

NOVEMBER XXIV.

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS, C.

From his life prefixed to his works : Villefore's life of St. Teresa, t. 1. p. 292. 318. t. 2. p. 132. See his life compiled by F. Honoratus of St. Mary, the judicious critic of the same Order, 12mo. and more at large by F. Dositheus of St. Alexis, in two vols. 4to. Paris, 1727.

A. D. 1591.

ST. JOHN, by his family name called Yapes, was youngest child of Gonzales of Yapes, and born at Fontibere, near Avila, in Old Castile, in 1542. With his mother's milk he sucked in the most tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and was preserved from many dangers by the visible protection of her intercession. The death of his father left his mother destitute of all succours with three little children, with whom she settled at Medina. John learnt the first elements of letters at a college. The administrator of the hospital, delighted with his extraordinary piety, employed him in serving the sick; an office which was very agreeable to the devotion of the youth, who acquitted himself with the feeling of charity much above his years, especially when he exhorted the sick to acts of virtue. He practised at the same time, excessive austerities, and continued his studies in the college of the Jesuits. At twenty-one years of age, to satisfy his devotion to the mother of God, he took the religious habit among the Carmelite friars at Medina, in 1563. Never did any novice give greater proofs of obedience, humility, fervour, and love of the cross. His zeal, far from abating after his noviciate, was continually upon the increase. When he arrived at Salamanca, in order to commence his higher studies, the

austerities which he practised were excessive. He chose for his cell a little dark hole at the bottom of the dormitory. A hollow board, something like a grave, was his bed. He platted himself so rough a hair shirt, that, at the least motion, it pricked his body to blood. His fasts and other mortifications were incredible. By these means he studied to die to the world and to himself; but by assiduous prayer and contemplation in silence and retirement, he gave wings to his soul. He lays down in his works as a fundamental maxim of perfection, that a person study, in the first place, to do all actions in union with those of Jesus Christ, desiring to imitate him, and to put on his spirit. This was his own practice. His second rule was to mortify his senses in all things, denying them whatever did not seem most to contribute to the glory of God, whether in his hearing, seeing, or other senses. It was his desire to be a lay-brother, but this was refused him. He had distinguished himself in his course of theological studies, when, in 1567, being twenty-five years old, he was promoted to the priesthood. He prepared himself to offer his first sacrifice by humiliations, fasts, penitential tears, fervent prayers, and long meditations on the sufferings of our Divine Redeemer; deeply imprinting his precious wounds in his heart, and sacrificing himself, his will, and all his actions with his Saviour, in raptures of love and devotion. The graces which he received from the holy mysteries, inflamed him with a desire of greater retirement; for which purpose he deliberated with himself to enter the Order of the Carthusians.

St. Teresa was then busy in establishing her reformation of the Carmelites, and coming to Medina del Campo heard speak of the extraordinary virtue of brother John. Whereupon she desired to see him, admired his spirit, and

told him that God had called him to sanctify himself in the Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel: that she had received authority from the general to found two reformed houses of men, and that he himself should be the first instrument of so great a work. Soon after, she founded her first monastery of men in a poor house in the village of Durvelle. John, who had acquiesced in her proposal, entered this new Bethlehem, in a perfect spirit of sacrifice, and about two months after was joined by some others, who all renewed their profession on Advent Sunday, in 1568. This was the beginning of the Barefooted Carmelite Friars, whose institute was approved by pope Pius V. and, in 1580, confirmed by Gregory XIII. So great were the austerities of these primitive Carmelites, that St. Teresa saw it necessary to prescribe them a mitigation. The odour of their sanctity in their poor obscure house spread over all Spain; and St. Teresa soon after established a second convent at Pastrane, and, in 1568, a third at Manreza, whither she translated that from Durvelle, and in 1572, a fourth at Alcala. The example and the exhortations of St. John inspired the religious with a perfect spirit of solitude, humility, and mortification. His wonderful love of the cross appeared in all his actions, and it was by meditating continually on the sufferings of Christ that it increased daily in his soul: for love made him desire to resemble his crucified Redeemer in all manner of humiliations and sufferings. And Almighty God, to purify his heart from all natural weaknesses and attachments, made him to pass through the crucible by the most severe interior and exterior trials; which is his ordinary conduct toward those souls which he prepares to raise to an eminent sanctity, and to enrich with his extraordinary graces.

