

that none can deceive him. [83] Then, not contenting ourselves with a prayer which would issue from our lips, but employing all the efforts of our heart in hating, without dissimulation, the enormity of our sins, God, I believe, will show us mercy; and, compelling us to love him, he will give us the grace to love him in good earnest."

Let us end this Chapter with the feelings of a mother on the death of a child who was her only treasure. "My God," she said to him, "I cannot complain of you. A thousand times, I have offered you both my life and that of this my child, whom I love more than myself; if you took both the one and the other, I would see the end of my troubles, and death would be as sweet to me as it now seems to me bitter. But if you please to content yourself with the half of my offering, what can I say in my grief, save that you are the master, and that it is for us to obey? It is enough for me that I live in the hope that one day you will show me mercy in Heaven,—that I may believe, from now on, that everything which can happen to me in this world, coming from you, can be only through love and for my good."

"No," said at other times this poor [84] afflicted mother, "I believe that God chooses to try me in this manner, so as to constrain me to have recourse to his goodness. Before the affliction, I was, as it were, drowsy, and often I forgot him; since then, I think only of him, because in him alone I find solace for my pains." At other times, she said to herself at the height of her grief: "Since God foresaw that my daughter was to die before the age of discretion, why had he rendered her so lovable? Why did he not take her to himself as soon as she appeared in