

# God and His Perfections

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*Permissu Superiorum*

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Approbation

"I have carefully read over this Little Volume for Children and have found nothing whatsoever in it contrary to the doctrine of Holy Faith; but, on the contrary, a great deal to charm, instruct and edify our youthful classes, for whose benefit it has been written."

William Meagher, Vicar General, Dublin, December 14, 1855.

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## **LISTEN TO THE WORDS OF LIFE**

1. ONE day St. Antony was preaching in a town called Rimini. The people would not listen to him; so he came down from the pulpit, went out of the church, and walked till he came to the sea. He stood on the sand of the seashore, and cried out to the fishes these words: "Fishes of the sea and of the rivers, listen to me. I wanted to preach to the people, but they would not listen to me; so I am going to preach to you."

When he had said these words an immense number of fishes, of all sizes, came

round him, covering all the sea. The little fishes came first, behind them the middle-sized fishes, and then the great fishes. They were all in good order and very quiet, with their heads out of the water, turned towards the preacher.

Then St. Antony spoke to them these words: "Fishes, my little brethren, you ought to thank your Creator for all the good things he has given you. First, there is the beautiful water in which you live, the sea water as well as the fresh water, whichever you like best. Then there are the holes and caves in the rocks, where you can go when a storm troubles the water. God has made you able to swim, and given you all that you eat to preserve your lives. In the great deluge, when it rained on the earth for forty days and forty nights, all the other animals were drowned, and you only were kept alive. When the prophet Jonas was thrown into the sea, God gave him to you to keep him alive for three days. When the people came to Jesus, and asked to pay the tribute, you helped him to pay it. You were the food of Jesus Christ the Son of God, before and after his resurrection. Now, when you remember all these great favors you have received from God, you ought to bless him and thank him even more than other creatures."

When the fishes heard these words they opened their mouths, and bowed their heads, and showed how great was their desire to thank God. Then St. Antony, full of joy, cried out: "Blessed be the great God, because the fishes praise him when men refuse to praise him." And now when the people heard what a wonderful thing had happened to the fishes, they all went out to see it, and, kneeling down before St. Antony, they asked him to pardon them, which he did. Then the Saint turned round, gave his blessing to the fishes and sent them all away.

So Almighty God worked a miracle, to let us see how much he desires that we should listen to his holy word which is full of power -- *Ecc. viii*. Little children, be at least as good as the fishes, and listen to the words of life which Almighty God speaks to you.

2. Sometimes children will attend to any little trifle, instead of listening to an instruction.

There was a great town called Athens. The soldiers were on their way to this town. They were coming to destroy it. The people of the town were in great fear; and they met together to consult what should be done to save the town.

Amongst them was one very wise man, called Demosthenes, who stood up and began to speak to them. The people would not listen to him. They talked, and made a great noise, so that he could not be heard. Demosthenes therefore gave over speaking, and was silent for a few minutes; then he cried out to the people that he had a story to tell them. When they heard that he was going to tell them a story, they became very quiet, silent, and attentive.

He began his story, "There were two men," he said, "travelling with one another. One of them had hired an ass from the other. In the middle of the day they stopped. He who had hired the ass, got off it; and as the sun was very hot, he sat down in the shadow of the ass. 'No', said the other; 'you hired my ass, but you did not hire its shadow.' When Demosthenes had said this, he gave over speaking. The people called out to him to go on. Then he said to them: "My good people, when I speak to you about the shadow of an ass, you listen to me; but when I speak to you about the safety of the town, you will not listen." So a little child will let itself be distracted by the shadow of a fly or any trifle, instead of listening to the Word of God.

### **FIRST COMMUNIONS, MISSIONS, RETREATS**

If you are getting ready for the day of your first communion, the greatest day of your life, or if you are making a retreat, or at a mission, I will tell you what to do;

1. Be sure that God sends down most wonderful graces and blessings on missions and retreats. God will give to you in particular such graces as you never received before, and your heart will be entirely changed. You may not feel this during the first day or two, but have patience and it will come.

2. to the mission, or retreat, or instruction for first communion, ask others to go. *James v.*, "He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins."

3. Come to every instruction. If you lose one instruction, it is like losing a link the middle of a chain, and perhaps you lose the most important instruction, and the very one which would do you most good.

4. From the beginning of the mission or retreat do not commit any more the sins you were accustomed to commit, cut yourself off from them as you cut a stick in two with a knife.

5. From the beginning of the mission say your morning and night prayers, and practice the other devotions recommended, daily Mass, grace before and after meals, spiritual reading, rosary, evening examination of conscience; also accustom yourself to make each day a meditation which you may continue during the rest of your life.

6. Avoid not only bad, but all company as much as possible. Jesus Christ went into the desert for forty days to avoid the company of others. *Osee ii.*, "I will lead her into the wilderness and speak to her heart."

7. Keep silence and talk as little as possible. *Eccles. v.*, "Let thy words be few." The more silent your tongue is, the more the voice of God will speak to your heart. The

greatest thing you have to do at a mission or retreat is to make a good confession: it is well to make a general confession, or, at least, a confession of the sins since your last general confession. If any one has concealed a mortal sin in confession, he will confess it during the retreat or mission, at least let him say at confession, "Please, Father, there is something I am afraid to tell." If you doubt about anything, say, "Father, I have a doubt."

8. Write, if you can, on paper your good resolutions and a Rule of Life for yourself, that is, what prayers you will say, what good things you will do every day. Keep this paper in your room, and read it very often. A little girl at school, during a retreat, wrote her good resolutions and rule of life on a paper. When she left school she forgot her duty to God for several years. One day she happened to go into a room. She opened a drawer, and saw in it a paper. She opened the paper, and behold, it was the very paper on which she had written her good resolutions and rule of life during the retreat at school! Her hand trembled while she was reading that rule of life, which she had forgotten long since. When she remember how happy she had been in that retreat, she burst into tears. The reading of that paper changed her heart. On that spot, and with that paper in her hand and with her eyes lifted up to God, she determined to be good again, and keep her rule of life, and be happy again as she was before.

9. Pray very much during the retreat or mission. If you pray much, and well, and from your heart, you are sure to make a good retreat. If you do not pray fervently, you are sure not to make a good retreat.

10. A mission or retreat is a good time to find out the will of God about your vocation.

11. In a mission or retreat, you can if you like, read *these books* to help you to meditate on the instructions you hear.

### **SERMONS, INSTRUCTIONS, CATECHISMS, SPIRITUAL READING**

I will tell you what you should do when you hear the Word of God in a sermon, or instruction, or a catechism, or when you read it in a good book.

1. Your dinner does you very little good, unless you have an appetite for it; so hearing God's word will do you very little good, unless you have an appetite for it, and a desire to hear it. If you do not feel this desire, at least wish for it, and pray for it, and it will be given to you; for it is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, called the gift of "understanding."