St. John, after tasting the first sweets of holy contemplation, found himself deprived of all sensible devotion. This spiritual dryness was followed by interior trouble of mind, scruples, and a disrelish of spiritual exercises, which yet he was careful never to forsake. The devils at the same time assaulted him with violent temptations, and men persecuted him by calumnies. But the most terrible of all these pains was that of scrupulosity and interior desolation, in which he seemed to see hell open, ready to swallow him up. He describes admirably what a soul feels in this trial in his book called *The Obscure Night*. This state of interior desolation, contemplative souls, in some degree or other, first pass through before their hearts are prepared to receive the communication of God's special graces. By it our saint obtained a perfect poverty and nakedness of spirit, freed from all the refined passions of self-love, and an excellent conformity to the holy will of God, which can only be built on the destruction of self-will, a heroic patience, and a courageous perseverance. After some time certain rays of light, comfort, and divine sweetness scattered these mists, and translated the soul of the servant of God into a paradise of interior delights, and heavenly sweetness. This was again succeeded by another more grievous trial of spiritual darkness which spread itself over his soul, accompanied with interior pains and temptations, in which God seemed to have forsaken him, and to be become deaf to his sighs and tears. So violent was his sorrow in this state of privation, that it seemed he must have died of grief if God had not supported him by his grace. In the calm which followed this terrible tempest he was wonderfully repaid in divine comforts. Surrounded with a new light he saw clearly the incomparable advantages of suffering, especially by the severest interior trials; he

saw how by them the soul is purified from imperfections; he now enjoyed a continual sweet presence of God, was always recollected, and felt in his heart a most ardent love of God, and vehement desire to imitate Jesus Christ in his sufferings, to carry his cross, to meet him under his humiliations, and to serve his neighbour for his sake: he found in himself an invincible courage, enjoyed a sovereign peace, and was often raised to the divine union in sweet love, which is the sublimest elevation of supernatural contemplation. This love with which his heart burned, was often accompanied with an excess of spiritual joy, in which his soul was penetrated with, and, as it were, drowned in a torrent of delights; yet with a pain which he called the wound of love. He explains this himself by saying, that the soul seems to herself wounded with repeated arrows of fire which leave her all consuming with love, and she is so inflamed as to seem to go out of herself, and to commence a new creature. His life was a continual vicissitude of crosses and privations, and of heavenly visits and caresses. He never received any extraordinary favour which was not preceded by some great tribulation; which is an ordinary conduct of the sweet providence of God in regard to his servants for their great spiritual advantage. God, in the sensible visits of his grace, draws a soul by his charms to run in the sweet paths of his love: but her virtue is chiefly perfected by tribulations. The brilliant diamond received from the hammer and chisel its lustre and polish. Trials were, by grace, the chief instruments of the admirable perfection to which our saint arrived. St. Teresa made use of him to impart the spirit of her reform to the religious in all the houses which she established. The convent in which she had made her first profession at Avila, had always

opposed her reformation. Yet the bishop of Avila thought it necessary that she should be made prioress there, to retrench at least the frequent visits of seculars. She sent for St. John, and appointed him the spiritual director of this house, in 1576. He soon engaged them to shut up their parlours, and to cut off the scandalous abuses which were inconsistent with a religious life of retirement and penance. Many seculars likewise put themselves under his direction, and he preached the word of God with wonderful unction and fruit. But God would be glorified by his sufferings, and to make them the more sensible to him, permitted his own brethren to be the instruments thereof, as Christ himself was betrayed by a disciple. The Old Carmelite friars looked on this reformation, though undertaken with the license and approbation of the general given to St. Teresa, as a rebellion against their Order; and, in their chapter at Placentia, condemned St. John as a fugitive and an apostate. This resolution being taken, they sent soldiers and sergeants who broke open his door, and tumultuously carried him to the prison of his convent; and, knowing the veneration which the people at Avila had for his person, removed him from thence to Toledo, where he was locked up in a dark noisome cell, into which no light had admittance but through a little hole three fingers broad. Scarce any other nourishment was allowed him during nine months which he remained there, but bread, a little fish called sardines, and water. He was released after nine months by the credit of St. Teresa, and by the protection of the Mother of God. In this destitute condition he had been favoured with many heavenly comforts, which made him afterward say: Be not surprised if I show so great a love for sufferings: God gave me a high

idea of their merit and value when I was in the prison of Toledo."

