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The Practice of the Presence of God

In Modern English

Brother Lawrence

Translated into Modern English by Marshall Davis, Amazon, 2013

FIRST CONVERSATION Written by Monsignor Joseph de Beaufort

- I first met Brother Lawrence on August 3, 1666. He told me that God had done a supreme, work of grace in his life through his conversion at the age of eighteen. It happened in winter. He had noticed a tree stripped of its leaves. He realized that in a little while the leaves would return, and the flowers and fruit would appear. At that moment he clearly saw the Providence and Power of God. That awareness of God had never dimmed. This experience had perfectly set him free from this world. It ignited in him a love for God that was so great that he could not tell whether it had increased during the forty years since that day.

- He said that all bodily spiritual disciplines and exercises are useless. All that is needed to bring us to union with God is love. He had pondered this subject much, and concluded that the shortest way to God was to go straight to Him by a continual exercise of love and doing everything for His sake.

LETTERS

- To practice this correctly, the heart must be empty of all other things. God will possess the heart alone.

- God knows what we are able to do. So let us begin to do it.

- Do not restrict yourself to certain religious rules or forms of devotion. Instead act with a general trust in God, with love and humility.

- What you are telling me is nothing new. You are not the only one who has trouble with wandering thoughts. Our minds are extremely unfocussed. But our will is the master of all our faculties, and it is able to rein them in and carry them to God, which is their final goal.

SPIRITUAL MAXIMS

- Without humble reliance on the ever-present assistance of God, they drag the soul down in spite of all resistance. To rely on God's help seems difficult, but grace makes it easy, and it brings joy.

- Authentic union is perfect union. In genuine union the soul is intensely active. – It is deeply spiritual, yet very simple. It fills us with a joy that is completely calm, and with a love that is very humble and reverent.

- Our acts of worship are to be prompted and guided by faith. We must honestly believe that God is really within our souls.

- The presence of God is the life and nourishment of the soul.