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THE MANUAL OF THE LITTLE ONES.

(By the B. Thomas a Kempis.)

PUBLISHED IN CONNECTION WITH THE CROSS.

Extra Number.

HALIFAX, MARCH 23, 1843.

Price—One Penny.

CHAPTER. I.

ON THE CALLING OF THE LITTLE ONES TO CHRIST.

1. "SINITE parvulos venire ad me, talium est enim regnum cœlorum." (St. Matt. xix. 14.)

"Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come to me, for the kingdom of heaven is of such."

Such are the words of JESUS Christ, our sovereign pastor and heavenly teacher, in the school of our God, which he spoke to his disciples and to the multitude, when little children were brought before him by their parents for him to lay his hands on them. And our holy Master, and sweet Lord (according to St. Mark x. 16.) embracing them, and laying his hands upon them, blessed them, and said, "Amen, I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter into it." (Ibid. v. 15.) And again, according to St. Matthew, he said to the adults, "unless you be converted, and become like little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

2. O good shepherd, and sweet master, how sweetly dost thou speak, and how truly dost thou teach, and in few words show to all men, that the right way of going to the kingdom of God is by the way of humility?

These holy words console the humble and the poor: rebuke the proud and the rich. but comfort the simple and

the innocent. For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James iv. 6.) now in this present life, and glory in that which is to come.

In all the good then which you do, or speak, or think, do not withdraw from humility, lest you lose all that you do, —for no good works avail unless they be founded in humility, and suffused with the honey of charity, and done with a pure intention for the honour of God. Beware of pride, which is the deep pit of all vices, and the ruin of all virtues. Be thou innocent and guileless as a little child, pure from all malice, and thou wilt be beloved of God and of me, and at peace with thyself.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS AND HIS HUMILITY.

1. "Discite a me," inquit JESUS, "quia mitis sum, et humilis corde." (St. Matt. xi. 29.)

"Learn of me," saith JESUS, "because I am meek, and humble of heart." Oh, humility—the virtue of Christ, how dost thou confound the pride of our vanity, who desire to be praised for a little good, and refuse to be blamed for the many evils we have done! O sweet JESU, who hast borne so many evils for us, who hast done none, and who hast conferred on us innumerable blessings which we deserved not, nor are worthy

to receive! For all that thou hast done for us is of thy grace and boundless mercy, and yet thou still continuest to vouchsafe, every day, by sparing us in our crimes, and by blessing us with many blessings! Thanks be unto thee, O most merciful God, for ever, but woe unto us for our ingratitude, lukewarmness, and pride, notwithstanding all thy benefits and promises!

CHAPTER III.

ON THE PURITY AND SUBLIMITY OF THE APOSTLE ST. JOHN.

1. "Ecce puer meus electus, quem elegi." (Esai. li. 2.)

"Behold my beloved servant whom I have chosen."

What gave to the blessed Apostle John so clear an intellect, and made him so beloved by our Lord Jesus Christ, that he should understand and write such lofty mysteries of God, far beyond all the doctors in the world?

It was his great purity of mind and body, his perfect charity, burning towards God and his neighbour, not in word only and speech, but in deed and in truth. For this he himself testifieth openly in his epistle, when writing of this twofold charity. But if ye cannot rise with St. John the Evangelist to the contemplation of such exalted mysteries of the Holy Trinity, yet be zealous in meditating and following the humility and patience of Christ with the sick Lazarus. And though you may not be able to fly up with St. Paul to the third heavens, yet learn to weep and implore forgiveness with the blessed Mary Magdalene at the feet of Jesus.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE SANCTITY AND EXCELLENCE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

1. "Vas electionis mihi est." (Act. ix. 15.)

"This man is to me a vessel of election."

Who is it made St. Paul so great and exalted in the sight of God?

It was his contempt of the world and all earthly things, his self-denial and mortification of the flesh, and his casting away all temporal honour, and, more than these, his perfect love of God and his neighbour, by serving Christ in this world, for no earthly gain, or self-advantage.