2. Do not go to an instruction through mere curiosity, for example to hear how somebody preaches, nor only because you are obliged to go, and you would be scolded if you were absent. Go to hear God's word, because it is able to save your

soul -- *James i. 21.*

3. What you hear in an instruction is not the word of a man, but it is the Word of God. "You receive my word," says St. Paul, "not as the word of man, but, as it is indeed, the word of God." *1. Thess.* So say in your heart: "My God, I believe that you yourself will speak to me in this instruction. "

4. Listen with attention. The sin of Adam has made our minds very weak, and we cannot always keep our attention fixed; but do not be willfully inattentive.

5. In almost every instruction you hear something recommended which you feel in your heart just suits you. This is a particular light which God sends from Heaven into your heart. say then to yourself, now I will begin this very day to do that thing. "Be ye doers of the word of God, and not hearers only." *James i.*

6. When a little bird comes to the river to drink, it does not keep its beak in the water all the time; but it lifts up sometimes, to let the water go down its throat. So when you are reading a good book, stop sometimes to let what you read, and especially what you feel most, go into your heart. 7. When you have eaten your dinner, you keep the food in your stomach, to feed your body. So when you have heard an instruction keep some of it in your mind, to think about afterwards, and feed your soul with it. In the stable of Bethlehem there were the infant Jesus, Mary his mother, and Joseph and the shepherds. When the shepherds were gone away, Mary, who was full of Divine Wisdom, kept the words of these poor ignorant shepherds in her heart, and thought of them, and meditated on them. *Luke ii.*

If you will not listen to the words of his life see what may happen to you. St. Francis once gave a great mission in the town of Naples. Several nights before the mission began, he went round through the streets to every house. He knocked at each door as we went along, and when it was opened, he said: "Please, for the love of God, to come to the mission." In a certain house in one of the streets there was living a very wicked woman; her name was Catherine. St. Francis came to the door of Catherine's house, and when it was opened, he said: "Please, for the love of God, to come to the mission." Catherine answered, "No, I will not come to the mission." St. Francis left the house, and went on his way. The next evening St. Francis came again to Catherine's house, and knocked on the door. The door was opened, "How is Catherine?" said St. Francis, "Catherine!" a voice answered -- "Catherine is dead!" "Then," said St. Francis, let us go up stairs and see the dead body." They all walked up stairs and went into a room where a dead body was laid on a bed. It was the dead body of the wicked Catherine, who only the night before had said: "I will not go to the mission." They stood round the dead body. St. Francis stood in front of it, and looked at the pale body, which had no life in it; then he said with a loud voice: "Oh! Catherine, Catherine, tell me, in the name of God I command you to tell me, where are you -- where is your soul?" A moment passed, and that cold dead body opened

its mouth, and the dead tongue moved in the inside of the mouth, and that dead tongue answered the question of St. Francis, and said in a frightful voice: "I am in Hell." Poor Catherine! you lived many years and committed many dreadful mortal sins; still the good God did not send you to Hell. Then St. Francis came to you from God, and he asked you to listen to him, and be converted, and you answered: "No, I will not listen." Then the just God sent you to Hell. In a like manner, if there be any child who will not listen to the instructions which are given to it, let that child tremble, because perhaps it is near to Hell as Catherine was. Listen, then, to the first instruction, and you will hear of "God and his perfections."

### **THE GREATNESS OF ALMIGHTY GOD**

"Who shall understand the ways of God?" -- *Ecc. xvi. 21*. One day St. Augustine, the great bishop, was walking on the sea-shore. He was thinking about the greatness of Almighty God. As he went along he saw a little child sitting close to the sea. This child had a small spoon in its hand, and was dipping the spoon into the sea. St. Augustine went to the child and said, "My little child, why are you dipping that spoon into the water?" The child answered: "I want to empty all the water out of the sea." "But," said St. Augustine, "it is of no use for you to try to empty the great sea with that little spoon; if you were to work forever you could not do it." The child then said: "I am an angel from Heaven; and God has sent me to tell you that it would be easier for me to empty the sea with this little spoon, than for you to understand all about the greatness of God." Who hath known the mind of the Lord (*Rom. ii. 30*) -- the greatness of God? Still, you may know something of God.

### **GOD IS ETERNAL**

1. God always was. Before the sun shone on the earth, before a grain of sand was made, God was. Before the millions of millions of years which are passed away, God was; for he never had a beginning. This book which you are reading was made -- somebody made the paper for it, and somebody printed it; but God was not made by anybody -- he always was of himself.

2. God will never have an end: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." -- *Heb. i. 8*. All creatures perish and die, but God will never die; "They shall perish, but thou shalt continue." -- *Heb. i. 11*. The hard stones are worn away by the winds and the rains; the grass dies; the flowers fade away; the leaves drop off the trees. The birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, breath out their last breath; the beasts perish in the fields; empires, and kingdoms, and nations, pass away; our bodies go into dust, because God has said: "Thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return." The stars will fall from Heaven: the Heavens and the Earth will pass away; and last of all death, which destroys all other things, will itself be destroyed: and when the Heavens and the Earth shall have passed away, God will make a new and more beautiful Heavens and Earth (*Apoc. 21*); and from the dust of the body in the grave he will make a more

beautiful body, shining like the sun in its brightness. So all things perish and die; only God lives for ever and ever.

3. All eternity is present before God. Look at the clock -- it is just one minute past twelve o'clock. That one minute is present to us; but the minute before it, and the minute after it, are not present to us. It is not so with god. *Job x. 7.* "Are thy days, O God, as the days of man?" All the years that are past, and all the years that are to come, are present before God just as much as this present minute. You cannot understand this. Take then, a very long stick, and put it close before your eyes. You see the middle of it quite well, but you cannot see the ends of it so well; because your eye is too weak. But the all-seeing eye of God can see not only the middle, but also the beginning and the end of all things. *Jer. xxii. 23.* "Am I, think ye, a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off." So all things, past and to come, are always present before God. Where, then, is this great God? what place is he in?

