

DAY 1.

A Confession on bended knees to implore God's goodness.

O MOST gracious Jesus, my Love, Salvation, and Comfort! O most faithful Lover of men, my Maker and Redeemer! Light of my heart, Solace of my spirit, and Medicine of my soul, how much do I owe You, O my God! Of what worth have You esteemed me, O my Creator, Who has formed me out of nothing to Your own image and likeness? For a price beyond all reckoning You have bought me; with exceeding great labor You have redeemed me; for how many years in long-suffering have You borne with me; while I still persevered in my iniquities You have spared me. Many are the good gifts, and great is the loving-kindness, by which You have drawn me, and followed after me; and countless are the times when in Your mercy, and by Your divine grace, You have come to my help, although as many times I turned my back upon You, nor obeyed Your holy inspirations—but neglected Your most holy will—when I even gave myself up, instead, to my own corrupt and wicked will.

O most gracious God, how ungrateful have I been for all Your bountiful gifts, even to this hour! O merciful God, behold I confess to You my manifold and great iniquity. Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise; for, see, Lord, You have lifted up my soul. O unseen Sanctifier, purify my spirit, and make ready my heart to praise You, and give thanks to You. Enlighten my understanding. Gather all my memories into one point. Kindle my desires. Purify my intention. Purge my affections. Raise up the powers of my soul to Yourself, and water its drought with the dew of Your heavenly grace. O most loving God grant now, I beseech You, bow down Your ears from Your throne in heaven to me, Your wretched and sinful creature, and hear my prayers, whereby in lowly fear I knock at the breast of Your divine grace. Behold! I turn wholly to You. I lift up all the powers of my soul to praise You, and bless You, and with my whole strength I open my heart to You. Oh! cause this heart of mine, I beseech You, to be pierced by the rays of Your divine love, to be

enlightened by the splendors of Your divine brightness, so that inwardly I may look into the lowest depth of my soul, and may see and acknowledge how far I am from You, my God!—that I may behold, too, the faults and vices which keep me from Your love and service, and make me unworthy to receive into my soul the inpouring of Your divine grace. For so long a time, O Lord my God, You have embraced and girt me round about with Your immeasurable gifts, and benefits, and graces, but, above all, with Your incomprehensible charity, that I cannot hide from the glow of Your love, or keep back my spirit from Your praise. Yes, my heart desires to praise You, and give thanks to You, so far as I am able, with every power of my soul; and my spirit exult earnestly in Your praise, and my soul magnify You, for over me Your grace is exceedingly great. But who am I, O most high and Almighty Maker, that I should dare to praise You? Moreover, how shall I dare to open my mouth, full, as it is, of all uncleanness, and covered with the vile filth of so many vices, to tell of Your power and might? In fact, what can I ever think, or understand, or speak of You, Who are immense, invisible, incomprehensible, inscrutable, so as to be able to praise, extol, and magnify You, since I am powerless to form any thought of You, or take in, or scrutinize Your Being? Yet, although I, who am but a poor, little, worthless soul,—an empty straw,—am not sufficient of myself to praise You, O high, and terrible, and incomprehensible Majesty, since neither Yourself nor Your works I can comprehend; nevertheless, for this very reason ought I to praise and extol You, O my God, and give thanks to You; because You are so wonderful, and high, and incomprehensible and inscrutable, that neither by understanding, nor keenness of mind, nor reason, can any of Your creatures reach to You, save only in the way and in the measure that You give them to understand concerning You by Your grace.

For if, of old, profane and unbelievers made such loud exultation, and boasted themselves so mightily of their great, and powerful, and immortal gods, in that they were made at great cost, and with cunning art, of gold, and other precious things,—and, indeed, in one sense they were not mortal, for never had they any share in mortal life—how much more just is it that I should exalt You, my

Almighty Lord, Whose power is so exceedingly great, that You fill the heavens and the earth with the glory of Your Majesty; Whose beauty is so exceedingly fair, that the sun and the moon and all the elements marvel at, while the angelic spirits rejoice beyond all measure in contemplating You; Whose strength is so exceeding terrible, that by one look You make the earth tremble; Whose might is so exceedingly marvellous, that by a word You brought forth the heavens and the earth, and all creatures are subject to Your will; Whose riches are so exceedingly vast, that whatsoever is contained within the boundary of heaven and earth belong to You alone, and is ruled by You without care or anxiousness; Whose goodness and loving kindness, last of all, are so exceedingly tender, that Your mercy is over all Your works. For there is not even a little worm, however utterly vile, nor any creature, however wretched, that does not share Your favor, or which You forget to uphold, and give it its food in due season.

If, then, from Your marvelous works, O Almighty and most gracious God, we are able to discover and gather, that You are so powerful, and wise, and good, because You created all things of such wonderful workmanship without any labor, and govern them so wisely without any care, and uphold them so tenderly without any lessening of Your riches; how powerful, and wise, and good, and admirable, must You be in Yourself, since, surely, the workman is higher, and nobler, and worthier, than the work of his hands! For with the same ease You could create, rule, and uphold a thousand heavens and a thousand worlds, as one heaven and one world. How then, O Almighty One, shall I tell of Your praise, when this is above the understanding of all Your creatures, even of the spirits in heaven? O most merciful God; I know that You stand in no need of any works or praise of ours, since in Yourself You are filled in all praise. You are simple in Yourself and perfect God, Whom no creature can add to, or take from by any of its works, nevertheless You grant to be praised by Your frail and worthless creatures. Therefore, although my praise, O loving God, is far too lukewarm and vile, and unworthy of Your lofty power, and incomprehensible wisdom, and unutterable goodness; yet grant graciously to accept it, and let Your goodness make up for my weakness. O most tender

Lord! Although unworthy, it is still my chief duty to praise You. For how can I be ungrateful for Your manifold gifts and benefits? Can I ever cease from praising You, when You never cease to do good for me? O most merciful Jesus, I would indeed wish to gather together, and pile up in the ark of my heart, all Your good gifts and all Your loving-kindness which You have poured out upon me, and to praise You and give You special thanks for each one of Your benefits. But who is able, O Lord, to look into or sound the depth of Your goodness, or to measure the breadth of Your love? Yet, although this is impossible for all Your creatures, still may this, the chief work of our salvation, where Your mighty love is chiefly reflected, never depart from my heart!