Now they are consoled ;
Now they are safe ;
Now they are at rest,
And for ever in My Father's kingdom shall
abide with Me !

CHAPTER 48

OF THE ETERNAL DAY AND OF THE STRAITS
OF THIS LIFE

O BLESSED mansion of the City
above!

O most bright day of eternity!
The day that night darkens not;
On which high truth for ever sheds its light!
Day ever joyful, ever safe,
And never changing to its contrary!
O that that day had burst on us,
And all these things of time had met their
end!

Upon the Saints indeed it shineth brilliant
in its beauty everlasting;

But to the wanderers on earth only from far
and through a mirror.

Well know the citizens of Heaven its joy:
The exiles, sons of Eve, groan over their
long and bitter waiting here.

The days of this our time are few and evil,
Full of sorrows and of troubles,

Where man by many a sin is stained,
By many a passion snared,
With many a fear oppressed,
With many a care racked,
With many a curiosity distracted,
Tangled in many vanities,
Girded with the waves of many errors,
Worn with toil,
Weighted with temptation,
Weakened with luxury,
Tortured by want.

O when shall be the end of these evils?
And when shall I be free of the wretched
bondage of my faults?
When call to mind Thee only, Lord?
When rejoice my fill in Thee?
When shall I be wholly quit of hindrance,
Truly set free without a weight on mind or
body?
When shall there be solid peace,
Peace secure,
Peace that cannot be broken,

Within, without,
Peace firm on all sides?
When shall I, good Jesus, stand to look on
Thee?
When shall I gaze upon the glory of Thy
kingdom?
When wilt Thou be all in all to me?
O when shall I be with Thee in Thy king-
dom;
Which thou hast from eternity prepared
for Thy beloved?

I am left poor and exiled in a foeman's
land,
Where there are daily wars
And great misfortunes.

Comfort my exile;
Soften my grief;
For all my longing soul sighs up to
Thee!
All that this world offers me as comfort
Is all a burden to me!

I would enjoy Thee intimately;
But I cannot grasp Thee.
I long to cleave to heavenly things;
But things of time and passions not mor-
tified oppose me.
In mind I would be lord of all;
But by my flesh against my will I am
bound down to slavery.
So I, unhappy man, am fighting with
myself,
And am become a burden to myself,
The spirit longing to be on high, the flesh
below!
O what I suffer within me while with the
mind I handle things of Heaven:
And, straightway, when I pray, a crowd of
fleshly thoughts comes over me.

Go not far from me, O my God!
Turn not away in anger from Thy ser-
vant!
Flash forth Thy lightning and scatter
them!

Shoot out Thine arrows and let all the
enemy's fancies routed be!

Call home my senses unto Thee:

Make me forget all worldly things:

Let me quickly cast aside and spurn the
foul shapes of sin.

Help me, eternal Truth,

That no vanity may move me!

O come, celestial sweetness,

And from Thy face let all uncleanness fly!

Pardon me, too, and forgive me, of Thy
mercy,

When in my prayer I think of other things
but Thee.

For I confess the truth:

I am accustomed to be much distracted.

Often I am not

Where my body stands or sits;

But I am rather there

Where I am borne upon the wings of
thoughts.

Where my thoughts are, there am I:
And my thoughts are often
Where is what I love.
That often comes across my mind
Which naturally pleases or from habit
suits me.
Wherefore Thou the Truth didst plainly
say:
“Where your treasure is
There, too, is your heart.”
If I love Heaven,
Willingly I ponder heavenly things.
If I love the world,
I rejoice at worldly joys,
And am sad at its adversities.
If I love the flesh,
I often conjure up what is of the flesh.
If I love the spirit,
I delight to think on spiritual things.
For whatever I love,
Of that I like to talk and hear,
And carry pictures of such things home
with me.

But blessed is the man
Who, for Thy sake, O Lord, bids every
creature go;
Treats nature violently;
And with fervor of spirit crucifies the
passions of the flesh;
To offer Thee a prayer that shall be pure,
When the sky of conscience is no longer
clouded,
And to be fit to join the Angel choirs,
All earthly things barred out, without him
and within!

CHAPTER 49

OF THE DESIRE FOR LIFE ETERNAL AND HOW
MUCH IS PROMISED UNTO THOSE THAT FIGHT

MY son
When you feel poured on you from
above

A longing for eternal bliss,
And you desire to go out from the dwelling
of the body,

To dwell without the shadow of a change
upon My brightness;

Enlarge your heart and take this holy
inspiration with all desire.

Give great, great thanks unto the goodness
from on high,

Which deals with you so condescendingly,
Visits you kindly,

Rouses you ardently,

Raises you mightily,

That by your weight you slip not back
again to earthly things.

For not by your own thought or endeavor
do you get it,

But merely by the condescension of the
grace of Heaven and of God's looking
on you;

That you may go on in virtues and in
greater humility,

And make you ready for coming fights,

And try to cleave to Me with all your
heart's affection,

And serve Me with a fervent will.

My son,

Often the fire is bright,

But without smoke the flame does not ascend.

So some men's longings burn unto celestial
things,

And yet they are not free from the tempta-
tion of carnal affection.