### **GOD IS EVERYWHERE**

1. "Of his greatness there is no end." -- Ps. cxliv. 3. He is in Heaven, in the blue skies, in the air which you breath, in the rain, and in the sunshine. God is on the earth, and on all the length and breadth of it; he is in the deep waters of the sea. God is in the green fields where you walk, in the streets through which you pass; he is in the house in which you live -- in the room where you sit down. God is in the school where you learn your lessons -- in the chapel where you say your prayers. He is in the shop where you work -- he is in the town full of people, in the sandy desert where no foot of man ever trod. God fills you more than water fills a sponge. God is in your heart, and he sees all your thoughts; he is with you, and he hears all your words. "No thought escapeth him, no word can hide itself from him." -- *Ecclus. 42.* You are in God as a bird is in the air, or a fish in the water. If you stir your hand or your foot, God is there to help you. God is in the light and in the dark; the light and the dark are the same to him; he sees in the light as he sees in the dark -- the dark is not dark to God. -- *Ps. cxxxviii.*

2. *How is God present everywhere?* How are you present yourself anywhere? Your hand is present in one place, your foot in another place, so that your hand is not where your foot is. but it is not so with God. God is a pure spirit, without a body. It is not as if part of God was in one place and part of him in another place. God is all everywhere. For example, God is in your heart with his whole self. The three persons of the Blessed Trinity are whole and entire in your heart, with all their wisdom, and power, and greatness. So God is in your heart just the same as he is on his throne in heaven, where all the angels fall down before him and adore him, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come." *Apoc. iv.* In the same manner, God is present everywhere, his whole self, in every atom of the air, in every speck of the universe. And there is but one God, who is *all and entire* everywhere, and *all and entire* in every part of everywhere. Will you

then let a frightful mortal sin go into your heart, where all God's sanctity is, where all his almighty power is, which can cast both your body and soul into hell?

3. A little boy wanted to do a very wicked thing. He said to himself, now I should be ashamed for anybody to see me doing this wicked thing, so I know what I will do: at night, when it is dark, I will shut myself up in a room, and lock the door, and then when I am alone by myself in the dark room, and nobody sees me, then I will do the wicked thing. That foolish boy knew not that the great Almighty God was in the dark room, and that he sees in the dark as he sees in the light -- that "in him we live, move, and have our being." -- *Acts. xvii. 28.*

4. In a town, the name of which is not known, there lived a woman called Thais. She led a very wicked life; for her mother, instead of teaching her what was good, had taught her all that was bad. The scandal which Thais gave was known throughout the whole country, and all good people lamented her bad example, and the injury which it did to souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Still, in the midst of her wicked deeds there was one good thing; she had never forgot a lesson which she had learned in her childhood, that "there is a God who will reward the just and punish the wicked." Perhaps it was because she thought sometimes about this great truth, which she had learned in the catechism, that God was so good to her.

God wished to save her from Hell, so he put it into the heart of a holy monk, called Paphnucius to go and speak to her, and try to convert her. Paphnucius knew that if he went dressed like a monk, she would not speak to him, so he put on another dress, took some money, and set off on horseback. His journey was a long one. When he came near the house of Thais, she was standing at the window, and when she saw that he wanted to speak to her, she made a sign for him to come in. Paphnucius therefore got off his horse, and went into the room where Thais was alone by herself. "What is that you want?" said Thais. "What have you come to speak to me about?" Paphnucius said: "It is a very important thing that I have to say to you, but I do not want anybody to hear it except you." "But," said Thais, "we are alone now; there is nobody in this room except you and me." "Yes," said Paphnucius, "there is some one else here." "Who is it?" said Thais, "for I see no one." Then Paphnucius answered: "There is the great God present here -- that God who sees all your grievous sins, the scandals you have committed, the souls you have ruined -- that God who can cast both your body and soul into Hell, is present here, he sees you, he is looking at you now at this moment."

These words, "God is present," struck the heart of Thais, and the grace of God went into her heart. She turned pale, and trembled, and fell on her knees, and the tears ran down from her eyes. "O father!" she said, "pray for me, that God may have mercy on my poor soul. Lay upon me any penance you please, and I will do it. I ask only three hours, and then I will do any thing you bid me."



She spent the three hours well. About one hour after she had been talking with Paphnucius, there was a large fire burning in the market-place, and the crowds of people were standing round in wonder. Thais had taken all the beautiful things in her house, and all her fine dresses, which had so often been the occasion of sin; she had them all put in a heap in the middle of the market-place; then she took a light, and set fire to them. While they were burning, she cried out to the people who stood round: "Let those who have followed me in my sins follow me in my repentance." Nothing remained but a heap of black ashes. The crowds went away.

Then Thais went back to Paphnucius, ready to do whatever he should bid her for the salvation of her soul. He led her therefore, to a convent, put her into a small room, and put a seal on the door, that nobody might go in to disturb her. There was a small window in the room, through which he desire the sisters to give her every day a little bread and water. When Paphnucius was going away, she said to him: "Father, tell me how I must pray to God." "You are not worthy," he said, "to have God's holy name on your lips, or to lift up to him your hands with which you have committed so many sins. You shall say only one prayer, and this shall be your prayer: "O thou who didst create me, have mercy on me.'" Three years passed, and the sisters heard her always, night and day, weeping and crying out: "O thou who didst create me, have mercy on me." At the end of three years, St. Paul, a holy monk, prayed to God to know if her sins were pardoned. Almighty God showed to him a seat in Heaven of wonderful beauty, and told him that this seat was prepared for Thais. Then Paphnucius came back to the convent, took the seal off the door, and told her that she might come out and be with the sisters. Two weeks after this Thais was no more. She died the death of a saint. How great then are these words: *God is present; he sees me; he hears me.* In a minute they changed one of the greatest sinners into a saint. In this manner, then, my child, shall you sometimes speak to Almighty God. (Ps. cxxxviii.) "Whither, O God, shall I go from thy spirit, or wither shall I fly from thy face? If I ascend into Heaven, thou art there. If I descend into Hell, thou art there. If I take wings early in the morning, and fly to the furthers parts of the sea, even there also will thy hand lead me. And I said, perhaps darkness shall cover me, and the night shall hide me. But darkness shall not be dark to thee, and night shall be light as the day. The darkness thereof, and the light thereof, are alike to thee."

5. It is a blessed thing to remember that God is present as often as you can. There is a certain religious order of nuns. These good nuns have a beautiful way of remembering the presence of God, even when they are talking with one another, which is commonly the time when people think least of the presence of God. In the midst of there conversation, there is a moment of silence, and one of the nuns speaks these words: "My dear sisters, I remind you that God is present." Blessed is the man who in his mind shall think of the all-seeing eye of God. *Ecclus. 14.*

6. I will tell you then what to do about the presence of God.

i. *Always remember that God, your good Father is present everywhere, in the room where you are, in the road where you walk, in the place where you work, in your heart. He is always looking at you, in your work, in your sleep, in your pains, temptations, troubles, when things do not go well with you. When you walk in the sunshine, you remember that the sun is shining; so, since you walk in God, remember God. You do not see God; but if you are with a person in the dark, you know that he is there, although you do not see him. Sometimes you can simply remember that God is present; sometimes you can make an act of faith, and say, "My God, I believe that you are present." Every thing you see ought to make you think of God. The light of the sun tells you of the grace of God, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. -- John i. The beautiful flowers tell you of God's beauty; the green grass and autumn fruits of the earth speak of God's providence; the hard rocks which seem never to wear out, tell you of God's eternity. In the people whom you meet there is the image and likeness of God. Fire, and storms, and war, and fever, and famine, and death, speak of God's justice. When things we see thus remind us of God, it is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, called the gift of "knowledge." St. Paul speaks of this when he says that "the unseen things of God from the creatures of the world are clearly seen." Rom. i.*

ii. Remembering that God is present, say often some nice little short prayer to him, such as, "My God, I believe that thou art present -- I adore thee -- I hope in thee -- I love thee with all my heart; or, "Thy will be done." Fix on some short little prayer that you love and say it very often. These short prayers are called *aspirations* or *breathings* and *ejaculations* or *darts*. As they are very short, the devil has not time to come and distract you. They do not take you off from your employments, for you have not to go and fetch a prayer-book or kneel down.

