

PRAYER 8.

A Prayer that we may follow Christ.

O SWEETEST Jesus, Who were forsaken by Your own disciples, taken prisoner by Your chosen people, betrayed, sold, and given up by Your own apostle, led, shamefully bound, before Annas the high-priest, denied thrice by Your chief apostle, and cruelly struck upon the face by a vile servant; I beseech You, O my God, by Your most sacred Passion, and by all the contempt which You did freely undergo for my sins, to forgive me whatever I have done wrong against Your law, and the right of Your commandments; and henceforth to direct all my life according to Your most gracious will. Grant me also the grace to follow Your example, by truly loving my enemies, and by doing good to them who do me wrong and trouble me. O my only comfort, so soften my heart, I beseech You, and make it so warm and pliable by the fire of Your love, that You may be able, according to Your will and desire, to beat it down with repeated blows of the hammer of affliction, and to work it into a vessel of love for the tenderness and delight of Your own Heart, and that I may never faint away through frailty under these blows, but that at each blow I may send forth fiery sparks of patience and resignation! O Jesus, mirror of virtue, form of perfection, way of life, lantern to my feet, grant that I may faithfully keep to the footsteps of Your patience, lowliness, obedience, and love, and so that my life may be in harmony with Yours, so far as this is possible for mortal man.

O You true Lover of men, Who desire that no man should perish, but that all should turn to the knowledge of the truth, and be enlightened by that, look upon me, I beseech You, from the bottom of my heart, with the eyes of Your mercy, as You looked on Peter, and Magdalen, and Matthew, and those many others, whom You drew forcibly away from the path of iniquity, to Your singular love, that the rays of Your divine light may shine in the dark depths of my soul, and that I may thus clearly

know my measureless vileness, and wickedness, and my own nothing, and utterly annihilate myself in my own eyes, and profoundly humble myself before You and all men, so far as it is possible for me, and pleasing and agreeable to You. O heat of the Love of God, that burned so fervently, that no water can quench You, for You ever brightly glow, nor can Your flame ever fail, and You consume and transform all things into Yourself, even as the fire which is seen by the eye transform iron and wood; burn, I beseech You, all that You can lay hold upon without obstacle, and melt my hard and stiffened heart by the heat of Your love, that I may embrace You with the closest love, and that I may be all consumed in my poor, frail, and corrupt nature, given up, as it is, to the senses which, indeed, I did not make and form for myself, but which I have rather unmade, and deformed, and that I may become nothing, and by Your marvelous transformation may put on and wear a new form and likeness according to Your likeness. And even as You, O everlasting Son of God, by the fellow-working of the Holy Ghost, were made the Son of Man, and taking upon You what You were not, yet remain what You were, so in like manner make me to be born again into the number of Your elect children, by the laying aside of the old, and carnal, and sensual man, and by the taking on of the new, and deiform man, created according to Your image. O Key of David! that opens, and no man shuts, that shuts, and no man opens, shut up, I beseech You, all the windows of my senses, through which entrance may be given to death, or the devil, or any wicked thing, into my soul, which is Your house, and which is being sanctified to holiness. And because it has pleased You to make Your temple within us, keep Your dwelling-place spotless, that it may be Your everlasting house of prayer, and that it may please You to dwell in for ever. Open only therein the eastern gate which Ezekiel saw, that is the highest part of my soul, of which You did give command to Your prophet, that no man should enter through it, for You, the King of Israel, would keep its entrance for Yourself alone. Keep, then, for Yourself alone, this entrance, that it may lie wide open at the rising of Your grace, and that when You, the Sun of Justice, begins to dawn over my darkened soul, immediately I may be able to receive in me the rays of Your light, and that so, in the words of the Holy Scripture, my evening and

Your bright morning may be one day; and also that I who, times beyond number, have, with Peter, by my wicked works, denied You by night, may confess to You by day.

Open up to me, also, O my God, the vein of tears, allow my eyes to grow weak and dim with weeping at the thought of many sins and of the wrongs I have done You, O Lord my God, by my dissolute and negligent life. In truth, most sweet God, You have loved us beyond our poor understanding, and therefore You asked for a return of love from us, and I long to satisfy this demand of Yours, and desire to love You in return, O my God, with my whole heart, and strength, and thought. But, O most gracious God, I have fallen down to my own self upon the earth, my heart is full of stains, my spirit full of sluggishness, my understanding full of darkness, my thoughts full of distractions, and I have utterly lost the mastery over myself; for my own household fights against me, nor is there anyone subject unto me. Indeed! with groans I complain to You, that the very wife, whom You have given to be my helpmate, whom I have more than enough cherished in my bosom, I mean my own flesh, persecutes me, and, like Eve, daily desires my destruction, by vexing me, and offering me the forbidden food of pleasure. Therefore I fly to You, O God, my protector. Enlighten, I beseech You, my inward eyes, that I consent not to sin; strengthen all my powers, that I may overcome my enemies, and subject all my senses and all my members to my spirit, in order to serve You alone. Cleanse my heart, inflame my spirit, enlighten my understanding, collect my thoughts, unite all my powers, and bind them together with the chain of Your love, and the constraints of Your fear, so that never anymore I may be estranged from You, but that ever subject and united to You, I may cleave unto You and faint not, but rather fear, and love, and thank, and praise, and bless You now and for evermore. Amen.