In asking things so zealously of God,

They do not always act with a quite pure
motive for God's honor.

And this is often your longing, too,

Which you said would be so anxious.

That is not pure and perfect
Which has been stained with thoughts of
your own profit.

Seek not what pleases you and profits
you,

But what is pleasing unto Me and honors
Me.

For, if you think rightly of it,
My appointment you ought to put before
your wishes,

And before all you long for,
And to follow it.

I know what you desire,
And I have heard your frequent groans.
You would be now in the liberty of glory
of the sons of God.

Now the eternal home delights you, and
Heaven, your country, full of joy,
But that hour is not yet come.

There is another time yet,
A time of war, I mean, a time of toil, a time
of proof.

Now you would be filled with the good that
is highest;

But you cannot get that now.

I am:

Wait for Me, saith the Lord, until the
kingdom of God come.

You must be proved still on earth,
And tried in much.

Consolation shall now and then be given
you;

But fulness and abundance are not granted.
Be of good heart, then, and play the man
In doing and in suffering things that cross
your nature.

You must put the new man on you,
And change into another man.

Often you must do the things you would
not,

And leave the things you would.

What pleases others shall proceed:

What pleases you shall not get on.

When others speak they shall be listened to:

What you say shall be held as nothing.

Others shall ask and get:

You shall ask and not succeed.

The names of others shall be loud on
men's lips:

Men shall be silent about you.

This or that business shall be put into an-
other's hands:

You shall be judged of use for nothing.

From all this nature will sometimes get
sad,

And it will be no small thing

If you bear in silence.

In these ways and many like ones
The faithful servant of the Lord is often
tried

To see how far he can deny himself and
break himself in all things.

Scarce is there anything in which you
need to die so much

As when you see and suffer things that cross
your will;
And most of all when bidden to do what
does not suit
And seems useless to you.
And because, set under rule, you dare not
say a word against the higher power,
You think it hard to move at some one's
nod,
And put what you feel all aside.

But think, My son, of the fruit of these
toils,
Their quick end and very great reward,
And you will have no trouble from them,
But a great comfort for your patience.
For even for this little bit of will you now
give freely over
You shall for ever have your will in heaven !
There shall you find all you wish,
All you can desire !
There at your hand shall be abundance of
all good,

And no fear of loss.
There shall your will be always one with
Mine,
And wish for nothing of its own or apart
from Me.

There no one shall resist you,
No one complain of you,
No one hinder you,
Nothing stand in your way;
But together all you want shall there be
present to you,
And shall refresh your every longing and
fill it to the full!

There will I give you glory for the affronts
you suffered,
A cloak of praise for sorrow,
And for the lowest place a kingly seat for
evermore!

There shall the fruit of obedience ap-
pear;
The toil of penitence shall then rejoice;
And lowly subjection shall be gloriously
crowned.

Bend, then, humbly under the hands of
all,
And let it be no care to you who speaks
or who commands;
But greatly care for this,
That, be it superior, junior, or equal who
asks a thing from you
By word or sign,
You take it all for good,
And try to fulfil it with real will
One may seek this, one that;
One may boast of this,
Another of that,
And he may be praised a thousand thou-
sand times;
But not in this, not in that, take you your
delight,
But in contempt of self,
And in what pleases Me and honors Me
alone.
This be your wish:
That God be always glorified in you,
Whether by life or death!

CHAPTER 50

HOW ONE IN DESOLATION SHOULD OFFER
HIMSELF TO THE HANDS OF GOD

LORD GOD, holy Father,
Be Thou now and for ever blessed;
Because Thy will is done,
And what Thou doest is good!
Let Thy servant find his joy in Thee,
Not in himself, nor in another;
For Thou alone art true joy,
Thou my hope, my crown,
My delight, my honor, O my Lord!
What has Thy servant,
Save what he has from Thee, unmerited?
Thine is all that Thou hast given,
And all that Thou hast done!

From my youth up I am poor and in the
midst of my toil.
My soul is sometimes sorrowful even unto
tears,
And sometimes greatly out of quiet because
of passions hanging over it.

I long for the joy of peace;
I beg the peace of Thy sons,
Who are fed by Thee in the light of con-
solation.

If Thou givest peace,
If Thou pourest on me holy joy,
Thy servant's soul shall be filled full of
music,
And pious in Thy praise!

But if Thou takest Thyself away, as very oft
Thou dost,
His soul will not be able to run the way
of Thy commandments.

His knees are bent: he smites his breast;
Because it is not with him to-day as it was
yesterday and the day before,
When Thy lantern shone about his head,
And under the shadow of Thy wings he
was protected

From temptations rushing on him.

Father, just and always to be praised,
The hour is come: Thy servant must be tried!

O Father, Whom I must love,
Meet it is
That in this hour Thy servant should en-
dure something for Thee.

Father everlasting, always to be praised,
The hour is come, which Thou didst know
from all eternity,

In which for a short time Thy servant
must faint outwardly,

But ever inwardly live on to Thee;

For a while must be despised,

Be humbled, and fail before the eyes of
man,

Be bruised by passion and by weariness;

That once again with Thee he may
arise

In the dawn of the new light,

And be made bright in Heaven!