iii. Remember that God is present and looking at you, offer to him *each* of your thoughts, words, and actions, with those of Jesus Christ, saying: "My Jesus, I do this for the love of you" But do your actions well and without sin. The saints became saints, because they did all their actions in the presence of God. When Saint Rose, of Lima, was twelve years old, she never forgot the presence of God for one single moment all the day long. When she was praying, or working, or eating, or walking, or speaking, she always remembered the presence of God. This is what the saints do in Heaven; they always see God. "Walk *before me*, and be perfect." Gen. xvii. "I have kept thy commandments, because *all my ways are in thy sight*" Ps. cxviii.

7. One word more on the presence of God. The room where you sleep -- what is it? It is a little *Chapel*. There is the pretty little white *Altar*, with its white altar-cloth and candlesticks, which you made for the glory of God, and the protection of the house. On the altar, betwixt the candlesticks, there is the *Cross*, the image of Jesus Christ crucified. There is also the *Picture or the image of Mary* your sweet mother, like a star shining upon you. Before the blessed Mary you perhaps put a light on Saturdays or on her festivals; and when the flowers are in the fields, you bring a fresh flower

and place it at her feet; perhaps, as in Catholic countries, you keep a lamp burning day and night before Mary. Near the altar there is the *Holy water* to send away the evil spirits from the house. There is your *Rule of Life* hung up, so that you always know how to lead the life of a Christian. Before the altar there is a *Lamp* which burns, and *Incense* which rises up. The lamp is your heart burning with the love of God. The incense is your prayer, which rises up like incense in the sight of God. When you are alone in this little chapel, there are always five persons with you, who you do not see. There is God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; there is your angel guardian to watch over you; and the Devil is there to tempt you.

What, then, are the things which you do in this little chapel? You go in there and having shut the door, you pray in secret to God, who is your Father. There you say your morning and night prayers, you make your meditation, and you read good books, you strike your breast, you kiss the ground, you look up at the cross and think of the sufferings of Jesus, you place yourself near the dear mother Mary, and say your beads to her, there you get ready for confession and the holy communion. In temptation you fly to your little chapel, and there you call on "Jesus and Mary to help you." If you have a difficult work to do, you go to your little chapel and ask Almighty God how it is to be done. If you ever feel sad and sorrowful, you go to your chapel and tell God that you are sorrowful; then a ray of light comes down from Heaven and makes you happy again. Every day when you cannot go to the great chapel where the blessed Sacrament is kept, you go into your own little chapel, you say a prayer to the blessed Sacrament. Each day also you offer a *sacrifice* on your little altar. The sacrifice is the thoughts, words, actions, and sufferings of the day, and you offer them to Jesus, saying: "My Jesus, I do all for the love of you." There also you make a retreat every year. Such is your room, a Heaven on Earth, a Paradise in the world, where you live with Almighty God and the angels. Such ought to be the room of every Christian. If you have not a chapel or an altar in your house, make one: so your house will become the house of God. "The Lord stirred up the spirit of the people to build his house." *Ag. i.* St. Theresa when a child, made her chapel in the garden. When you are in your little chapel, see how God knows your heart.

## **GOD KNOWS ALL THINGS**

If God is present everywhere, he sees all things, and knows all things. He knows every grain of sand on the earth. He sees the tops of the mountains, and the depths of the sea. he knows every flower in the fields, every tree in the forests, every creeping thing, and every beast on the face of the earth. He knows every fish that swims in the water, and every bird that flies in the air -- he knows every star in the skies. God knows every angel in Heaven, every man, woman, and child on Earth. he knows every hair on your head, every motion of your body, every thought of your heart; he sees the deep things of the heart, and the sins in the conscience; neither is there any creature which he cannot see but all things are "naked and open to his eyes" *Heb. iv.* God knows all things that are past, present, and to come. God sees

things not as they look to us, but as they are in themselves. *Rom. xi. 33.* "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God." "All wisdom is from God." *Ecc. i. 1.* If you ask God, he will give you wisdom and knowledge. He will not give you the knowledge of the stars or of the trees, he will not teach you how to get money, or to be great in this world. God will give you the wisdom of Heaven, teaching you to know your own heart, and the sins by which you have offended him. He will teach you that what you have been created for is to fear him, and to keep his commandments, and to save your soul. God is able to give what he pleases.

## **GOD IS ALMIGHTY**

1. There was a time when there was nothing except God himself; no sun, no stars, no Earth, nothing but God. All was darkness; but God spoke the word, and then the sun shone in the heavens, and the stars sparkled in the blue skies, the mountains rose up out of the Earth, the rivers flowed into the great sea, the green grass grew over the Earth, the beautiful flowers covered the fields, the trees spread out their branches. At his voice the fishes were swimming in the waters, the birds flying in the air, and the beasts were on the face of the Earth. Then God took some of the dust of the Earth, and made out of it a body, and he breathed into it the breath of life, a living soul, and there was Adam, our first father. So God made all things, and the words of God are perfect. *Deut. xxxii.* A little girl once made a pocket-handkerchief, but she had something beforehand to make it of -- she had plenty of linen and thread, besides pins and needles and scissors. When God made all things, he made them out of nothing. If God had made the world out of one little grain of sand, this would have been a wonderful thing, but he made it out of nothing -- nothing! A carpenter had to make a chair, but it cost him a great deal of labor and trouble and time to make it. He had to get wood, and saw it and cut it, and hammer and nail it. To make all things was not the least trouble or labor to Almighty God. It is as easy for God to make the whole world, as to make one little grain of sand. "He spoke, and at his word all things were made."