He had no sooner recovered his liberty but he was made superior of the little convent of Calvary, situate in a desert, and, in 1579, founded that of Baëza. In 1581, he was chosen prior of Granada, in 1585, vicar-provincial of Andalusia, and in 1588, first definitor of the Order. He founded at the same time the convent of Segovia. In all his employments the austerities which he practised seemed to exceed bounds; and he only slept two or three hours in a night, employing the rest in prayer, in presence of the blessed sacrament. He showed always the most sincere and profound humility and even love of abjection, an inimitable fervour and zeal for all the exercises of religion, and an insatiable desire of suffering. He used to say: "To suffer for the sake of God is the true characteristic of his love, as we see in Christ, and in the martyrs. And persecutions are the means to enter into the depth, or attain to the knowledge, of the mystery of the cross, a necessary condition for comprehending the depth of the wisdom of God and of his love." Hearing Christ once say to him: "John, what recompense dost thou ask of thy labours?" He answered: "Lord, I ask no other recompense than to suffer and be condemned for thy love." At the very name of the cross he fell into an ecstasy in the presence of mother Anne of Jesus. These things he frequently asked of God: *1st*, That he might not pass one day of his life without suffering something. *2dly*, That he might not die superior. *3dly*, That he might end his life in humiliations, disgrace and contempt. The very name of the sufferings of Christ, or sight of a crucifix, threw him into raptures of sweet love, and made him melt in tears. The passion of our Redeemer was the usual subject of his meditations, and he exceedingly recommends the

same to others in his writings. His confidence in God made him often give his own necessities to the poor, and deserved miraculous supplies for his monasteries. This firm confidence in divine providence he called the patrimony of the poor, especially of religious persons. The love of God so powerfully possessed his soul, and its fire was so violent that his words sufficed to kindle a flame in others. He was frequently so absorbed in God that he was obliged often to offer violence to himself, to treat of temporal affairs, and sometimes when called out from prayer was incapable of doing it. Coming to himself from sudden raptures, he would cry out with words, as it were of fire: "Let us take wing and fly on high. What do we do here, dear brethren? Let us go to eternal life." This love appeared in a certain brightness which darted from his countenance on many occasions, especially when he came from the altar, or from prayer. A person of distinction was one day so moved with the sight of it, perceiving the heavenly light of his face to dazzle his eyes, and pierce his heart with divine love, that on the spot he took a resolution to renounce the world, and embraced the Order of St. Dominick. A lady coming to confession to him was so struck with a heavenly light which shone from his countenance and penetrated her soul, that she immediately laid aside her jewels and gawdy attire, and consecrated herself to God in strict retirement, to the astonishment of the whole city of Segovia. His heart seemed an immense fire of love, (to use his expression in his Flame of Divine Love) which could not contain itself within his breast, but showed itself by these exterior marks. His love of his neighbour was no less wonderful, especially toward the poor, the sick, and sinners; his continual tenderness and affection for his enemies, and the benefactions and kindness with which he always studied to

return good for evil, were most admirable. For fear of contracting any attachments to earthly things, he was a rigorous observer and lover of poverty. All the furniture of his little cell or chamber consisted in a paper image and a cross made of rushes, and he would have the meanest beads and breviary, and wear the most threadbare habit he could get. A profound sentiment of religion made him bear an extreme respect to whatever belonged, even remotely, to churches, or to the service of God. The same motive of the honour of God sanctified all his actions. He employed many hours every day and night in prayer, and often before the blessed sacrament with extraordinary fervour. True devotion he described to be humble, not loving to be lofty; silent, not active; without attachment to anything; without singularity or presumption, full of distrust in itself, following with ardour simple and common rules. By experience in spiritual things and an extraordinary light of the Holy Ghost, he had a singular gift in discerning spirits, and could not be easily imposed upon in what came from God. He discovered, by the first examination, that the pretended visions of a certain woman were only illusions; and the same of a nun in Portugal. In 1591, the chapter of his Order met at Madrid, in which St. John opposed two severe measures used in the punishment of disobedience against father Gratian, who had been a great assistant to St. Teresa; and likewise strenuously spoke against a motion supported by some of the chiefs for casting off the direction of the Teresian nuns. This gave offence to some whom envy and jealousy had indisposed against him, and by their means the servant of God was thrust out of all employments in his Order. It was with joy that he saw himself in disgrace and at liberty, and retired into the little

solitary convent of Pagnuel, in the mountains of Sierra Morena.¹

God was pleased to finish his martyrdom by a second grievous persecution from his own bre-

