

of spiritual declension has been brought about by his not living *near* Christ—by allowing the world, Satan and the flesh to obtain a mastery over the soul—and thus a heavy cloud has settled down upon it, hiding the Father's face from him; and in this darkness of separation from God the poor believer exists. Bleak winter is howling where tropical summer might reign. Nothing can be more sad than such a state, because every hour that he continues out of communion with God, the Holy Spirit is grieved, the Saviour slighted, and the Father's love wearied by the backsliding of His child.

Such are the people to whom our Lord addresses His most severe words of condemnation in His epistles to the churches—the Christians who shall be **SAVED**, but *so as by fire*—the Christians who doubtless will take **A PLACE** in the kingdom of God, but who will be there without the glorious **CROWN** promised to the faithful in Christ Jesus.

Our blessed Lord in the 15th chapter of St. John describes the effects of union with Himself thus:—"Every branch **IN ME** that