Among all the many revelations made to him by God, what did he teach the most often or impress the most constantly to the faithful at Rome, Corinth, Galatia, or all over the world? It was Jesus Christ, and him crucified for us, for whom he desired to suffer many things, and feared not to die, for the honour and love of his name. He bore about in his body and his heart daily the marks of his passion.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE GREAT HUMILITY OF ST. FRANCIS.

1. "This is he who despised the life of the world." (Ant. Eccl.)

"Hic est qui contempsit vitam mundi."

What made the humble St. Francis so devout and so beloved of God in this life, and so exalted in glory? Verily it was his profound humility, and because in all the divine blessings and daily exercises he bore about with

him the passion of Christ; and with a mind filled with love, mourned over the wounds of his sorrow, meditated thereon most deeply, wept over them most bitterly, and loved most burningly. For great grace is conferred on the humble, and on such as daily cultivate the passion of Christ.

For the truly humble considers not himself as such; neither does he lift himself up for the good he may do; but he esteems himself viler than all others, and truly confesses that he is below all. He looks upon all his evil, and weeps; but when he sees another's good he rejoiceth thereat, for which he praiseth and blesseth God, praying that He may have mercy upon him, and free him from all his evil.

CHAPTER VI.

ON GOOD THOUGHTS AGAINST EVIL.

1. "Vade retro, Satana." St. Matt. xvi. 23.)

"Go behind me Satan."

As a soldier of Christ, address these words to all the evil phantoms of the devil; for they are the holy words and works of Christ.

Wherefore, against the fiery darts of the flesh, call to mind Christ's bitter wounds. Against the weariness of heart let the sweet name of Jesus be ever in thy mouth. Against all wicked suspicions and indignation towards others, think of all the faults thou hast committed from thy first birth till now, and cease to be angry. Let all thy good be common with others, and done for the praise of God; but impute thy evil to thyself alone, and turn thee to more fervent amendment.

2. When you rest from external labour, forthwith let a psalm or the praise

of God be in thy heart and in thy mouth. The heart cannot long rest still, for either it imagineth good or evil; either it turneth to sorrow or joy, like the vane that is moved by the wind.

Wherefore, that evil may not rush in suddenly and stain thee, sow therein holy words, like clean grains, in thy heart, and turning them diligently there, convert them into food. O would that your good words and prayers were as many as thine evil words; that thou reflected and meditated on as much good as thou hast thought on what is wicked and hurtful.

Open thy heart to Christ, and close it to the devil, that thy soul may be in heaven, not on earth. Christ speaketh to thee in every word of God, and in every book written with the finger of the Holy Spirit. For whatsoever you read, or write, or understand of the holy Scriptures, is the consolation of a faithful soul in tribulation, and a remedy against the poison of the devil, and recall the heart of a wandering mind to its God in heaven.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE SHORT DURATION OF EVERYTHING UNDER HEAVEN.

1. "Vanitas omnis homo vivens." (Ps. xxxiii. 6.)

"All men living is vanity." He is to-day, and to-morrow is not to be found.

The rich and the poor perisheth, the young and the old; as the fair perisheth, so does the swarthy; as the learned, so the unlearned.

Great and small, noble and base, lord and servant, seperior and subject alike perish.

Honours perish, and reputation passes away; as the scholar so the masetr,

as the clerk so the layman, as the canon so the monk.

The theologian passes away, and so the astronomer, the physician and all that are skilled in any art. Behold, all things perish, but to love God and live justly!

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE DEVOTION OF THE HOLY KING DAVID IN PRAYER.

1. "Quis enim in omnibus sicut David fidelis." (Ant. Eccl.)

"For who among all was as faithful David," hastening to the kingdom of the heavenly king? In the day he was a brave soldier, fighting against his enemies, and in the night, a devout monk, praying with sighs and tears for the sins he had committed. But, above all, he poured out his grateful thanks to God, for the innumerable mercies specially vouchsafed to him, and for all others conferred on every creature whom he had wonderfully created and adorned to the glory of his holy name.

And yet, lest pride might creep in for the good he had received, he calls out in his praise. "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory." (Ps. cxiii. 1-9.) And lest he should fall under his adversaries, he exclaims: "Be thou my helper," O Lord, "forsake me not." (Ps. xxvi. 9.) And lest he should be ever ungrateful, he says: "Blessed be the name of the Lord, from henceforth, now, and for ever." (Ps. cxii. 1.)