1 In this solitude he finished his mystical treatises, which compose his works, in two volumes, quarto. The two first, *On the Obscure Night*, and *On the Ascent of Mount Carmel*, treat on the interior trials and anguish by which a soul is purged from earthly affections, and prepared for supernatural prayer. In the others, called *The Exposition of the Canticles*, and *The Living Flame of Love*, he explains the operations of the Holy Ghost in the supernatural impressions and all the degrees of divine union in the said prayer. No pen indeed can describe those secret communications of a soul in that state; and none but he who has felt them, can ever be able to form any idea of them. For the satisfaction of such, St. John wrote these works: which are only proper for such spiritual persons, and may become hurtful in the hands of unexperienced persons, who are easily the dupes of their own imagination; and especially of enthusiasts, who abuse what they do not understand, to favour their own illusions. From the maxims of the most experienced doctors of mystic theology all may learn the advantage and necessity of interior trials, which are much more severe than all exterior tribulations, and than the labours and crosses of an apostolic life. By these God conducts souls to the perfect crucifixion of self-love, before they can be found worthy of his special favours. But such extraordinary graces are not necessary for the most perfect sanctity. They are easily subject to illusions and dangers, unless tried by perfect humility and obedience; and whatever in them does not sensibly increase sincere and perfect humility, is certainly illusion. Nor are they to be otherways prized, than by the rule which St. Paul lays down concerning exterior gratuitous graces. No man can lawfully desire or seek them, (which is presumption and illusion:) no man can ever think himself the better for them, or prefer himself to others, which is pride; no man is to rely on them, but only on the divine law, and an humble obedience; and every one must be persuaded that crosses and tribulations are the royal and the only road to heaven, though God in his mercy, in condescension to our weakness, sweetens them with his presence, peace, and consolations.

In books of devotion the errors of the False Mystics, or Quietists and Semi-Quietists, are carefully to be guarded against. The heresy and fanaticism of Quietism was

thren before his death. His banishment to Pagnuella he thought his happiness, and always excused and commended father commissary and the other authors of his disgrace, and hindered

broached by Michael Molinos, a Spanish priest, and spiritual director in great repute at Rome, who in his book entitled, *The Spiritual Guide*, established a system of perfect contemplation. It chiefly turns upon the following general principles. 1. That *perfect* contemplation is a state in which a man does not reason, or reflect either on God or himself, but passively receives the impression of heavenly light without exercising any acts, the mind being in a perfect inaction and inattention, which this author calls Quiet. Which principle is a notorious illusion and falsity: for even in supernatural impressions or communications, how much soever a soul may be abstracted from her senses, and insensible to external objects, which act upon their organs, she still exercises her understanding and will, in adoring, loving, praising, or the like, as is demonstrable both from principle, and from the testimony of St. Teresa, and all true contemplatives. 2. This fanatic teaches, that a soul in that state desires nothing, not even his own salvation; and fears nothing, not even hell itself. This principle, big with pernicious consequences, is heretical; as the precept and constant obligation of hope of salvation through Christ, is an article of faith. The pretence that a total indifference is a state of perfection, is folly and impiety, as if solicitude about things of duty was not a precept: and as if a man could ever be exempt from the obligation of that charity, which he owes both to God and himself, by which he is bound above all things, to desire and to labour for his salvation, and the eternal reign of God in his soul. A third principle of this author is no less notoriously heretical, that in such a state the use of the sacraments and good works becomes indifferent; and that the most criminal representations and motions, in the sensitive part of the soul, are foreign to the superior, and not sinful in this elevated state; as if the sensitive part of the soul was not subject to the government of the rational or superior part, or as if this could be indifferent about what passes in it. Some will have it, that Molinos carried his last principles so far, as to open a door to the abominations of the Gnostics; but most excuse him from admitting that horrible consequence. See F. Avrigny, *honouré of S. Mary*, &c. Innocent XI. in 1687, condemned sixty-eight propositions extracted from this author as respectively heretical, scandalous, and blas-

all others from writing to the vicar-general of the injustices done him. There were in the Order two fathers of great authority, who declared themselves his implacable enemies, harbouring

phemous. Molinos was condemned by the inquisition at Rome, recalled his errors, and ended his life in imprisonment in 1696. See Argentre Collect. judiciorum de novis erroribus, t. 3. part 2. p. 402. Stevaert Prop. Damnat. p. 1.

