

be instructed how to get over this trouble, which was a hindrance to his salvation. After his prayer he went out to his cell, and saw a person, the exact image of himself, seated at work making mats out of palm leaves. The saint perceived it was an angel who took this form, and acted in this manner to make him understand how, by going from work to prayer, and from prayer to work, he could cheerfully and surely work out his salvation. The old hermits of the desert all understood this. They did not dare to be idle, but made baskets, cultivated the ground, spent all their time in labor or prayer, and so worked out their salvation in the utmost security.

We cannot have the life of those old hermits of the desert over again nowadays ; but, outside the walls of the convent, whose life is most like theirs ? That of the good laborer, who earns his own living at service, or at some other honest employment. He it is who enjoys, more than any others that I know of, the advantages which these old saints coveted so much -- who can spend his days in work and prayer, and thus keep off the evil one, and work out his salvation with comparative ease. Do not then complain of labor, but rejoice, and thank God that He has given you not a life of idleness, but honest and continual labor. It is a very great favor of His love, as you will see, when this body of the flesh falls away, and you stand on the other side of eternity.

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