CHAPTER IX.

ON POVERTY OF SPIRIT FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.

1. "Tanquam nihil habentes," in

hoc mundo, "et omnia possidentes," cum Christo. (2 Cor. vi. 10.)

"As having nothing," in this world, "and possessing all things," with Christ.

O holy poverty of spirit, to be beloved above all the honours and riches of this world, which Christ taught and kept unto the end of his life, and forsook all things entirely, for our example.

For this, how many wise and noble, how many rich and powerful have forsaken all to follow Christ, and made a voluntary choice of it, for the sake of the kingdom of heaven?

O how great is the liberty of the pure soul, that, for the love of JESU, desireth to have none of the pomp and circumstance of this vain world!

Verily, what great security of conscience, and joy of heart it is to live in subjection and obedience, and for the sake of JESUS Christ crucified to deny oneself even unto death?

O how heavenly is the manna, hid to the proud, but revealed unto the humble, growing up in the innocent, and tasted by the devout, who for their special consolation worship Christ who suffered and was crucified for them!

CHAPTER X.

ON THE SIMPLE BROTHER'S STUDY OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST.

"Salus tua ego sum, dicit Dominus." (Ps. xlvii. 7.)

"I am thy salvation, saith the Lord."

The simple and innocent brother findeth more sanctity and purity, and more knowledge and prudence, against all the wickedness of the devil, the errors of the world, and the filth of vices, in the life and passion of our Lord, than does the lofty speculator and subtle dis-

putant, in the consideration of the whole mechanism of the world.

Let us learn, then, to imitate the life and passion of Christ; for to speculate on the machine of this world, without God's praise and glory, is vanity and folly; and it is better to pray humbly to God, than search subtilly into heaven.

2. For it is the part of God, who created all, to govern all; but it is the part of man to keep his commandments, and to beware of sin. We should all be saints if we did these things: but because there are many who do them not, and live not well, therefore do many evils happen to them by the just judgment of God.

Fly, then, from the world, my brother; enter with gladness into thy cloister, and in soundness follow Christ by the strait and narrow way.

It is good for thee to enter heaven with one eye, rather than with two to be cast into hell, where, for all thy wicked deeds, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth for ever. Alas for them!

CHAPTER XI.

ON SINCERITY IN MANY VIRTUES.

1. "Estote rationabiles sine dolo."

"Desire the rational milk without guile." O sweet and holy word, that cometh from the mouth of St. Peter the Apostle; for these following are most pleasing unto God and his angels; chastity with humility; knowledge without being puffed up; prudence without presumption; eloquence without vain glory; gladness without extravagance; sorrow without bitterness; patience without murmuring; speaking without

falsehood; replying without deceit; promises fulfilled without procrastination; praise without vituperation; love without vice; prayer without weariness; gratitude to God for all good, without end; meditation without wandering; contemplation without obscurity; work without defilement; repose without sloth; the union of the soul with God, without intermission.

"Behold a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile." "O how good is God unto Israel, unto such as are right of heart!" Say, then, with David in the Psalm; cast aside all earthly good, and with all thy heart pray with him, saying: It is good for me to adhere unto God; it is good for me to put my hope in the Lord." (Ps. xli. 7.) "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." I wish, I desire nothing but Thee, O Lord, alone, for all my labour, and my reward in heaven. Amen.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE PRAISE OF GOD, OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE JUST.

"Rectos decet laudatio." (Ps. xxxiv. 1.)

"Praise becometh the upright."

Blessed is he who doeth all things with a pure intention, simply for the praise of God.

Blessed is he who at all times directeth his heart to the good pleasure of God, and seeketh after no private convenience in the end.

Blessed is he who casteth far from him all the impure idols of the enemy, but in his straits flies humbly to the arms of Christ crucified, and prays.

Well shall he go on, and Jesus shall be with him, whithersoever he goeth,

till he come with him to his eternal country.

2. O sweet name of JESUS, above the names of all the saints in heaven or on earth, to which every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, of things on earth, and of things under the earth, of angels and men!