2. The great God, who made all things, rules over all things. All creatures in Heaven, on earth, and everywhere, obey him. "For who resisteth his will?" *Rom. ix. 19.* Every grain of sand, every leaf, every flower, every insect, every beast on the Earth, every fish in the water, every bird in the air, all obey God and do his will. Why does the sun rise and set, and the stars go forward in their path? Because God tells them. Why do the winds blow, and the trees blossom and give their fruits? Why do the rivers go on without stopping, and the swelling waves of the sea -- why do they not break in upon the Earth and drown it? why does the thunder shake the Earth, and the lightning strike the high trees? Because God commands them. In the things which are done in this world, men think they are doing only their own wills, and yet all the while they are doing the will of the great God. Kingdoms and empires rise and fall. The great towns and cities, capitals of empires, become a ruin and crumble into dust, where they are swept away by the winds. The very place where they stood is

not known, and their name is to be found only in histories. All these things are done because it is God's will. "Shall there be evil in the city which the Lord hath not done?" *Amos. iii.* the great and the wise men of Earth take counsel; and the nations of the world make wars, one against the other, and they do it to please themselves, and they know not that they are in the hand of a workman. "So God does according to his will with all, and there is none that can resist him and say to him, why hast thou done it?" *Dan. v. 32.* Therefore let us adore the great Almighty God, the Creator and Ruler of all things, saying: "Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O King of Ages: who shall not fear thee and magnify thy holy name?" *Apoc. xv.* "Be ye humbled under the mighty hand of God." *1 Pet.*

It is wonderful to see the power of God when he rewards the good and punishes the wicked.

## **GOD IS JUST**

1. "God will render to every man according to his works." *Matt. xvi.* He rewards the just even for the least little good work they do for his sake. In the Temple of Jerusalem there was a box. When the people went into the temple, many of them put money into this box for the use of the temple. Some put a pound in the box, some a shilling, some six pence or less. One day there came into the temple an old woman, who was a widow and very poor. She was so poor that all in the world she had but one farthing. When she passed the box, she took out of her pocket her one only farthing, and for the love of God she put it into the box. Now what do you think was the value of this poor little farthing work in the sight of God? Its value was so great that you could not reckon it, even if you covered all the Earth over with figures. If you go to Heaven, you will see there that farthing work shining like the sun, and the reward which that widow will get for it will last for ever. Then, my child, first have no mortal sin on your conscience. Secondly, do your works to please God, saying always, "My Jesus, I do this for the love of you." Then every little thing you do will shine like the sun before God. *Eccus. xvii.*; and for every work you will have a reward such as the "eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man understood." *Cor. ii.*

2. God punishes the wicked. He cannot bear to see a sin; it looks frightful to his eyes. (*II Peter ii.*) "The sinner brings upon himself swift destruction." For one willful mortal sin, which lasts but for the twinkling of an eye, he is burnt for ever and ever in the fire of Hell. it is just that it should be so, because the wicked sinner dares, in the presence of God and before his eyes to break his commandments. When the sinner commits a mortal sin, he, as it were, thrusts a black, frightful sin, as frightful as the Devil, and as terrible as Hell, into the very midst of the Sanctity of God, which dwells in his heart. It is doing the same as that wicked man did, who dared to lift up his hand, and to give Jesus Christ, the Son of God, a blow on the face. Besides, the

sinner knows very well, God has told him beforehand, that if he commits that mortal sin, he must go to Hell. So the sinner "makes a covenant with Hell," *ii Is. xxviii.* -- and puts himself into Hell by his own free will. For the least little sin, an idle word, *Matt. xii.*, you must burn for a long time in Purgatory. We cannot now understand the judgements of God. Sometimes "a wicked man liveth a long time in his wickedness," -- *Ecc. vii.*, -- committing thousands and thousands of mortal sins; sometimes a sinner is cut off "in the midst of his days," and sent to Hell directly after his first mortal sin. There was a little child, says St. Gregory. The father of this child was taking a walk with it in his arms. Suddenly this child began to blaspheme God. As soon as the blasphemy had come out of its mouth, the Devil came and snatched the child out of the father's arms and carried it down to Hell, to burn there for ever and ever for this one blasphemy.

But God is always good to his creatures. Perhaps he saw that if this child had lived longer, it would have committed many more sins, and he would have had to punish it more in Hell, "Yea, O Lord, just and true are thy judgements." *Apoc. xvi. 7.* Sometimes when a man has spent all his life in good works and serving God, when he grows old, he commits a mortal sin, and he dies in it, and is lost forever in Hell. There was a certain man in Egypt who had led the life of a saint for many years. his days were spent in prayer and fasting and all kinds of good works. in his old age he fell into a mortal sin, instead of repenting, he went directly and threw himself down a precipice and was killed. "How unsearchable are God's judgements." *Rom. ii. 33.* Sometimes, but very seldom, it happens that a man who has passed all his life in committing sins, at the end of his life is converted and is saved. The poor thief who was crucified along with Jesus, had been a great sinner; but a few minutes before he died, he repented and became a friend of Jesus, and the same day his soul was in Paradise. We cannot understand these things now; but we shall understand them all at the day of judgement, and then we shall say: "Thou art just, O Lord, and all thy judgements are just." All we can do is live all our days in the fear of God -- to fear him who can cast both body and soul into Hell, and to try to work out our salvation in fear and trembling. Say also sometimes, "My God, may I never, never commit a mortal sin; may I die rather than commit a mortal sin." Pray often for those who are in mortal sin. It grieves God to have to punish his creatures; but there is one thing he loves to do.

## **GOD IS MERCIFUL**

1. Almighty God loves to have pity on his poor creatures, and his tender mercies are over all his works. *Ps. cxliv. 9.* So the Son of God took a body and soul and a heart like ours. Then he let all the pains and sorrows of every one of his poor creatures come into his own heart, that he might know them, and feel how hard it is to bear them. Never was there any heart so full of sorrows and miseries as the heart of Jesus Christ. He took into his heart all the pains, labors, and fatigues and wearinesses, and disgusts, and anxieties, and heart-breakings, of every afflicted creature that shall

have lived from the days of Adam till the end of the world, and he made them all his own. Every sigh of distress, every groan of misery that has been, or shall be, went into the heart of Jesus Christ. "So he bore our infirmities, and carried our sorrows." -- *Isais liii*. When Jesus was on the Cross, he looked and saw all the pains and sorrows of his creatures, and he felt them all, and they pressed on the sacred heart of Jesus like a great heavy weight, and the strong heart of Jesus Christ could not bear the sight of them any longer, and he died of grief. So now if you have a pain or a suffering, you can go to Jesus and say: "My dear Jesus, I have a heavy pain to bear, and you know how hard it is to bear it, because you felt this very pain yourself; so, my sweet Jesus, give me patience." When you are on the bed of sickness, or when you are hungry or cold, and you cry for it, Jesus looks on you so kindly and sorrowfully, and he cries along with you. When the pain goes away, and you are glad, Jesus is glad with you.

