

Monday after Septuagesima: Obligation and Recompense in the Service of God

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will continue tomorrow the same subject of meditation as that of this morning, and we shall see: first, that the God who calls us to serve Him has a right to require everything of us without promising us anything in return; second, that nevertheless He magnificently recompenses those who give Him all. We will then make the resolution: first, not to exercise any reserve in the service of God, and to grant to grace all that it asks of us; second, often to repeat to God in the form of an ejaculatory prayer that we are wholly His, and that we desire to live only for Him. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the first commandment of the Decalogue, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength*" (Deut. vi:5).

Meditation for the Morning

Let us adore God, our first principle and our last end, claiming through this double title all our services. As being made by Him we owe Him everything, as holding everything from Him we owe it all to Him a second time. Let us render to Him under these titles our most profound homage, our adoration, and our love.

GOD HAS A RIGHT TO REQUIRE ALL FROM US, WITHOUT PROMISING US ANYTHING IN RETURN

It being a fact that we derive everything from God, therefore in giving Him all we only render to Him that which belongs to Him. If amongst men benefits received are a sufficient reason for devotion to him by whom they have been given, even when no remuneration has been expected; if a man who is great in this world expects all from those whom he calls his creatures; if a father has a right to be loved and served by his children, even though he may have no inheritance and no money to leave them, and if such as these could not fail in their duty without attracting general reprobation and being looked upon as monsters of ingratitude, how much more ought we to be wholly belonging to God, without any thought of recompense! God has a right to say to us; "If you serve Me you will only have done your duty; I do not owe you anything on that account, no more than a father considers himself obliged to take into consideration the good offices done him by his son; but, on the other hand, if you do not serve Me as you ought and as My benefits oblige you to do, I will damn you." Legislators do not pay: He who keeps the law shall be recompensed; they say: He who does not keep it shall be punished. The master does not say to his slave: Obey, and I will recompense you; he simply says: Obey, and no harm shall happen to you; if you do not obey, I will chastise you. Even admitting that all labour merits wages, God need not have promised more than a recompense as temporary as are our services; under no title does He owe us an eternal recompense, and if He promises it to us, it is pure goodness on His part; we should therefore be inexcusable if we were not wholly His, wholly His in all things, down to the smallest details of our conduct, always His through esteem and love.

GOD RECOMPENSES MAGNIFICENTLY THOSE WHO GIVE HIM ALL

God will give Himself to us in the same proportion that we give ourselves to Him. If He wills that we should be wholly His in a complete detachment from creatures, He also promises to be entirely ours. If He wills that we should be always His, He also wills to be always ours, as perfectly ours as though we were alone in the world. Our good God thirsts for our happiness. "Serve Me," He says; "think only of serving Me, and I will think of you, I will take care of you, I will give Myself to you as your possession and your treasure" (Gen. xv:1). This doubtless has regard principally to eternity, but even in this present life what does He not do for those who give themselves fully and constantly to Him? He establishes His dwelling in their heart. He sheds therein His grace and His consolations. There is within such a heart a peace which surpasses all understanding, and which is accompanied with delicious joy (Gal. v:22); it is like a continual feast (Prov. xv:15); it is a foretaste of Paradise. Oh, how happy then are we when we love and serve God with all our heart! How miserable, on the contrary, when we resist the advances of God and make reservations in His service! We suffer greatly, we suffer without merit; and this anticipated hell is but the prelude of the other which will last eternally. O my God, how good it is then to serve Thee! (Ps. LXXII:28) Let us encourage ourselves by means of these considerations to do all for God, and to do it in the best possible manner. Let us pass in review all that we have to do today, and let us make a strong resolution to do it for God alone and with all possible perfection.

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.