Thou art the way of the just, the glory of the blessed, the hope of the poor, the health of the sick, the lover of the devout, and the comforter of all in tribulation.

Be unto me my help and my protector in my need, for thy holy names' sake, which is blessed for ever.

When I am poor, I shall praise thee; when I am sorrowful, I shall, praise thee.

When I am joyful, I shall praise thee wheresoever I may be, I shall praise thee. Amen.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON KEEPING A STRICT WATCH OVER THE HEART AND LIPS.

1. "Cor mundum crea in me, Deus." (Ps. I. 12.)

'Create in me a clean heart, O God.'

This prayer is very profitable and powerful against every vice, whether of long temptation, or rushing suddenly into the heart.

Nothing is more laborious, but at the same time more useful than to keep the heart from vain imaginings, and the mouth from idle words.

Nothing is more fruitful, than to give one's self to spiritual exercises, in prayer or meditation, in study or singing psalms, or in doing the works of charity with a willing mind.

Few words are enough for our need; many words are superfluous: words of levity bring on vanity; words of curiosity bring in detraction; harsh words excite trouble; haughty words beget pride; simple words show humility; words of truth bring pleasantness; words of falsehood provoke indignation; good words deserve praise; evil words deserve punishment; a holy life deserves eternal glory. Wherefore, he that keepeth a good watch over his heart, watcheth over the door of his life, lest he lose the grace of interior devotion, by the carelessness of his external speech.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON FREQUENT PRAYER.

"Quoniam oportet semper orare." (St. Luke xviii.)

"That we ought always to pray."

O how sweet and salutary an admonition; how pure and holy is prayer, touching the heavens, and deserting the earth; speaking with God, but silent with men!

This same word Christ teacheth to his Apostles, and to all religious. For as the body liveth and is nourished by earthly food, so is the soul strengthened by sacred words, by prayers, and by meditation. Great sorrow of heart for sins committed, and humble confession of thy sins, with a firm resolution of amendment, give great confidence to prayer; for nothing is so rich as a good will, nor so acceptable to God, nor so salutary to our salvation.

For as often as you pray to God, so often do you sigh and mourn over your sins; and because you sin daily, therefore you ought daily to pray and mourn,

and implore forgiveness for thine offences.

2. You pray much, if you mourn much; you pray little, if you mourn little. You obtain little, if you give but little attention to what you read and sing.

In many things there is access, but daily prayer, a groaning of the heart, with the fervour of the Holy Spirit, purgeth away all languor. He that prayeth not, nor mourneth over his daily faults, increaseth his punishment in the world to come. Be not, then, slothful in prayer, nor in devout thanksgiving to God, who never ceaseth to shower down his blessings upon us.

3. Wherefore, no place, no time, no work, no labour, no sorrow, ought to prevent us from praying, upon whom the eyes of God are ever open, here and everywhere, for ever.

For as often as you call to mind the Lord your God, and mourn, so often do you speak with him in secret and prayer.

If you cannot do so always with your mouth, yet you can and ought in mind and desire to call upon God, to sigh and to weep before him. For he ever prayeth unto God who thinketh what is good, speaketh what is good, and doeth what is good, for the honour of God. Amen.

CHAPTER XV.

ON DESERVING THE REWARD OF ETERNAL LIFE.

1. "Ecce merces vestra multa est in cælo." (St. Matt. v. 12.)

"For your reward is very great heaven!"

All present joy is short, and, alas! involved in much evil, but the kingdom of God is ever full of joy, and is eternal,

exalted high above sense and intellect. This no one can give unto thee, nor take away, but the only God, the Creator of all, the Judge of the living and the dead, that rendereth to every one according to his works.

Wherefore, in order to follow after, deserve and eternally obtain this kingdom, we must strive with fortitude; we must pray fervently; fast often; sigh often; mourn often; confess often; communicate often; we must minister devoutly; celebrate the adorable mysteries devoutly; sing Psalms devoutly; we must study diligently; we must keep silence strictly; we must serve gladly; we must obey readily.

2. We must bear all things patiently we must cast out all carnal desire instantly; we must shun all worldly intercourse particularly; we must fly from all that is base; follow all that is honourable; hate all that is vicious; love all that is virtuous; we must cut off all that is earthly, and cleave sovrantly to all that is heavenly.