O Holy Father!

This is Thy appointment and Thy will,

And what Thou hast ordained is come
to pass.

This is a grace unto Thy friend;
Suffering and tribulation in the world for
love of Thee,

Whenever and from whomsoever Thou
permittedst it.

Without Thy counsel and Thy provi-
dence,

And without cause, nothing is done on
earth.

It is good for me, O Lord, that Thou hast
humbled me,

That I may learn Thy ways of justice,
And throw aside all heart-elation and pre-
sumption.

Good for me that confusion has covered
my face,

That I may seek Thee to console me,
rather than men.

I have learnt, too, from this to dread Thy
unsearchable judgments,

Thou that dost afflict the righteous with the
wicked,

But all with equity and justice.

Thanks be to Thee that Thou didst not
spare my evil ways,
But didst wear me down with bitter stripes,
Bringing pain and agony on me within,
without.

None there is of all the creatures under
heaven that can console me
But Thee, O Lord my God, heavenly physi-
cian of the soul;

Who smitest and dost heal,
Bringest down to Hell and bringest back
again!

Thy discipline is over me:
Thy rod itself shall teach me.

See, loving Father, in Thy hands I am!
I bow beneath the rod of Thy correction!
Strike my back and my neck,
That I may bend my wayward steps unto
Thy will!

Make me a devoted and humble pupil, as
Thou wast wont to do,
That I may walk quite at Thy nod.

I yield myself and all I have to Thee to be
corrected:

Better to be corrected now than hereafter!

Thou knowest all and each,
And nothing in the human conscience
escapes Thee.

Before they are, Thou knowest they will
come,
And need there is none that one should
tell or warn Thee of things done on
earth.

Thou knowest what is best to help me on
my way,
And what the use of trouble is to clear the
rust of evil ways.

Do with me according to Thy pleasure!
My sinful life do not despise —
A life known to none better or more clearly
than to Thee alone!

Grant me, O Lord, to know what should
be known,

To love what should be loved,
To praise what is most pleasing to
Thee,
To esteem what seems of price to Thee,
And to blame what in Thy sight is vile!

Let me not judge according to the vision
of the outward eyes,
Nor pass a judgment from the hearing of
the ear of inexperienced men,
But distinguish with a judgment that is
true
Between the things of sight and those of
soul,
And above all to ask, ever to ask, what is
the pleasure of Thy will!
Often the senses are deceived in judging:
The lovers, too, of the world are deceived,
Loving only what they see.
Why is man better for this
That he is thought great by man?
The deceiver misleads the deceiver while
he praises him,

The vain the vain, the blind the blind, the
weak the weak,
And truly rather pours confusion on him
with his empty praise !

For "as much as each is in Thy eyes,"
So says the humble Saint Francis,
"So much he is and no more !"

CHAPTER 51

WHEN WE FAIL IN WHAT IS VERY GREAT, WE
MUST PRESS ON IN HUMBLE WORKS

MY son,
You cannot always be in fervent
longing for the virtues,
Nor stand upon the higher step of contem-
plation;
But you must now and then descend to
lower things,
Because of your original corruption,
And even against your will and with
weariness,
Carry the burden of corruptible life.
As long as you wear the mortal frame,
You will feel weariness and heaviness of
heart.
Therefore while in the flesh you must often
groan over its burden,
Because you cannot always cleave unto the
pursuits of the spirit and divine con-
templation.

Then it is well for you to betake yourself
To humble and to exterior works,
And to refresh yourself in doing good,
And, firmly confident, to wait for My
coming and the visit from on high;
To bear your exile and dryness of mind
with patience,
Till you again are visited by Me,
And freed from all disquiet.
For I will make you to forget your toils,
And enjoy peace within.
Before you I will stretch the meadows of
the Scriptures,
That with a swelling heart you may begin
to run the way of My commandments.
And you shall say:
The sufferings of this time are not worthy
to be compared
With the glory to come
That shall be revealed in us.

CHAPTER 52

THAT A MAN SHOULD NOT THINK HIMSELF
WORTHY OF CONSOLATION, BUT RATHER
WORTHY OF STRIPES

LORD,
I am not worthy of Thy consolation,
Nor of any spiritual visitation.
And so Thou dealest justly with me
When Thou leavest me poor and desolate.
For could I weep tears like the sea,
I should still not be worthy of Thy con-
solation.
So I am worthy of naught but to be
scourged and punished,
Because I grievously and often have of-
fended Thee,
And sinned exceedingly in much.
Therefore, were the matter duly weighed,
I am not worthy of even the smallest con-
solation.

But Thou, clement God and merciful,
Who dost not wish Thy works to perish,

To show the riches of Thy goodness to-
wards the vessels of Thy mercy,
Even beyond all meriting of mine,
Thou deignest to console Thy servant
Beyond the measure of man !
For Thy consolations
Are not like chattering human words.

