

opening to me his Paradise. After that, they may burn me, they may torture me, and make me suffer a thousand deaths; but they cannot prevent my loving him."

Animated by the same sentiment, a good Old Man replied to some Infidels, who reproached him, saying that his Faith was useless, since the God whom he adored did not cure him of a painful disease, which made his life not a blessing for which he should thank him, but an unbearable burden. "My friends," he said to them, "you would condemn your own words if you would raise your eyes to Heaven, to which I try to keep my heart attached. You count the diseases of the body in the number of misfortunes; and, in truth, they are a misfortune for you, who know no other happiness than in this life. But the Christians look upon them as a blessing, [165] when they think of what the Faith teaches us,—that God will reward us in Heaven according to the measure of our sorrows and of our joys, provided we thank him alike for both, because he orders both of them for our good, the reason being, doubtless, that he loves us even in this life since he will love us forever."

The answer of another Old Man, aged 70 years, was no less inspired by the Spirit of Faith, when the reproach was cast at him that God had no pity on him, because of a stroke of paralysis that had deprived him of the use of an arm. "What!" he replied, "would you wish that there should be no dried trees in the woods and no dead branches on a tree that is growing old? For my part, I take pleasure in seeing my limbs wither; and the approach of death has not frightened me, since I have the Faith