This is the way of the heavenly life; and the form of the renunciation of this world in a religious state; that leadeth the *little children*, the meek and the chaste, to the beatitude of eternal life, and to the glory of the saints, to be enjoyed with Christ, for all eternity. Amen.

END OF THE MANUAL FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

Reading Room Notice!

THE SUBSCRIBER begs leave to notify the Public, that he has refitted up in connexion with the Exchange Reading Room, the READING ROOM lately occupied by Mr. Keefler, and that he is now ready to receive subscribers at the rate of THREE DOLLARS per annum.

March 7. 2w. GERRISH & TTS.

Four Chapters from the Dialogue of the Novices.

BY THOMAS A KEMPIE.

THE PROLOGUE.

“Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost” (St John vi. 13), said Christ to his disciples. For when the omnipotent and merciful Lord had filled five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, he ordered the fragments that remained to be gathered up lest they should be lost. In a mystic sense, these fragments are the words of the doctors, and the example of good men, which ought often to be deeply thought of, and diligently noted and gathered up in the books and tablets of the heart, as those were in baskets.

Urged by this consideration, for the exhortation of the novices, with God’s help, I have thought to note down in this work some few of the admonitions and examples of my predecessors; to the end that those who hear those good things may give greater praise to the highest God from whom all good proceeds; and that many, reading these things may be the more inflamed unto the contempt of the world.

THE NOVICE. 1. I pray thee, most dear Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, to take a watchful charge over me,—to teach me what is salutary, to correct my excesses with severity, to apply timely remedies to my passions; and if

you know of any good example, to propose it for my imitation: for to this end have I left the world, and the things that are in the world, that in a religious state I may more fully learn the will of God, and act so as I may live more secure from the temptations of this life, till, having finished my course I may deserve to obtain the reward of eternal blessedness with the faithful of Christ.

2. For I resolve, from this time to come, to order my whole life to the service of God, and to consummate the little time that yet remains unto me in the state of religion. Wherefore, behold me ready to undergo all labour, to acquiesce, in thine admonitions, and to comply with the rules of my elders, set forth for my salvation and progress, as becomes the noviciate, and the state of religion requires.

THAT DISCOURSE OF GOD IS VERY PROFITABLE TO THE NEWLY CONVERTED.

1. THE SENIOR. With pleasure I listen to thy words; and as far as I can do thee good, I shall comply with thy request. And may the grace of the Holy Spirit be with me now, that I may speak worthily, and our converse be pleasing to God, and profitable to our neighbours.

If there be a great art in teaching, it is to propose just things duly, and to confirm them by sacred testimony. I wish to talk with thee somewhat of God, and of the servants of God; that for the hearing thereof, comfort may com-

to you, and an increase of reward to me from such discourse. I trust in the Lord Jesus, that his mercy may not be wanting to our prayers, who hath promised that He will be present with those that speak of him, saying: "Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matth. xviii. 20.)

2 For it is now as when his two disciples were walking and discoursing of him in the way, he appeared unto them in the likeness of a stranger, and said: "What are these discourses that you hold one with another, as you walk, and are sad?" (St. Luke xxiv. 17) "And they said, concerning Jesus of Nazareth," (ver. 19.)

See how mercifully our Lord came unto them in their sadness, and joined them in presence. And because they spoke not of worldly matters, but of the works of their Saviour, therefore they deserved to be comforted by him, and moreover, to be instructed in the divine Scriptures; for presently they were so wondrously inflamed with the love of Christ, that they declared, in the wonder of the light that flowed from his sweet discourse: "Was not our heart burning within us whilst he spoke in the way, and opened unto us the Scriptures?" (St. Luke xxiv. 32.)

For as good conversation enkindles the heart of the pious to a love of heavenly things, and makes the fruits of virtue generate therein, so vain discourse corrupts good manners, loses the grace of God, quenches devotion, stains the conscience, and scandalises others.

Let us pray then, to the Lord, that he may lift up the light of his countenance upon us, and keep us from all evil deeds, and idle words; let us sit at the feet of Jesus, with Mary Magdalene, hearkening to his words (Luke x. 39), which can save our souls: and in all our works, let us show forth the good-will of God.