What have I done, O Lord,
That Thou shouldst give me any consola-
tion from on high ?
I cannot think of any good I have done,
But I have ever been prone to evil ways,
And slothful in improvement.
It is true
And I cannot deny it.
Were I to say otherwise,
Thou wouldst stand against me,
And there would not be one to speak for me.
What have I merited for my sins
But Hell and everlasting fire ?
In truth, I confess that I am worthy of all
mockery and contempt,

And ought not to be named among Thy
pious souls.

Though it be hard for me to hear it,
Yet for truth sake I will bring up my sins
against myself,

That I may the easier win Thy mercy.

What shall I, guilty, say,

Full of all confusion?

I have no lips to speak save this, save this
alone:

I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned!

Pity me, pardon me!

Suffer me, therefore, that I may lament
my sorrow a little,

Before I go to a land

That is dark and covered with the mist
of death!

What dost Thou most ask of one that is
accused, a wretched sinner,

Save that he be bruised and humble himself
for his sins?

The hope of pardon has its birth

In true contrition and in humbleness of
heart.

The troubled conscience is there brought
to peace;

Lost grace is regained;

The man is saved from coming wrath;

God and the penitent soul meet each other
in a holy kiss.

A humble sorrow for one's sins

Is a sacrifice that Thou wilt take, O Lord,
Of a far sweeter savor in Thy sight than
smoke of incense!

This is the pleasant ointment, too, which
Thou didst wish poured on Thy sacred
Feet;

For Thou hast never once despised
The contrite and humble heart.

There is the place of refuge from before the
anger of the enemy;

There the soul is bettered and washed
clean,

Whatever stain has been contracted from
without.

CHAPTER 53

THAT GOD'S GRACE DOES NOT MIX WITH
A TASTE FOR EARTHLY THINGS

MY son,
My grace is precious.
It will not mingle with the outer world,
Nor with the comforts of the earth.
Thus you must cast aside all things that
hinder grace,
If you would have it pouring into you.

Seek for yourself a secret spot:
Love to dwell alone with yourself.
Ask for none to gossip with;
But rather pour forth pious prayers to God,
That you may keep your mind contrite,
your conscience pure.
Value all the world at nothing.
Put giving yourself to God before all out-
side cares.
For you cannot give yourself to Me
And take your pleasure too in passing
things.

You must get away from those you know
and love,

And keep your mind barred from every
temporal solace.

Thus blessed Peter the Apostle begs

That the faithful of Christ

Should hold themselves as strangers and
pilgrims in this world.

O how trustful will you be when death
is nigh,

If love of nothing keeps you in the world!

But this — the keeping of the heart away
from all —

Man's ailing mind grasps it not as yet,

Nor does the animal man know what the
freedom is of the interior life.

But if he really would be spiritual,

He must give up the far ones and the near,

Guarding against no one more than self.

Win the battle over yourself

And you will more easily subdue the rest.

It is a perfect victory,
This triumph over self.
The man who keeps himself in hand, —
Sense subject to reason,
Reason subject in all to Me —
He is truly the victor of himself and lord
of the world !

And if you fain would mount thus high,
Then begin like a man, and put the axe
unto the root.

Drag out and kill the hidden ill-ordered
tendency
To self and to all selfish and material good.

On this one fault — that man loves him-
self too much —

Nigh every evil hangs
That must be radically overcome.
And this once beaten and conquered,
Great peace and quietness shall straight-
way reign.

But as few try to die perfectly to self,

And never fully aim outside themselves,
Therefore they stay entangled in them-
selves

And cannot be lifted above themselves in
spirit.

But the man who longs to walk freely
with Me

Must kill all his wicked and ill-reined affec-
tions,

And not cleave from passion in selfish love
to any creature.

CHAPTER 54

OF THE DIFFERENT MOVEMENTS OF NATURE AND GRACE

MY son,
Heed carefully the movements of
nature and of grace.

For they are quite contrary and their
movements are subtle,

And their working is hardly recognized
Save by a man

Who is spiritual and interiorly enlightened.
All seek the good;

In all they say or do, men aim at some-
thing good.

So many are deceived by what seems
good.

Nature is cunning, and lures, snares,
and deceives many.

It has itself always as its end.

But grace walks simply

Turns from every evil appearance,

Puts forth no deceits,

And does all purely for God,
In Whom, as in its end, it also rests.

Nature shuns death, shuns pressure,
shuns defeat,
Would not be second,
Would not willingly be under.
But grace works at self-denial,
Fights self-indulgence,
Seeks subjection,
Wishes for defeat,
Cares not to enjoy its own liberty,
Loves to be bound by rule,
Wishes not to have command,
But ever under God to live,
Stand and be,
And for God's sake is humbly ready to bow
down
To any human creature.

Nature works for its own end,
And thinks, "What can I gain from some
one else?"

Grace rather considers not what is useful
or convenient to itself,
But what will profit many.

Nature is glad to be held high of men, and
reverenced.

But grace gives faithfully to God all honor
and glory.

Nature fears confusion and contempt.

But grace rejoices to suffer reproach for
the name of Jesus.

Nature loves leisure and quiet for the
body.

Grace cannot be idle,
But embraces toil joyfully.