Semi-Quietism was rendered famous by having been for some time patronized by the great Fenelon. Madame Guyon, a widow lady, wrote An Easy and Short Method of Prayer, and Solomon's Canticle of Canticles interpreted in a Mystical sense, for which, by order of Lewis XIV. she was confined in a nunnery, but soon after enlarged. Then it was that she became acquainted with Fenelon; and she published The Old Testament with explanations; her own Life by herself, and other works, all wrote with spirit, and a lively imagination. She submitted her doctrine to the judgment of Bossuet, esteemed the most accurate theologian in the French dominions. After a mature examination, Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, cardinal Noailles, Fenelon, then lately nominated archbishop of Cambray, and Mr. Tronson, superior of S. Sulpice, drew up thirty articles concerning the sound maxims of a spiritual life; to which Fenelon added four others. These thirty-four articles were signed by them at Issy in 1695, and are the famous articles of Issy. (See Argentre, Collectio judiciorum de novis erroribus, t. 3. Du Plessis, Hist. de Meaux, t. 1. p. 492. Mémoires Chronol. t. 3, p. 28.) During this examination, Bossuet and Fenelon had frequent disputes for and against disinterested love, or divine love of pure benevolence. This latter undertook in some measure the patronage of Madame Guyon, and, in 1697, published a book entitled The Maxims of the Saints, in which a kind of Semi-Quietism was advanced. The clamour which was raised drew the author into disgrace at the court of Lewis XIV. and the book was condemned by Innocent XII. in 1699, on the 12th of March, and, on the 9th of April following, by the author himself, who closed his eyes to all the glimmerings of human understanding, to seek truth in the obedient simplicity of faith. By this submission he vanquished and triumphed over his defeat itself, and by a more admirable greatness of soul over his vanquisher. With the book, twenty-three propositions extracted out of it, were censured by the pope as rash, pernicious.

malice and envy in their breasts, which they cloaked under the sanctified name of holy zeal. They were puffed up with an opinion of their learning, and with the applause which they

cious in practice, and erroneous respectively, but none were qualified heretical.

The principal error of Semi-Quietism consists in this doctrine, that in the state of perfect contemplation, it belongs to the entire annihilation in which a soul places herself before God, and to the perfect resignation of herself to his will, that she be indifferent whether she be damned or saved; which monstrous extravagance destroys the obligation of Christian hope. The divine precepts can never clash, but strengthen one another. It would be blasphemy to pretend, that because God as a universal ruler suffers sin, we can take a complacency in its being committed by others. God damns no one but for sin and final impenitence: yet whilst we adore the divine justice and sanctity, we are bound to reject sin with the utmost abhorrence, and deprecate damnation with the greatest ardour; both which by the divine grace we can shun. Where then can there be any room for such a pretended resignation, at the very thought of which piety shudders? No such blasphemies occur in the writings of St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, or other approved spiritual authors. If they are, or seem to be expressed in certain parts of some spiritual works, as those of Bernières, or in the Italian translation of Boudon's *God Alone*, these expressions are to be corrected by the rule of solid theology. Fenelon was chiefly deceived by the authority of an adulterated edition of the spiritual entertainments of St. Francis of Sales, published at Lyons in 1628, by Drobet. Upon the immediate complaint and supplication of St. Francis Chantal, and John Francis Sales, brother of the saint, then bishop of Geneva, Lewis XIII. suppressed the privilege granted for the said edition, by letters-patent given in the camp before Rochelle in the same year, prefixed to the correct and true edition of that book made at Lyons by Cœurceillys in 1629, by order of St. Francis Chantal. Yet this faulty edition with its additions and omissions has been sometimes reprinted; and a copy of this edition imposed upon Fenelon, whom Bossuet, who used the right edition, accused of falsifying the book. (See *Mem. de Trev.* for July, anno 1558, p. 446.)

