

The Absence of Feeling and the Revelation of Self No Sufficient Causes of Distress.

by Francois Fenelon

The absence of feeling and the revelation of self are not sufficient causes of distress, and we must learn to live in humility and obedience to God.

Scripture: John 10:11

Topics: "Church Leadership", "Good Shepherd"

Description

Greek Word Studies, in a sermon on the role of a shepherd, emphasizes the importance of shepherds in tending, guiding, and guarding the flock of believers, drawing parallels to the care and leadership provided by Jesus as the ultimate Good Shepherd. The term 'shepherd' is used metaphorically for church leaders who are called to exercise administrative and protective activities over the community of believers, reflecting God's love for His people. The shepherd's duty is to graze, guide, and guard the flock, ensuring effective and urgent action in caring for them.

Transcript

LETTER XX.

The absence of feeling and the revelation of self no sufficient causes of distress.

I pray God that this new year may be full of grace and blessing to you. I am not surprised that you do not enjoy recollection as you did on being delivered from a long and painful agitation. Everything is liable to be exhausted. A lively disposition, accustomed to active exertion, soon languishes in solitude and inaction. For a great number of years you have been necessarily much distracted by external activity, and it was this circumstance that made me fear the effect of the life of abandonment upon you. You were at first in the fervor of your beginnings, when no difficulties appear formidable. You said with Peter, it is good for us to be here; but it is often with us as it was with him, that we know not what we say. (Mark ix. 56.) In our moments of enjoyment, we feel as if we could do everything; in the time of temptation and discouragement, we think we can do nothing, and believe that all is lost. But we are alike deceived in both.

You should not be disturbed at any distraction that you may experience; the cause of it lay concealed within even when you felt such zeal for recollection. Your temperament and habits all conduce to making you active and eager. It was only weariness and exhaustion that caused you to relish an opposite life. But,

by fidelity to grace, you will gradually become permanently introduced into the experience of which you have had a momentary taste. God bestowed it that you might see whither He would lead you; He then takes it away, that we may be made sensible that it does not belong to us; that we are neither able to procure nor preserve it, and that it is a gift of grace that must be asked in all humility.

Be not amazed at finding yourself sensitive, impatient, haughty, self-willed; you must be made to perceive that such is your natural disposition. We must bear the yoke of the daily confusion of our sins, says St. Augustine. We must be made to feel our weakness, our wretchedness, our inability to correct ourselves. We must despair of our own heart, and have no hope but in God. We must bear with ourselves, without flattering, and without neglecting a single effort for our correction.

We must be instructed as to our true character, while waiting for God's time to take it away. Let us become lowly under his all-powerful hand; yielding and manageable as often as we perceive any resistance in our will. Be silent as much as you can. Be in no haste to judge; suspend your decisions, your likes and dislikes. Stop at once when you become aware that your activity is hurried, and do not be too eager even for good things.

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