Nature seeks to have curious and beauti-
ful things,

And shudders at the cheap and gross.
Grace is pleased with what is plain and
humble,

Looks not roughly on the rough,
And does not fly from wearing old garments.

Nature regards the things of time,
Is glad of earthly gains,
Is gloomy at loss,
And pricked by the least injurious word.
Grace attends to the eternal,
Cleaves not unto temporal things,
Is not disturbed when property is lost,
And is not soured when words are harsh,
Because it puts its treasure and its joy in
Heaven,
Where nothing perishes.

Nature is covetous, and is gladder to get
than to give,
Loving its own, its private store.
Grace is good, and devoted to the com-
munity,
Shuns owning things, and is content with
little,
And thinks it more blessed to give than to
receive.

Nature is inclined to creatures and to its
own flesh,
To vanities and runnings here and there.
But grace leads to God and to virtues,
Renounces creatures,
Shuns the world,
Hates the body's desires,
Restrains wandering about,
Blushes to appear in public.

Nature is glad to get some comfort from
without.
In which it can have pleasure of the senses,
But grace seeks to be consoled in God
only,
And to have pleasure in the highest good
above all visible things.

Nature does all for gain and its own
good;
Cannot do anything for nothing;
But hopes to get an equal or a better re-
turn,

Or praise, or favor, for the good it does;
And it wants its own deeds and gifts to be
thought much of.

But grace seeks nothing temporal,
And asks, for pay, naught else but God
alone;

And wants needful temporal things
No more than they can serve it to gain
the eternal.

Nature is glad of many friends and kins-
folk,

Boasts of long ancestry and noble stock,
Smiles on the powerful,
Fawns on the rich,

Applauds those that resemble it.

Grace loves even its enemies,
And a crowd of friends raises not its pride;
Pride of ancestry and birth are naught
with it,

Save when greater virtue goes with them;
It looks with kindlier eye upon the poor
than on the rich,

Shows sympathy rather with the innocent
than with the powerful;
Smiles with the truth-lover, not with the
deceiver;
Ever cheers on the good to aim at the
better gifts,
And by their virtues to be like the Son of
God.

Nature soon grumbles over want and in-
convenience.

Grace bears want with constancy.

Nature turns all things back to self,
And for itself it strives and quarrels.
Grace brings all things back to Him from
Whom at first they flow;
Ascribes no good unto itself, nor arrogantly
presumes;
Quarrels not, and puts not its own opin-
ions first,
But in all that has to do with sense and
understanding

Bows to the eternal wisdom and the di-
vine examination.

Nature seeks to know things that are
secret, and to hear the news;

Likes to be seen abroad and to have expe-
rience of many things through the
senses;

Longs for recognition and to do what brings
it praise and admiration.

But grace cares not to see what is new and
strange,

For all this is sprung from the old cor-
ruption;

Since nothing is new and lasting upon
earth.

So it teaches to rein the senses in,
To shun complacency and show;

To hide in humility what is worthy of
praise and admiration;

In everything, in every branch of knowl-
edge, to look for useful fruit,

And what brings praise and honor unto God;

Wishes no trumpeting of self or its own
deeds,
But wishes God to be blessed in His gifts,
Who gives all out of pure charity.

This grace is a supernatural light and a
special gift of God,
And properly a mark of the elect and a
pledge of eternal salvation.
It lifts a man up from things of earth
To love the things of Heaven,
And of a man of flesh makes him a spirit-
ual man.

The more, then, that nature is crushed
and conquered,
The more grace is poured into us,
And daily, by new visitations, the interior
man
Grows more like to the image of God.

CHAPTER 55

OF NATURE'S CORRUPTION AND OF THE POWER OF DIVINE GRACE

LORD GOD,
Who didst create me to Thy image
and likeness,
Grant me this grace
Which Thou hast shown to be so great
and needful for salvation:
That I may conquer my most wretched
nature,
Which drags me down to sin and ruin.
For in my flesh I feel the law of sin
Warring against the law of my mind,
And leading me captive to obey my sen-
sual being in many things.
I cannot stand against its passions,
If Thy most holy grace assist me not,
Poured like a flame upon my heart.

I need Thy grace and great grace,
If nature is to be defeated —
Nature, ever prone to evil from its youth.

For through Adam, the first man, it fell and
was through sin corrupted,
And to all men comes down the penalty for
this stain;
So that nature's self, fair and right as
formed by Thee,
Stands now for vice and for the weakness
of corrupted nature;
Because its movement, left unto itself, drags
men to evil and to lower things.
For the slight strength that has remained
to it
Is as a spark hidden in ashes.
I mean, the natural reason, folded deep in
darkness,
Still able to discern between good and evil,
And able to separate the true and false,
Though it cannot fulfil all it approves,
And possesses not the Truth's full light,
Nor has its affections healthy as of old.

Thus it is, O my God, that in the inner
man I am delighted with Thy Law,

Knowing Thy bidding will be good and
just and holy,

And I condemn all evil and sin, as things to
be shunned;

Yet with my flesh I serve the law of sin,
While I am obedient to the senses,
rather than to reason.

And thus it is that to will good is pres-
ent in me,
But the power to do it I do not find.