Bossuet had several years before maintained in the schools of Sorbonne with great warmth, that a love of pure bene-

acquired by their talents in the pulpit, on which pretence they neglected all the duties of their rule. St. John, when provincial of Andalusia, after frequent admonition of this irregularity,

volence is chimerical. Nothing is more famous in theological schools, than the distinction of the love of *chaste desire*, and of *benevolence*. By the first, a creature loves God as the creature's own good, that is, upon the motive of enjoying him, or because he shall possess God, and find in him his own complete happiness; in other words, because God is good to the creature himself both here and hereafter. The love of benevolence, is that by which a creature loves God purely for his own sake, or because he is in himself infinitely good. This latter is called pure or disinterested love, or love of charity; the former is a love of an inferior order, and is said by most theologians to belong to hope, not to charity: and many maintain that it can never attain to such a degree of perfection as to be a love of God above all things; because, say they, he who loves God merely because he is his own good, or for the sake of his enjoyment, loves him not for God's own increated goodness, which is the motive of charity; nor can he love him more than he does his own enjoyment of him, though he makes no such comparison, nor even directly or interpretatively forms such an act, that he loves him not more than he does his own possession of him, which would be criminal and extremely inordinate; so this love is good, and of obligation, as a part of hope, and it disposes the soul to the love of charity. Bossuet allowed the distinct motives of the loves of chaste desire and of benevolence; but said, no act of the latter could be formed by the heart, which does not expressly include an act of the former, because, said he, no man can love any good without desiring to himself at the same time the possession of that good, or its union with himself, and no man can love another's good merely as another's. This all allow, if this other's good were to destroy or exclude the love of his own good. Hence the habit of love of benevolence must include the habit of the love of desire. But the act may be, and often is exercised without it, for good is amiable in itself, and for its own sake; and this is the general opinion of theologians. However, the opinion of Bossuet, that an act of the love of benevolence, or of charity, is inseparable from an actual love of desire, is not censured but is maintained also by F. Honoratus of St. Mary, (*Tradition sur la Contempl.* t. 3. c. 4. p. 273. Mr Norris carries this notion so far as to pretend that creature

which tended to the destruction of religious discipline in their Order, finding no other remedy took effect, forbade them to preach, and confined them to their convents. Instead of humble sub-

in loving God consider nothing in his perfections but *their own* good. (Letter 2, On Divine Love. p. 8.) Some advised Fenelon to make a diversion by attacking Bossuet's sentiments and books at Rome, and convicting him of establishing theological hope by destroying charity. But the pious archbishop made answer that he never would inflame a dispute by recriminating against a brother, whatever might have seemed prudent to be done at another season. When he was put in mind to beware of the artifices of mankind, which he had so well known, and so often experienced, he made answer: "Let us die in our simplicity." (*Moriamur in simplicitate nostrâ.*) On this celebrated dispute, the ingenius Claville (*Traite du Vrai Merite*) makes this remark, that some of those who carried the point, were condemned by the public as if they lost charity, by the manner in which they carried on the contest; but if Fenelon erred in theory, he was led astray by an excess in his desire of charity. By this adversity and submission he improved his own charity and humility to perfection, and arrived at the most easy disposition of heart, disengaged from every thing in the world, bowed down to a state of pliability and docility not to be expressed, and grounded in a love of simplicity which extinguished in him every thing besides. Those who admired these virtues in him before were surprised at the great heights to which he afterward carried them; so much he appeared a new man, though before a model of piety and humility. As to the distinction of the motives in our love of God, in practice, too nice or anxious an inquiry is generally fruitless and pernicious: for our business is more and more to die to ourselves, purify our hearts, and employ our understanding in the contemplation of the divine perfections and heavenly mysteries, and our affections in the various acts of holy love, a boundless field in which our souls may freely take their range. And while we blame the extravagances of false mystics, we must never fear being transported to excesses in practice by the love of God. It can never be carried too far, since the only measure of our love to God is to love without measure, as St. Bernard says. No transports of *pure* love can carry souls aside from the right way, so long as they are guided by humility and obedience. In disputes about such things, the

