

rain; but it pleased the Almighty to snatch him from the precipice.' He was then in his fiftieth year.

At this time, continues our author, a poor layman, a devotee of secular learning, but deeply versed in the science of the saints, dwelt in Germany, at a distance of about 50 miles from Cologne; it pleased the Almighty to make him the instrument of his merciful designs on Thaulerus. God revealed to this layman his intentions in respect to Thaulerus, and ordered him to repair immediately to Cologne, and there to conduct himself in the commission entrusted to him, as the Holy Spirit should suggest. He disclosed to him the real state of Thaulerus's interior; his good qualities, his defects, and what was wanting to make him a perfect follower of Christ.

Without delay, the layman repaired to Cologne. He attended at a sermon preached by Thaulerus; and, when it was finished, he presented himself before Thaulerus, and requested him to be his spiritual director while he should stay in that city: Thaulerus assented to his request; and the layman spent three months in prayer and penance under his direction.

At the end of them, he besought Thaulerus to preach a sermon on the best means of attaining the height of spiritual perfection. 'Why,' said Thaulerus, 'do you make this request to me?' What will you understand of a discourse which necessarily must be sublime?' The layman humbly replied, 'That, though he might not be capable of understanding such sublime speculations, he might nevertheless be moved by them to desire, with humility, the perfection which they inculcated: and, perhaps,' he said 'there may be some one among the audience to whom such a discourse may be essentially useful.' After much entreaty, Thaulerus consented to preach the sermon requested of him. He preached it a few days after; the audience were charmed, and the preacher and his eloquence were the discourse of the day.

On the following morning the layman waited on Thaulerus; repeated to him, word for word, the whole of his sermon, and then humbly requested his leave to comment particularly upon it. To this Thaulerus consented; and the layman then pointed out those passages in it, where purity of heart, detachment from creatures, and real humility, were most inculcated. He then opened to Thaulerus the inmost recesses of his heart, and made him sensible how much he fell short of the doctrine which he had inculcated; and concluded by telling him, that he was little better than a Pharisee.

Up to that word, Thaulerus heard the layman with patience; but it then failed him, and he began to justify himself with some warmth. The layman would not allow him to proceed: 'I call him a Pharisee,' he said, who, being full of himself, or too sensible of the esteem of men, seeks in his actions, however otherwise good and holy, his own glory, and not the glory of God. Consider, if you are not

of this number. With what dispositions did you begin your studies? With what self-complaisance did you contemplate your progress in them? What satisfaction have you in thinking of your dignity of Doctor? Of the gifts with which heaven has favoured you? In stead of referring them to the glory of God, who should have all your love, and all your trust, you regard yourself too much: and thus, with all your knowledge, you are really ignorant; and with all your labours, sermons, and writings, you do little good. Your doctrine is heavenly; the word of God is often on your lips; but in consequence of your want of humility, you yourself do not relish the truths which you teach, and they produce little effect on your hearers. The pure of heart, those who seek God only, are shocked by your sermons, which contain many good things, but abound too much with yourself.' Here the holy layman paused.

For some time Thaulerus was silent: he was confounded with the clear view, which, for the first time, he had of his vanity and defects: but it was the moment of grace. 'I acknowledge,' he said to his instructor, the truth of all you say. The Holy Spirit speaks by you to me. You read into my heart; God only can enable you to do it. I was a stranger to my heart; complete what you have so well begun; you are my guide, my teacher, my master.'

Satisfied with his good dispositions, the layman put into the hands of Thaulerus a writing, containing the true principles of a spiritual life, and desired him to reflect seriously on it, and give himself up for a few days to retirement and devotion. Thaulerus obeyed; and during his retreat, the layman frequently called on him, explained to him the science of the saints, and watched his progress in it. He inculcated to him the necessity of humility, of mortification, of self-renunciation, and of living for God alone. When he found that Thaulerus was thoroughly initiated in these holy doctrines, the layman informed him, that the will of God called him elsewhere, and that he should be absent from him during two years. 'During that time,' said the layman, 'you must abstain from preaching, from teaching, from hearing confessions, from direction of souls, and all other public functions. You must faithfully practise the ordinary duties of the community; and when you are not employed in them, you must remain in your cell; abstain from the pursuit of profane science, and, in solitude and silence, incessantly bewail your sins at the foot of the cross. You will suffer much, both in mind and body; but you will not be wholly without divine consolation. Above all things, trust in God. You will learn at length to renounce yourself, to take up his cross and follow him.'

Thaulerus obeyed these lessons most punctually.