And thus it is that I often make many
good resolves,
But as God's grace is not there to help my
weakness,
Upon a slight resistance I fall back and fail.

And thus it is that, though I know the
way of perfect life,
And see quite clearly how I ought to act,
Yet, crushed beneath the weight of my cor-
ruption,
I do not rise to things that are more perfect.

O how much, how very much I need Thy
 grace, O Lord,
To begin,
To continue
And to perfect what is good!
Without this grace I can do nothing;
But I can do all things in Thee
When grace strengthens me!

O grace, truly heavenly!
Apart from thee we have no merits of our
 own!
Apart from thee no natural gifts have
 any weight!
Arts are nothing,
Riches nothing,
Beauty and strength are nothing,
Wit and eloquence are nothing
With Thee, Lord, without grace!
For the gifts of nature are shared by good
 and bad alike;
But grace or love is the peculiar gift of
 the elect.

Wearing this mark, they are deemed worthy
of eternal life.

So high it reaches

That no gift of prophecy,

No miracle-working,

Nor any speculation, sublime as it may be,

Is, without it, of any value.

No, not even faith, nor hope,

Nor any other virtue

Is, without charity and grace, acceptable
to Thee.

O thrice blest grace of God, that makest
the poor in spirit rich in virtues,
And the rich of much wealth humble of
heart!

Come thou, come down to me!

Fill me early with Thy consolation:

Lest my soul faint for weariness and
drought!

I pray Thee, Lord, that I may find favor
before Thee!

For Thy grace is enough for me,
Though I gain not other things, which
nature wants.

If I shall be tried and worried with many
tribulations,

I will fear no evil,

If only Thy grace stays with me.

It is my strength;

It tells me what to do and brings me
aid.

It is stronger than all foes,

And wiser than all the wise.

Mistress of truth,

Teacher of discipline,

Light of the heart,

Solace in distress!

It puts to flight my sorrow:

It takes away my fear,

It nurses my devotion,

It makes my tears to flow!

Without it, what am I? —

A withered log

A useless stump, to be cast forth!

Then let Thy grace, O Lord, ever go
before and follow,
And make me ever busy in good works,
Through Jesus Christ, Thy Son.
Amen.

CHAPTER 56

THAT WE SHOULD DENY OURSELVES AND
IMITATE CHRIST BY THE CROSS

MY son,
The more you can go out of self,
The more you can pass over into Me.
As freedom from a passion for outer things
Brings interior peace,
So giving up yourself within
Joins you to God.

I want you to learn perfect self-denial,
Resting in My will
Without a murmuring or complaining
word.

Follow Me!
I am the way,
The truth,
And the life!

Without the way you cannot walk;
Without the truth you cannot know;
Without the life you cannot live.

I am the way you ought to follow;
The truth you ought to believe,
The life you ought to hope for.
I am the way secure from harm,
The truth that cannot play you false,
The life that cannot end.
I am the straightest way,
The highest truth,
The real, the blest, the uncreated life.
If you continue in My way, you shall know
 the truth,
And the truth shall make you free
And you shall grasp eternal life.

 If you would enter into life,
Keep the Commandments.
If you would know the truth,
Believe Me.
If you would be perfect,
Sell all.
If you would be My disciple,
Deny yourself.
If you would gain the blessed life,

Despise the present life.
If you would rise high in Heaven,
Humble yourself in the world.
If you would reign with Me,
Carry the Cross with Me.
For only servants of the Cross
Find out the road of bliss and true light.

Lord Jesus,
As Thy way was strait and contemned by
the world,
Grant me to imitate Thee with contempt of
the world.
For the servant is not greater than his
lord,
Nor the pupil than his master.

Let Thy life be Thy servant's task:
For there is my salvation
And true sanctity.
Whatever else I read or hear
Neither refreshes me nor gives me full
delight.

My son,
You know all this, and you have read it
all:

If you do it, blessed shall you be!
He that hath My commands and keepeth
them,
He it is that loveth Me.
And I will love him too,
And show Myself to him,
And I will make him sit with Me in My
Father's kingdom.

Lord Jesus,
As Thy word is and Thy promise,
Let it be so indeed to me,
And let it be my lot to gain it.
I have taken, I have taken the cross from
Thy hand:
I will bear it, I will bear it to my death,
As Thou didst lay it on me!
It is a cross, a good monk's life,
But it leads on to Paradise.
I have begun:

There must be no going back,
No leaving it!

Oh, my brothers,
Go we on together:
Jesus will be one of us!
For Jesus we have taken this cross upon
us:
For Jesus let us persevere on it.
He will be our helper,
Our guide, our pioneer.
See, marching on before us goes our King
To fight upon our side!
Let us follow like men;
Let there be no fear of terrors;
Let us be ready to die valiantly in war;
Let not the charge that we desert the
cross
Be brought against our glory!

CHAPTER 57

THAT, WHEN A MAN SLIPS INTO SOME FAULTS,
HE MUST NOT BE TOO MUCH CAST DOWN

MY son,
Patience and humility in days of
trouble please Me more
Than much piety and consolation in days
of happiness.