mission they were stung with bitter gall in their hearts, and regarded this treatment as an unjust and unreasonable impediment to the exercises of their zeal, for which they thought themselves qualified: as if any other disposition than that of distrust in themselves and perfect humility could draw down the blessing of God upon their functions. This presumption hurried them blindly into many other more grievous sins, which passion palliated under the names of virtues. In the saint's disgrace, one of them, called F. Diego Evangelista, ran over the whole province to beg and trump up accusations against the servant of God, and boasted that he had sufficient proofs to have him expelled the Order. The saint said nothing all this while only that he was ready to receive with joy any punishment. Every body at that time forsook him; all were afraid of seeming to have any commerce with him, and burnt the letters which they had received from him, lest they might be involved in his disgrace. St. John had no other comfort or refuge but prayer, in which the abundant consolations of the Holy Ghost rendered his sufferings sweet to him. This storm ceased when the informations of Diego were laid before the superiors; for had they been all true, they amounted to nothing which deserved any chastisement. The sweetness of the divine love and peace which overflowed the soul of the servant of God all this

utmost care is necessary that charity be not lost in them, that envy and pride be guarded against, and that sobriety and moderation be observed in all inquiries; for nothing is more frequent than for the greatest geniuses in pursuing subtilties to lose sight both of virtue and of good sense and reason itself. See Bossuet's works on this subject, t. 6. especially his *Mystici in Tuto*, in which he is more correct than in some of his other pieces; also Du Plessis (*Hist. de l'Eglise de Meaux*, t. 1. p. 485.) The several lives of Fenelon &c.

time, filled him with interior joy, which increased in proportion as he was more abandoned by creatures. "The soul of one who serves God," said the saint,¹ "always swims in joy, always keeps holiday, is always in her palace of jubilation, ever singing with fresh ardour and fresh pleasure, a new song of joy and love."

St. John, living in the practice of extreme austerities, and in continual contemplation, fell sick, and when he could no longer conceal his distemper, the provincial ordered him to leave Pegnuela, that place being destitute of all relief, and gave him the choice either to go to Baëza or to Ubeda. The first was a very convenient convent, and had for prior an intimate friend of the saint. The other was poor, and F. Francis Chrysostom was prior there, the other person whom he had formerly corrected and who was no less his enemy than F. Diego. The love of suffering made St. John prefer this house of Ubeda. The fatigue of his journey had caused his leg to swell exceedingly, and it burst in many places from the heel quite to the knee, besides five ulcers or wounds under his foot. He suffered excessive pains from the violence of the inflammation, and from the frequent incisions and operations of the surgeons, from the top to the bottom of his leg. His fever all this time allowed him no rest. These racking pains he suffered three whole months with admirable patience in continual peace, tranquillity, and joy, never making the least complaint, but often embracing the crucifix, and pressing it close upon his breast when the pain was very sharp. The unworthy prior treated him with the utmost inhumanity, forbade any one to be admitted to see him, changed the infirmarian because he served him with tenderness, locked him up in a little cell, made him

¹ St. John of the Cross, *Flame of love*, p. 523.

continual harsh reproaches, and would not allow any thing but the hardest bread and food, refusing him even what seculars sent in for him, all which the saint suffered with joy in his countenance. God himself was pleased to complete his sacrifice, and abandoned him for some time to a great spiritual dryness, and a state of interior desolation. But his love and patience were the more heroic. God likewise stretched out his hand to bring the dove into the ark when she seemed almost sinking in the waters, overwhelming his chaste soul again with the torrent of his delights with which he so often strengthened the martyrs, converting their torments into pleasures. The provincial happening to come to Ubeda a few days before his death, was grieved to see this barbarous usage, opened the door of his cell, and said, that such an example of invincible patience and virtue ought to be public, not only to his religious brethren but to the whole world. The prior of Ubeda opened his eyes, begged the saint's pardon, received his instructions for the government of his community, and afterward accused and condemned himself with many tears. As for the saint himself, we cannot give a better description of the situation of his holy soul in his last moments than in his own words, where he speaks of the death of a saint:¹ "Perfect love of God makes death welcome, and most sweet to a soul. They who love thus, die with burning ardours and impetuous flights, through the vehemence of their desires of mounting up to their beloved. The rivers of love in the heart, now swell almost beyond all bounds, being just going to enter the ocean of love. So vast and so serene are they that they seem even now calm seas, and the soul overflows with torrents of joy, upon the point of entering into the full possession

¹ *Flamma vivi Amoris*, p. 507.

