

CHAPTER X. Morning Prayer.

BESIDES your systematic meditation and your other vocal prayers, there are five shorter kinds of prayer, which are as aids and assistants to the great devotion, and foremost among these is your morning prayer, as a general preparation for all the day's work. It should be made in this wise.

1. Thank God, and adore Him for His Grace which has kept you safely through the night, and if in anything you have offended against Him, ask forgiveness.
2. Call to mind that the day now beginning is given you in order that you may work for Eternity, and make a stedfast resolution to use this day for that end.
3. Consider beforehand what occupations, duties and occasions are likely this day to enable you to serve God; what temptations to offend Him, either by vanity, anger, etc., may arise; and make a fervent resolution to use all means of serving Him and confirming your own piety; as also to avoid and resist whatever might hinder your salvation and God's Glory. Nor is it enough to make such a resolution,--you must also prepare to carry it into effect. Thus, if you foresee having to meet some one who is hottempered and irritable, you must not merely resolve to guard your own temper, but you must consider by what gentle words to conciliate him. If you know you will see some sick person, consider how best to minister comfort to him, and so on.
4. Next, humble yourself before God, confessing that of yourself you could carry out nothing that you have planned, either in avoiding evil or seeking good. Then, so to say, take your heart in your hands, and offer it and all your good intentions to God's Gracious Majesty, entreating Him to accept them, and strengthen you in His Service, which you may do in some such words as these: "Lord, I lay before Thee my weak heart, which Thou dost fill with good desires. Thou knowest that I am unable to bring the same to good effect, unless Thou dost bless and prosper them, and therefore, O Loving Father, I entreat of Thee to help me by the Merits and Passion of Thy Dear Son, to Whose Honour I would devote this day and my whole life."

All these acts should be made briefly and heartily, before you leave your room if possible, so that all the coming work of the day may be prospered with God's blessing; but anyhow, my daughter, I entreat you never to omit them.

CHAPTER XI. Evening Prayer and Examination of Conscience.

AS I have counselled you before your material dinner to make a spiritual repast in meditation, so before your evening meal you should make at least a devout spiritual collation. Make sure of some brief leisure before suppertime, and then prostrating yourself before God, and recollecting yourself in the Presence of Christ Crucified, setting Him before your mind with a stedfast inward glance, renew the warmth of your morning's meditation by some hearty aspirations and humble upliftings of your soul to your Blessed Saviour, either repeating those points of your meditation which helped you most, or kindling your heart with anything else you will.

As to the examination of conscience, which we all should make before going to bed, you know the rules:

1. Thank God for having preserved you through the day past.
2. Examine how you have conducted yourself through the day, in order to which recall where and with whom you have been, and what you have done.
3. If you have done anything good, offer thanks to God; if you have done amiss in thought, word, or deed, ask forgiveness of His Divine Majesty, resolving to confess the fault when opportunity offers, and to be diligent in doing better.
4. Then commend your body and soul, the Church, your relations and friends, to God. Ask that the Saints and Angels may keep watch over you, and with God's Blessing go to the rest He has appointed for you. Neither this practice nor that of the morning should ever be omitted; by your morning prayer you open your soul's windows to the sunshine of Righteousness, and by your evening devotions you close them against the shades of hell.