

assistance of Jesus who would love to be the companion of his adolescence, of his life-journey, of its sorrows and dangers. « O Friend, do not part with Me, » says Jesus to the boy wishing to leave Him for sin's sake, « love Me and I shall love you, and if you love Me, you will be the beloved one of My Father, and He will come with Me and live in your heart forever; and our coming will bring you all you may desire, everything that can make you happy ! » Alas! the young man will no longer look at Him, he shuns the presence of Jesus who alone knows the greatness of the storms waging in his heart, who alone can extinguish the flames consuming his young existence. He parts with Jesus, and Jesus sorrowfully permits him to go, because He leaves all freedom to everyone who has no desire to remain in His service, His company. *Man must be virtuous by choice and not by restraint.*

Behold the young man gone « *abroad into a far country !* » What happened to him? There, friendless, unknown, inexperienced, he soon became the dupe of would-be friends. There, he squandered all his riches in pleasures and amusements. He met with destruction there where he had hoped to find enjoyment, life and happiness. He lost all with the loss of self. By opening his heart to poisonous joys, he paid dearly for those pleasures that have always begotten shame and remorse. He exchanged his virtue for vices he had never known before.

But where is that « *far country* »? It is there where the darkness of sin is to be found; consequently, wheresæver one lives at a distance from God, deprived of His light and grace. God is never where sin exists, and where He is not, His grace is not to be found, and without that vivifying dew the soul soon languishes and dies.

« *And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want.* » How could he be otherwise than poor and miserable since he had abandoned the fountain of all riches. Are God's gifts to be found in a heart burdened with sin? No, the fountain soon dries and the soul quickly withers. It did not take long for the Prodigal to learn this truth. He soon began to experience the frightful consequences of his waywardness. Where there is no moderation