

so that having tasted of the sweetness of the spirit, the flesh and the world seem wholly vile. Whence the Lord saith to those that perfectly renounce this world: "Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold; and shall possess life everlasting." (St. Matth. xix. 29.)

3. But because that many seek after vain consolations, and turn away to external objects, therefore do they not feel the grace of devotion, nor deserve to receive the heavenly illumination. Wherefore, the most sure way of pleasing God,—and what is meritorious of greater grace and glory,—is to fly the world, to leave your friends, to despise temporal things, to assume a stricter life, to renounce your own will, to live in obedience, to be continually employed, to macerate the flesh by watching and fasting, to apply earnestly to reading and prayer, to strive daily against temptations and vices, to loathe the present, to long after the eternal, to see continually the grace of God, to keep carefully when found, to think meanly of thyself, to lend a willing service to others, to wish to please God alone, to endeavour to converse among your brethren without quarrels, and firmly to persevere in the holy purpose you have set before you, with a great desire of advancing more and more. These belong to the true disciple of Christ, and these lead the servant of God, without doubt, to the heavenly kingdom.

Whence our loving Master said to his chosen disciples: "You are they who have continued with me in my temptations; and I dispose to you, as my Father hath disposed to me, a kingdom; that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." (St. Matt. xxii. 28.)

THE NOVICE. 1. What thou hast said pleaseth me; for I am comforted in these words, I am comforted in the Lord, and in the hope of eternal life, for which I labour, and breathe now joyfully. "For I reckon, that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." (Ad. Rom. viii. 18.) And verily to those that faithfully serve God, it shall be well with them now, and they shall receive still greater things in the time to come. For "we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good," (Id. v. 28.)—doth things to come.

2. Wherefore, I beseech thy clemency, that you may confirm my wavering mind by thy holy words, and if thou knowest of any good examples, propose them for mine imitation. For though I have heard many and illustrious examples of men of old, yet I would hear also good things of those of our own days; nevertheless, unfold to me the causes that retard my spiritual proficiency, that so I may beware of the frauds of the enemy, and may be able to follow the paths of the just with foot that offendeth not.