2. But above all, God has great pity on poor sinners, "neither will he have a soul to perish," -- *II Kings xiv. 14*: and he tries so much to convert them. He knocks at the door of a sinner's heart, and says: "Poor sinner, why will you go to Hell? Be converted to me and by my friend. I am your Creator. I cannot tell how much I love you. Do you not remember that I died on the cross to save you? So change your life, and be good. you will find it so easy to be good; and you will be so happy; and after you have been good for a little time, I will come and take you to Heaven. For as I live, says Almighty God, I desire not the death of a sinner, but that he should be converted and live." Then the wicked sinner says, "No, Almighty God, I do not want to be converted; Go away from me." Then God does not get angry with the sinner, and send him to Hell as he deserves; but he is very sorry for the poor sinner, and says: "I must have patience with this poor creature, for he is very blind, and does not know what is for his good; so I will go away now and after some time I will come back again." Then the Almighty God goes away, and after a time he comes back again, and he whispers into the sinner's heart, and says: "My dear sinner, have pity on your poor soul. The time of your death is drawing very near. You are standing on the brink of Hell. I cannot bear to think of your losing your soul forever. I should be so sorry. It breaks my heart to think that after a little time, all must be over for you, and I shall never be able to love you any more."

So God comes to the sinner again, and again, and again. Then God says, "This poor sinner will not listen to me, although he knows that I love him so much: so I will try some other way. I will send him some pain, and perhaps then he will be converted; or I will send his angel guardian to put good thoughts into his heart; or, I will send the priest to talk to him. I will bid every creature to speak to his heart to convert him. The thunder, and lightning, and wars, and famines, and earthquakes, and disease, and death, and pains, and sorrows, shall tell him of the torments of Hell. The trees of the Earth, and the beasts of the fields, and the birds of the air, which do my will, shall give him an example that he may do my will. His hands and feet, which serve him, shall teach him to serve me. Sometimes when he is talking with others, he

shall hear words that are not meant for him; but I mean them for him, to strike into his heart and awaken him out of the sleep of death." When God sees that the sinner is always obstinate, and that he is obliged to call him out of the world without repenting, it is more bitter to him than if he had to die on the cross again. So God has mercy and pity on his poor creatures. II *Esdra*s x. 17. "Thou art a forgiving God, gracious, and merciful, long-suffering and full of compassion."

It is wonderful to see what care God takes of his creatures. Will a mother forget her own dear little child? If she does, God will not forget you.

## **THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD**

1. Nobody knows how God loves his creatures. "God has loved you with an everlasting love." *Jer.* xxxi. 3. He loves you before the world was made. he loved you before you were born, and when you were born. He loved you all your life. You love your parents, but you are not loving them every moment; for example, when you are asleep you are not thinking of them, so you are not loving them. Through all the great eternity, which never had a beginning, God never stopped loving and thinking about you for one single moment, just the same as if he had nobody else to think about and love except you; so God's love for you is "above all understanding." *Eph.* iii. 19. If God loves you, be sure that he will take care of you.

2. A little boy had a garden, with rose-trees in it. You would have been surprised to see how diligent this boy was in taking care of the garden. He dug up the earth all around the rose-trees. When the weather was dry he fetched water from the well, a long way off, and poured it over the rose-trees. If a sharp frosty wind was blowing, he set up boards to make a shelter. If he saw a caterpillar eating the leaves, he killed it. He was always watching till the rose came into flower; and when the rosebuds began to open, he went every morning to see how much they had opened during the night. but how great was his joy when the roses were become large, beautiful flowers, with colors as bright as the rainbow! Why, then, did this boy take so much care of his roses, for many other people passed the garden, and they cared nothing at all about the roses, and did not even look at them? Because they were his own roses, he loved them, and took care of them. This little boy had sense enough to take care of his own; and the all-wise God has he not wisdom enough to take care of his creatures, the work of his hands? This little boy had something in his heart which made him love his own roses: and do you think that God, who loved you from all eternity, now, when the time for you to live is come, loves you no longer?

3. Oh! If you only knew how God loves and takes care of all, even of his least little creatures, and he "rejoices to do good to them all." *Jer.* xxxii. God does not forget the very stones of the earth; but he watches over them, and gives to them their strength and hardness. The little flower in the woods, which perhaps nobody ever saw, God loves it, and gives to it colors so beautiful, that no king in all his glory was ever so



beautiful. The birds which fly in the air do not work or labor, and yet they eat every day as much as they like; and who is it that takes care to feed them? It is Almighty God, who scatters grains about the Earth for them to eat. The little gnat which flies in the air, and is so small that you can scarcely see it, is not forgotten by God: but he takes care of it, and gives it wings to fly with: and he loves to see it happy and flying in the sunshine. The poor worm which creeps in the earth, God takes care of it and feeds it. Does God then take so much care of the stones, and the flies, and the grass, -- and you, my child, God's greatest work, his very image and likeness, will he take no care of you?

4. Little child, I will show you what care the good God takes of you. "All things are yours." - *I Cor. iii. 22*. He has made the Earth for you to walk on; he has made the winds and the air that you might have breath to breathe, He made the sun, and the moon, and the stars, to shine upon you, -- and he makes their light to come to your eyes, so that you may see; he makes the sound comes to your ears, that you may hear. He made the stones and clay of the Earth, that you might have a house to live in: and the beasts, that you might have clothes to wear and keep you warm. He made the plants, and the things which grow on the Earth, that you might have food to eat. So "all things work together for your good." *Rom. viii*. Every time you move your hand or your foot, God is there to help you, putting strength into your arm every time you lift it. If God forgot for only one moment to help you, in that moment you would become nothing. The Lord must direct your steps. *Prov. xvi*. It is God who puts thoughts into your mind; and if he did not, you would become a fool and an idiot. "So God is kind to all, even to the unthankful." *Luke vi. 35*.

5. Near the river Jordan, and about a mile or so from Jericho, there was a monastery in which St. Gerasimus lived. One day this saint, being out of the monastery, saw a large lion on the road. He was surprised to see that it walked only with three of its legs -- the other leg did not touch the ground: it seemed to be lame. When the lion saw St. Gerasimus, it came quickly up to him, and lifted up one of its legs, and roared aloud, as if it wanted to let him know that it was in great pain. St. Gerasimus took hold of the lion's foot, and looking at it saw that a large thorn had gone into it, and that it was bleeding. He was very sorry to see the poor lion's foot bleeding; so he took hold of the thorn, and drew it out of the flesh; then he wiped away all the blood and matter, and washed it with water, and taking a nice piece of clean linen, he tied it round the lion's foot. When he had done the lion this service, he went on his way, thinking no more about it; but, happening to turn round, he saw that the lion was following him. When he came home he shut the door. The lion did not go away, but stopped at the door; and from that moment it never went away, and it became as tame as a cat or dog. It never made anybody afraid, but learnt to do a great many things for the service of the house, like the other tame beasts. Whenever the saint went out, it always followed him, and never left him for a moment. After five years St. Gerasimus died; then the lion looked very sorrowful, and went and lay down on his grave; and there it stopped for three days and three nights, during which it

would neither eat nor drink. After the three days the poor lion died. So grateful was the lion to the saint, because he had taken the thorn out of its foot.

