

Eternal with all our heart, with all our soul, and love Him even when we draw our latest breath.

PRAYER.

O God! I feel that I am yet far removed from experiencing such a love! Forgive me if I have so long mistaken Thy holy precepts. I will henceforth love Thee with a new and perfect love, with deeds and not with words; for Thy love, O God! is revealed to me in Thy words and in the blessings which Thou continually bestowest on me.

Then say Psalm xlviii.

MEDITATION FOR TUESDAY (THE THIRD DAY).

ON THE LOVE OF THY NEIGHBOUR.

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Lev. xix. 18.) The God of Israel teaches us in these words every human charity, and they contain the essence of the whole moral law.

The love of our neighbour is essentially a Jewish virtue; it was our holy law which, in the name of God, first proclaimed the dogma of universal brotherhood. Israel was charged to propagate and teach it among the nations, and God's people has never been guilty of utterly disregarding it; for in every page of Holy Writ, God has established the strictest rules of charity not only towards Israelites, but has commanded us also to extend this charity, this fraternal love, to strangers of all nations: “The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself.” (Lev. xix. 34.) These holy precepts have been perpetuated among us by tradition; and Israel, while so often forgetting many of God's commands, which are in our days especially so much neglected, observes at least the divine precept of charity, and through works of mercy seems still to retain the impress of the spirit

of the law. And yet, when we consider how imperative the duties towards our neighbour are on us, and how many other virtues they demand for their exact fulfilment: we shall see with sorrow that many errors have yet to be avoided, and many virtues to be acquired. We love our neighbour frequently from human, selfish motives; regardless of God's precept, we consider but our own interest or vanity; or perhaps our affection is centred on those nearest to us, on a few friends at farthest, or on those who, by their education and training, have similar prejudices, positions, or sympathies with ourselves. )

Still our love must be extended to all, without regard to person or faith; for all are comprised in the term neighbour. We should consider this world as the house of God, in which all men are His children and our brothers, whatever their rank, education, or fortune may be, and we ought to feel most for the necessitous and humble; and we should herein imitate God, who says, "I dwell in the high and holy place, yet also with the contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble." (Isaiah lvii. 15.)

Alas! how little is this virtue practised among men. The love of our fellow-creatures ought to be the link connecting all mankind, and become the pledge of peace; and yet do we daily give way to violence, hatred, and intolerance;—brother rises against brother, relative against relative, family against family, Israelite against Israelite. We ought to live together as children of the same father, to help, support, and love each other; but, alas! too often do we cherish in our hearts envy, pride, and intolerance, forgetful of God's precept, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in Thy heart; thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people." (Lev. xix. 17, 18.)

We say that we love our fellow-man, and perhaps we believe that we do; but where are the acts to prove it? The love of our fellow-creatures should not be a vague love, but we must show it in our actions, in results. Can intentions avail aught without deeds? will words alone demon-

strate friendship? the offers of service be enough without performance? Of what use is mere pity to the suffering poor, the sick, the forsaken, the unfortunate?

Perhaps I may say, My heart is not unmoved at the sight of misery, my conduct is not hard to the poor. But is it enough to pity misfortune, to bestow alms on the poor, or to be free from hate and envy of those above us?

No; the love of our kind should be an active virtue. We should console the afflicted, help the needy, not only with our means, but also with our counsels, encourage and guide them in their inexperience, and raise them in their own estimation by our conduct towards them. We must not bestow alms on the first comer, to spare ourselves the sight of misery; but it is our duty so to regulate our charity, that the distressed may be relieved, and their suffering alleviated. We must perform our part in deeds of public benevolence according to our means, and support public institutions not only with our gifts, but also with our zealous co-operation.

Let us, then, practise active charity, which is shown in works, and not in words; in actions, and not in offers; in services and sacrifices, and not in good intentions merely.

#### PRAYER.

I will strive, O God! to subdue all selfishness and indifference to the lot of others, to perform deeds of love towards my fellow-creatures, and, according to Thy divine command, to love them, inasmuch as they are, like myself, created in Thy image. I will bear their misconduct with gentleness, sympathize with their moral and physical infirmities, and supply their wants according to my means; for I know, O God! that to act in this manner is rendering the most acceptable homage to Thy holiness and to the blessed faith which Thou hast given us. Amen.

Read Psalm lxxxii.