Why does a trifle spoken against you
make you sad?

Had it been something more,
You ought not to have been troubled.

But now let it go by.

It is not the first;

It is nothing new;

And, if you live long,

It will not be the last.

Oh, you are man enough,

So long as nothing crosses you!

You counsel others well: your words can
make them strong as oak;

But when to your door comes a sudden
trial,

You fail in counsel and strength.

Think how very frail you are:

You find it ever and again in meeting little
crosses.

Yet they are for your salvation:

They and the like.

Put it from your heart as best you know
how,

And if it touches you,

Let it not cast you down, nor long entangle
you.

Bear it with patience at least,

If you cannot with joy.

Though you do not care to hear of it and
are angry at it,

Repress yourself,

And suffer nothing inordinate to pass your
lips whereby the little ones may be
scandalized.

The disturbance excited will soon calm
down,

And, when God's grace returns, the inward
smart will turn to sweetness.

I still live, saith the Lord,
Ready to help and console you more than
My wont,
If you trust Me and devoutly call upon
Me.

Be more quiet,
And gird yourself to stand still more.

All is not made vain,
If you find that you are often troubled,
or tempted grievously.

You are man: you are not God.

A thing of flesh,
No Angel.

How could you always stay in the same
state of virtue,

When the Angel in Heaven
And the first man in Paradise failed of
this?

I am He that raises into safety them that
mourn;

And those that know their weakness
I carry forward to My divinity.

Lord,
Blessed be Thy word,
Sweeter to my lips than honey and the
honeycomb!
In troubles and straits so great what were I
to do,
Didst Thou not strengthen me by Thy holy
words?
So long as I shall come at last to the haven
of salvation,
What care I how I suffer, or how much?
Give me a good end:
Give me a happy passage from the world.
Think on me, O my God,
And lead me by the straight path to Thy
kingdom!
Amen.

CHAPTER 58

OF NOT PEERING INTO THE HIGHER THINGS
AND THE SECRET JUDGMENTS OF GOD

MY son,
See you dispute not of high matters
and of God's hidden judgments:

Why he is left so abandoned,
And another is raised to grace so great:
Why, too, he is so much affected,
And another is lifted up so very high.
These things are quite beyond the grasp of
man:

No reason, no discussion, can avail to trace
the footsteps of God's judgments.

When, then, the enemy suggests these
thoughts,

Or even when some busy folk enquire,
Answer as the prophet did:

“Thou art just, O Lord,
And Thy judgment is right!”

And yet again:

“The judgments of the Lord are true,
Justified in themselves!”

My judgments must be feared,
Not discussed;
For they are not to be understood by human
intellect.

And do not ask
Nor quarrel over the merits of the Saints,
Which is holier than the other,
Or which is greater in the realms of Heaven.
Such things oftentimes breed strifes and
useless quarrels.

They nurse pride, too, and vainglory,
From which envy and dissensions follow;
While one man proudly tries to put first this
Saint,
And another, that.

The wish to know and search out such
things brings no profit,
But rather displeases the Saints.
For I am not a God of quarrels, but of
peace.

This peace lies rather in true humility
Than in exalting self.

Some are attracted with a zealous love
and greater feeling
To this Saint or to that,
But with affection rather human than
divine.

I am He that made all the Saints!
I gave them grace:
I have given them glory.
I know what each deserves.
I went before them in the blessings of My
sweetness.

I knew before the ages who My loved ones
were.

I chose them from the world:
They chose not Me.

I called them by My grace;
I drew them in My mercy.
I led them on through various tempta-
tions;

I poured upon them wondrous consola-
tions;

I gave them perseverance;
I crowned their patience.

I know them, first and last;
I embrace them all with love past telling.
I must be praised in all My Saints;
I must be blessed above all things and
 honored in each of them.
I made them so gloriously great, and pre-
 destined them when they had no merit of
 their own.
He, then, who despises one of My least
 ones
Pays no honor to the great;
For I made little and great.
And he who robs one Saint of any-
 thing
Robs Me of it, and all the rest in
 Heaven
All are one by the bond of charity.
They feel the same,
They think the same,
They love each other as one
And, what is higher far,
They love Me more than themselves and
 their merits.

For they are rapt out of themselves, and
drawn out of their own love.

They hasten all to love of Me,

In Whom they also rest with joy.

Nothing can turn their looks away,
nothing depress them;

For, full of everlasting truth,

They glow with the fire of a charity not to
be quenched.

Then silent be the discourses of all
fleshly animal men

About the state of the Saints;

Men that know not how to love aught but
their own joys.

They take away and add as they please,

Not as it pleases the everlasting truth.

In many there is ignorance,

And above all in those who, dimly en-
lightened,

Rarely can love any with a perfect spiritual
love.

They are yet much drawn

By natural affection and by human
friendship

To these Saints or to those,
And, as they find things here below,
So they think it is with things of
Heaven.

But far, incomparably far,
Are the thoughts of the imperfect
From the things the enlightened gaze
upon
Through revelation from on high.