of God. She seems already to behold that glory, and all things in her seem already turned into love, seeing there remains no other separation than a thin web, the prison of the body being almost broken." Though the Holy Ghost varies his operations and gifts in his servants, this seems the exact portraiture of the soul of our saint upon the point of leaving this world. Two hours before he died he repeated aloud the *Miserere* psalm with his brethren; then he desired one to read to him part of the book of Canticles, appearing himself in transports of joy. He at length cried out: *Glory be to God*; pressed the crucifix on his breast, and after some time said: *Lord, into thy hands I commend my soul*: with which words he calmly breathed forth his soul on the 14th of December in 1591, being forty-nine years old, of which he had spent twenty-eight in a religious state. St. Teresa in her epistles and other works styles him a saint even before he had embraced her reformed Order, and says that he was one of the most pure souls in the Church, to whom God had communicated great treasures of light, and whose understanding he had filled with the science of the saints. Almighty God exalted him after his death by several miracles; amongst which the cure of a nun of the Annunciation, at Neuf-Chateau in Lorrain, struck with a palsy, in 1705, effected on the ninth day of a Novena of devotion to this saint, was juridically proved in the court of the bishop of Toul. St. John was canonized by Benedict XIII. in 1726, and his office in the Roman breviary was appointed on the 24th of November. His body remains at Segovia. A history of his revelations, and many miracles, with an exact account of his writings, and mystical theology, may be read in his life by F. Dositheus of St. Alexis.

The spirit of Christianity is the spirit of the cross. To attain to, and to live by, pure love, we

must live and die upon the cross, or at least in the spirit of the cross. Jesus merited all the graces we receive by suffering for us; and it is by suffering with him that we are best prepared to be enriched with them. Hence afflictions are part of the portion which, together with the hundred-fold of his consolations, he has promised to his most beloved servants. His most holy and innocent mother bore a large share in all his sufferings. His apostles and other most faithful servants, in proportion to the high degree in which they stood in his favour, drank of this cup. Those souls which he has raised to the highest degree of familiarity in this life, he always prepared for that grace by severe trials. Dr. Henry Boudon, archdeacon of Evreux, whose progress in an interior life is manifest from his *Reign of God in a Soul*, and several other works, was attacked by slanders, persecuted by his own bishop, and expelled with so much infamy that scarce was he able to find any one, even in distant provinces, that would receive him under his roof. He was, moreover, perfectly acquainted with the state of interior anguish and desolation; which he describes from his own experience in his *holy Paths of the Cross*. M. de Bernieres Louvigni, a gentleman of Normandy, and treasurer of France at Caën, who trained up Dr. Boudon and other eminent clergymen, infused into them the maxims of true piety, and sent zealous missionaries into the East and West Indies, and other remote kingdoms, living always a layman in the world, was one of the most excellent contemplatives of the last century. The perfection of an interior life he attained by the most profound humility, perfect disengagement of his heart from hearthly things, and assiduous prayer and holy meditation. Yet this preparation for those sublime graces would have remained imperfect, had not the good use of

many severe afflictions completed the crucifixion of the old man in his heart. The same all the saints assure us by their own example. But in the divine love they found a recompense, which richly paid them for all its cost, this love being its own present reward, as it is a fire which is its own fuel.

ST. CHRYSOGONUS, M.

THE name of this holy martyr, who was apprehended at Rome, but beheaded at Aquileia in the persecution of Dioclesian, occurs in the canon of the mass, and is mentioned in the ancient Calendar of Carthage of the fifth century,¹ and in all Western martyrologies since that time. The church in Rome of which he is titular saint, is mentioned in a council held by pope Symmachus, and in the epistles of St. Gregory the Great; it gives title to a cardinal priest. The head of St. Chrysogonus is shown there in a rich case; but his body is at Venice.

SS. FLORA AND MARY, VV. MM.

IN the reign of Abderramene II. king of the Saracens at Cordova in Spain, Flora, because she was of Mahometan extraction by her father, but had been secretly instructed in the faith by her mother, was impeached by her own brother before the *cadi*, or judge of the city. This magistrate caused her to be scourged, and beaten on the head till in some parts her skull was bare. Then he put her into the hands of her brother that he might overcome her resolution. After some time she made her escape over a high wall, and took shelter with a sister at Ossaria. Having lain concealed some time, she ventured back to

¹ Ap. Mabil, Annal. t, 3. p. 417,