6. Learn from this lion to be grateful to him who takes away sickness from you. Remember that it is God who sends you sickness, and it is his hand alone which takes it away again. Do not say then: "Oh, it was the medicine which cured me, or the doctor who cured me;" for it is God who makes the doctor and the medicine cure you. Say rather: "My God, I thank you, because I was sick, and you have healed me. 'Thou who redeemest my life from destruction, and healest all my diseases.' - *Ps. cii*. Blessed be your name, O great God."

7. See now what God has done for your soul.

Let us go into the chapel, where you hear mass on Sundays. Look, there is the font where you were christened. The priest at this moment is baptizing a baby. He pours a little water on its head. Into those few drops of water God puts his almighty power, to wash from the soul of the baby the dark stain of original sin and to make its soul bright and as beautiful as the spirit of an angel. "God hath loved us, and washed us from our sins." *Apoc. i*.

8. Look at those rails where you knelt when the bishop gave you the sacrament of Confirmation. The bishop anointed your forehead with a drop of oil, and into that little drop of oil God put the power and virtue of the Holy Ghost, to make your soul strong with the strength of the Holy Ghost. So that, after your confirmation, if anybody had come to you and said: "Little child, if you do not deny the faith of Jesus, you shall be killed," the Holy Ghost would have put into your heart this answer: "I will not deny the faith of Jesus. I am ready to die for the faith of Jesus." Then indeed "you were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." *Heb. vi*.

9. There is the confessional. The priest sits there holding in his hands the almighty power of Jesus Christ -- and for what? You may have committed a mortal sin -- then your soul is in chains, and these infernal chains were made by the devils in Hell, and they go round and round your poor soul as the ivy goes round a tree. You go to that confessional with sorrow in your heart, and the absolving words of the priest, as if they were the very breath of Jesus Christ, which "he breathed on the apostles" (*John xx.*), strike those chains, and they are broken in pieces; your soul is set free, free as an angel of God.

10. See that sparkling light which always hangs before the altar, in front of the tabernacle; it tells you that the flesh and blood of Jesus is always in the tabernacle, to feed your poor hungry soul: "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." *John vi*. God has scattered the stars in the skies, in every country, in every kingdom, God has left the body and blood of his Son Jesus to feed those dear souls which he loves so much.

11. In every part of the world God has also placed bishops and priests, and blessed and consecrated them, that they might help you to save your soul. In Heaven he has created countless millions of bright angels to watch over your soul, and keep you in all your ways, lest any evil should come near you. *Psalm xc.*

12. He spoke to the blessed Virgin Mary, his mother, about you, and said to her: "Mary, my dear mother, look at that little child; I love it very much; I want you to be its mother: be very kind to it, and take care of it, as you took care of me when I was a little child."

13. Many other things God made for your soul -- crosses, that you might remember that Jesus was crucified for you; beads, that you might speak to your dear mother, Mary; holy water, to send away the Devil from your soul, medals, that you might be blessed in the hour of your death; and scapulars, that, by the prayers of Mary, your soul might come soon out of Purgatory. You have seen a great shower of rain falling from the clouds. The large drops came down quickly one after another, and covered the earth with water. So quickly, and without stopping for a moment, the blessings of the providence of God are always, night and day, coming down on your body and your soul. So "all things are yours." *1 Cor. iii.*

14. But if God loves his creatures and takes so much care of them, why do we see so many poor people without bread to eat, without clothes to put on, without a house to shelter them? Others are blind, or deaf, or lame; others without their senses -- they are idiots and lunatics. remember "nothing on Earth is done without a cause, and sorrow doth not spring out of the ground." *Job v.* My dear child, be sure that whatever God does is always for the best. We do not always know why he does these things; but we shall know at the end of the world, when he will tell us why he did every thing. *John xiii. 7.*; but even now we can often see that these misfortunes are really the greatest blessings.

15. The Patriarch Jacob had twelve sons; one of them, called Joseph, who was a good boy, told his father of some very wicked thing which his brothers had done. They were very angry because Joseph had done his duty in telling of them, and determined to take revenge. One day when they were minding the sheep in the country, Joseph came to see them. When they saw Joseph coming, they said to one another, "Let us kill him." While they were thinking of killing him, some merchants happened to pass by: so they thought they would sell their brother Joseph to the merchants. When Joseph found that his brothers were going to sell him, he cried and sobbed and asked them to have pity on him, and not to sell him; but they had no pity for their poor brother. So they sold him to the merchants for twenty pieces of silver. The merchants went on their journey, and carried poor Joseph far away into the land of Egypt. What a misfortune, a little child would say, for Joseph to be sold, to leave his father and brothers, and never to hope to see them again, to be carried

away into a strange country where he knew nobody. But it is the providence of God that the greatest blessings come in the shape of the greatest misfortunes. Some years had passed, and a frightful famine was come on the land where Joseph's father and brothers were living. They heard that corn was sold in Egypt, so they took sacks and went there to buy it. When they came into Egypt, they went to the house of the ruler, because all the corn belonged to him, and, behold they found that the ruler was their own brother Joseph, whom they had sold! Joseph wept through joy to see his brothers again, he gave them plenty of corn and told them not to be afraid for having sold him, for it had been God's will that he should be sold to go into Egypt to provide corn for them in the famine. So Joseph's misfortune saved himself and his father and brothers from dying of hunger in the famine. Thus it is the providence of God that the greatest blessings should come in the shape of the greatest misfortunes.

16. One day there was great crying in the town of Bethlehem. Many hundred of poor babies had been killed. A cruel king, called Herod, wanted to kill the Infant Jesus, but he did not know which of the babies was the Infant Jesus. So he commanded the soldiers to kill all the babies. Then there was a great weeping and lamentation in Bethlehem. The mothers would not be consoled, because their babies had been killed. But in the misfortune which Providence sends there is a blessing. Those mothers were very sorrowful when they saw their babies dead, for they knew not that death was a blessing for those babies. Because they died for the sake of the Infant Jesus, they are happy forever with Jesus in Heaven.

17. St. Francis of Sales was in a town called Ancona. He wanted to sail across the sea to Venice. Seeing a boat he went to the captain and paid the price of a place in the boat. Then he went on board and sat down, waiting for the boat to set off. While he was sitting there, a person came and told him that he could not have a place, because all the boat had been hired by some one else. Francis begged that he might be allowed to stay, because he would take up very little room, and he was in a great hurry to go. However, he was not listened to, so he was obliged to take his things and go out of the boat. He thought it a great misfortune that he had lost such an opportunity of going on his journey. He stood for a while on the land, watching the boat as it set off. A favorable wind filled the sails, and carried the boat quickly over the water. The sun was bright, and the weather calm; but when the boat was far out at sea, the weather began to change. Dark clouds covered the sky, and thunders roared, and the lightnings flashed around the boat, which was tossed about by the fierce winds. For a while the sailors struggled against the storm, but the waves of the sea dashed over them, and, at last St. Francis saw the boat sink down into the sea, and everybody in the boat was drowned. St. Francis then saw that the loss of his place was a great blessing, and he learnt ever afterwards to believe that the losses and sufferings which Providence sent him were for his greater good.