See then, My son, that you do not
curiously handle
The things beyond your knowledge;
But rather think on this and make this
your care,
That you be found there in God's kingdom,
though you be but the least.
Even though a man should know who is
the holier, or
Is held the greater in the kingdom of
Heaven,

What would this knowledge profit him,
Unless from this knowledge he humbled
himself more before Me,
And rose up unto the greater glory of
My Name?

A far more acceptable thing to God
does he

Who thinks upon the greatness of his sins,
and the smallness of his virtues,
And how far he is away from the perfection
of the Saints,

Than he who talks about their greatness
or their littleness.

Better to pray unto the Saints with pious
prayers and tears,

And with a humble mind to implore their
glorious prayers,

Than to dig into their secrets in a vain
inquiry.

The Saints are well and very well content,
If men would learn contentment, and stop
their empty talk.

They boast not of their merits;
For they ascribe no goodness to themselves,
but all to Me,

For I have given them everything from My
unbounded charity.

So greatly are they filled with love of My
divinity,

And with a joy passing all bounds,
That there is nothing lacking to their glory:
No happiness can they want.

The higher they are in glory,
The deeper are they all in their humility,
And the nearer and the dearer are they
unto Me.

And thus you have it written:
That they cast their crowns before God,
And fell upon their faces in the presence
of the Lamb,
And adored Him that liveth for ever and
ever!

Many ask who is greater in God's king-
dom

Who know not if they shall be worthy to be
reckoned with the least!

It is a great thing to be even the least in
Heaven,

Where all are great.

For all shall be called and shall be sons
of God.

The smallest shall be as a thousand,
And a sinner of a hundred years shall die.

For when Christ's disciples asked who was
the greater in the kingdom of Heaven,

This was the answer:

“Unless you be converted and become as
little children,

Ye shall not enter into the kingdom of
Heaven.

Whosoever, therefore, shall humble self as
this little child,

He is the greater in the kingdom of
Heaven.”

Woe unto those who scorn freely to hum-
ble themselves with little children:

The low door of the heavenly kingdom will
not let them in.

Ay, and woe unto the rich,

Who have their comforts here !

For, when the poor enter into the kingdom
of God,

They shall stand without and wail.

Rejoice, ye humble,

And exult, ye poor !

For yours is the kingdom of God,

If ye but walk in truth.

CHAPTER 59

THAT ALL HOPE AND TRUST IS TO BE FIXED
IN GOD ALONE

WHAT is the trust, O Lord, I have in
this life,

Or what my greatest comfort in all I see
beneath the sky?

Is it not Thou, Lord my God,
Whose mercy none can tell?

Where was it well with me apart from
Thee?

Or when could it be ill when Thou wert
near?

Rather would I be poor for Thee
Than rich without Thee.

I choose to wander with Thee on earth
Rather than have Heaven without Thee.

Where Thou art, is Heaven;

And, where Thou art not,

Death and Hell!

Thou art my longing;

And therefore I must moan for Thee, and
cry, and pray.

In no one, — in no one, can I fully trust
To help me in my needs when most I
want it

Save in Thee, my God, alone!
Thou art my hope, my trust,
My consoler Thou, and Friend most
faithful in all!

All seek their own:

Thou aimest only at my salvation and my
progress,

And turnest all to good for me.

Though Thou expose me to various temp-
tations and crosses,

All this Thou ordainest to my good,

Thou who in a thousand ways art wont to
prove Thy loved ones.

In this proof Thou shouldst not less be
loved and praised

Than if Thou wert to fill me with heavenly
consolations.

Therefore in Thee, Lord God, I put all my
hope and refuge,

On Thee I lay all my trouble and distress !

For I find all weak and unsteady
That I see apart from Thee.

Numbers of friends will help me not ;
Brave comrades cannot aid me ;
Wise counsellors can give no useful answer ;
The books of the learned yield no comfort ;

No precious substance can secure me ;
No secret and pleasant place can save me ;

If Thou dost not aid, assist, comfort, console, instruct, and guard !

For all that seems to lead to peace and happiness

Is nothing without Thee,

And truly brings no jot of happiness.

Therefore Thou art the end of every good,

The pinnacle of life,

The depth of eloquence ;

And to hope in Thee past all
Is Thy servants' strongest solace
To Thee my eyes are turned;
In Thee I trust, my God, Father of
mercies !

Bless and sanctify my soul with blessing
from above,
That it may be Thy holy dwelling-
place,
The home of Thy eternal glory;
And that nothing may be found within the
temple of Thy dignity
To offend the eyes of Thy Majesty.
According to the greatness of Thy good-
ness
And the multitude of Thy mercies
Look on me,
And hear the prayer of Thy poor servant
So far an exile
In the region of the shadow of death !
Guard, and save Thy poor servant's
soul

Amid the many dangers of a life that
soon decays,
And with Thy grace to keep him company,
Guide him along the road of peace
Unto his native country
Of everlasting brightness!
Amen.

And the young spirits of the blue
 And with the stars in long thin
 Guide him along the road of
 Into his native country
 Of everlasting happiness

And the young spirits of the blue
 And with the stars in long thin
 Guide him along the road of
 Into his native country
 Of everlasting happiness

And the young spirits of the blue
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