18. Learn, then this great lesson: as in the bitter medicine which the doctor sends,

there is health, so in the misfortunes which Providence sends you, there are blessings. The greatest blessings come in the shape of the greatest misfortunes. Therefore, in losses, in sickness, in pain, in hunger, when somebody is cruel to you, when your parents or your friends die, in the hour of your own death, do not say "what a pity this is, what a misfortune," but say, "I believe that God has sent this loss or suffering to me, and I am sure that in some way or other it will be for my greater good. I do not see now how it will be out for my greater good, but that, in the end it will turn out for my greater advantage, I am quite certain." All things work together unto good for the just. *Rom. viii.*

19. *You must always wish for God's will to be done.* First. -- God is almighty, and he rules the world and every thing that is in it. So that from the days of creation, till the last day of the world, every thing, even the least little thing, will have been only because it was the will of God that it should be. "Good things and evil, life and death, riches and poverty, come from God." *Eccus. xi.* What we call accidents, are accidents only to us, but not to God. A man once sent two servants by different roads, wishing them to meet one another. When they met they thought it was accidental, but it was not an accident to the man who sent them. So all the accidents which happen to you come because God sends them. One thing, however, God does not wish, and that is, sin, which is in the heart of the sinner. "God hates sin." *Ps. liv.* But if you suffer any thing from the sin of another, God wishes you to have that suffering: for example, if you lose something because it is stolen, God wishes you to have that loss. "Shall there be evil in the city which the Lord hath not done?" *Amos. iii.*

Secondly. -- Every thing which happens to you is sent by God, because he sees that it is just the very best thing for you at that moment. "All things work together unto the good for the just." *Rom. viii.* "No evil shall come to them." *Ps. xc.*

20. Now, the greatest of all virtues is to be content with whatever happens to you, *because* it is the will of God; and to have in your heart the spirit of that prayer, "Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." *Matt. vi.* A man threw a stone at a dog. The dog did not look at the man, but ran at the stone, and barked at it, and bit it. Do not then be like the dog, and get vexed at the pain you suffer, instead of remembering that God sent it. If you take a stick into your hand, the stick never says, "I will not be in your hand." If you lay the stick on the ground, it never says, "I will not be laid on the ground." Little child, learn to be like the stick, and to be where Almighty God puts you. So if you have to live with people who are cross to you, be content, *because* it is the will of God. A bricklayer was making some bricks. He took some soft clay, and turned it about in his hand up and down, first on one side and then on the other. The clay was very quiet, and let the man do as he liked with it. In like manner, my child, let God do as he pleases with you. "Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God." *Ps. cxlii.*

There was a learned man who wished to save his soul. For eight long years he

prayed to God that he might find somebody who could teach him the best way of saving his soul. It happened one morning that he was praying more fervently than usual, and he heard a voice, which said "Go to the door of the church, and you will find someone standing there who will teach you which is the best way to serve me." He knew that this voice came from God, so he set off to the church to find the person who was to teach him how to serve God. When he came to the door of the church, he found no one there except a poor old beggar, who was very dirty and covered with sores. All the clothes the beggar had on were not worth three farthings. He spoke kindly to the beggar, wishing him good morning. The beggar answered: "I do not remember that I ever had a bad morning." "God prosper you." said the learned man. The beggar answered: "God always prospers me." "But," said the learned man, "I cannot understand you: What do you mean?" "I will tell you what I mean," said the beggar. "You wished me good morning; and I answered, that I had never had a bad morning, as you will see. If I am hungry, and can get nothing to eat, I say: 'My God, may your holy will be done.' If I am cold, and there is no fire, I say: 'My God, may your will be done.' If I am sick, or suffer a pain, I say: 'My God, may your will be done.' If someone injures me, I say: 'My God, may your will be done.' So I am always content, and never have a bad day. I said that God always prospered me, because, whatever God sends me, whether it be joyful or painful, sweet or bitter, I know it is for the best. So I am always prosperous and happy." Little child, go and do in like manner. Therefore, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, in life and in death, let your prayer be: "My God, may your will be done." There is another beautiful prayer: "May the most just, the most high, and the most amiable will of God be done, praised and eternally exalted, in all things." If you say this prayer once every day, you can gain each day an indulgence of one hundred days, and also a plenary indulgence once a month, and a plenary indulgence when you die.

21. *Put your Trust in the Providence of God.* -- "Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat; nor for your body, what you shall put on. Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, -- and yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them; and are not you of much more value than they? Seek, therefore, the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added to you." -- *Matthew vi.*

22. There was a very rich person who had a little child which he loved very much. He took the greatest care of this child, and never let it want for any thing. He gave it plenty to eat, and always what was best for it; its breakfast, and dinner, and supper, were always ready at the proper time. He had very good clothes made for it, of the best cloth -- clothes for summer, and warm clothes for winter. He had a fine, large house; and this child slept in one of the best rooms in the house. He sent the child to the best school he could find. If the child was sick, he sent for the most skilful doctors to cure it. The father was always thinking, day and night, how he could do good for his dear child. But the child was very foolish. It was always saying to itself: "Oh! perhaps my father will forget to give me my dinner; or perhaps he will leave me

without clothes; or perhaps, if I am sick, he will not send for the doctor." So the foolish child was always fretting itself, and behaving very ill to its good father, making long faces, and looking cross, and giving back answers. Although it remembered that all its life its father had never once forgotten it, still it was always afraid, and it was very unhappy.

The good father is Almighty God; and you are the fretful child. God made you; and he loves you so much, that nobody can tell how much he loves you. He is very wise, and knows what is best for you. He is very rich, for of his riches there is no end; and if he gives away any thing, he is not any poorer; so he is able to give to you what is best for you. He has made you a great promise, that he will every moment of your life give you what is best for you. Very often something happened to you which you thought was not for the best; and yet you found out afterwards that it was really the best for you, or at least you will find out when you are dead. Yet still you are unhappy, often thinking in yourself and saying: "Oh! I am afraid! What am I to do? Perhaps such a thing will happen! -- perhaps it will not be the best for me!" My little child, learn a lesson at least from the birds which fly in the air: they do not trouble themselves about what may come; they expect to have food to eat -- and God always feeds them. So, my dear child, "cast your care on God, for he hath care of you," *II Peter v.*; and let your daily prayer to Almighty God be: "Give us this day our daily bread." Expect and feel sure, that God will, in every thing, do what is best for you. *Psalms ciii. 28.* "All expect of thee, O God, food in season: Thou openest thy hand and fillest every living creature with blessings."

THE END

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