THE NOVICE. 1. Thou hast comforted me, and instructed me, by words and by the best examples. "Oh! that I may keep my ways, so that I may not offend with my tongue." May all my goings be directed ever in the sight of my God. Be not then angry with my questions, but tell, I pray thee, how one may come to the complete contempt of this world, and become the true disciple of Christ?

2. For I see many leave the world, and yet return into a worldly life. I observe others, who have taken upon them the religious habit, yet languish away from their former fervour. Some who open up the Church unto others, but who taste not of the sweetness thereof themselves. Some, too, I notice, who are carried away with external things, and by degrees decline to a perilous and hurtful license. I pray thee, then, do not let me wander without the orbit of perfection, but teach me plainly what to avoid and what to hold.

HOW TO HOLD TO GOOD EXAMPLE AND
TO SHUN BAD.

THE SENIOR. 1. The good disciple is ever ready to acquiesce in his master's

advice, and presume not rashly to undertake anything contrary to his judgment; but studies to preserve humility, fulfil obedience, deserve thanks, to hold peace, to keep a good conscience, and increase his glory.

For he that lends his ear to wisdom and knowledge in the beginning, cannot easily go astray, but shall rejoice in a blessed end, when his short toil is over. The more he advances in virtue, the more shall his wisdom increase; and the more humbly shall he bow to his superiors.

For the tree that raises its goodly branches aloft into the air must have its roots deeply set in the soil below, lest it fall, and be rooted up.

Let not therefore any sudden fear overcast thee, but put a firm trust in God; forsake thy own will, and bow thyself down in true humility. For the Lord shall be at thy side,—“who protecteth them that walk in simplicity” (Prov. ii. 7); and who revealeth his things unto the humble.

2 But that you may the better persevere in what is good, take thy rule of life from those who are better than thyself; search out wisdom from those more learned; seek counsel from the experienced, and with the devout hold converse.

If you should see some wandering from the way of truth, and going after Satan, do not imitate those that perish, but study rather, to be the more emulous of the good and fervent. Seek to be saved with the few, “and enter ye

in at the narrow gate:” for, as Christ hath witnessed, “Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat.” (St. Matth. vii. 13.)

Woe unto those that depart from the Lord their God, and return unto Egypt; that is, unto this world, darkened by sins, that they may feed upon the flesh-pots that quickly perish.

But, “Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; who meditateth in his law day and night, that he may walk in his ways.” (Ps. i. 3.)

Moreover, the merciful Lord deserteth not his own, but, as the good Shepherd, comforteth his sheep, who hear his voice and follow him even unto death, choosing rather to die in the conflict of temptation, than to consent unto sin, and to return basely unto the world. To such he hath said: “Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom.” (St. Luke ii. 32.) Why will you fear then, under such a shepherd, to fight for that eternal kingdom which He has promised to give unto you?—yea, and will do as he hath promised. And not only hath he promised that he will give future joys in the place of this world’s contempt, but even in this present life he gives to those that serve him, the consolation of the Holy Spirit, which is far better and more sweet than all this world’s gladness. For often to those that pray, he pours in the grace of devotion; and to those that meditate on the law of God, he opens the light of understanding;

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. Mat. 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.

OF A CERTAIN MATRON, WHO DEPLORED HER SON'S CONVERSION, BUT AFTERWARDS BEING HERSELF CONVERTED, GAVE THANKS TO GOD.

There was a certain matron, rich and worldly, who had an only son whom she loved tenderly, for he was adorned with the gifts of youth and knowledge, and comely manners; who, being inspired by the heavenly spirit, chose rather to serve God in humility, than to enjoy and make merchandise of his paternal goods in this world. Wherefore he withdrew himself from the sight of his friends, and sought a monastery of regulars, to converse with the Lord more in secret, and in greater perfection, by casting aside all this world's hindrances. Which resolution his widowed mother sought diligently, by prayers and lamentations, to make him recall, but all to no purpose.

She went, therefore, away to her own house, cast down with heavy grief, when there fell out in her city an unhappy accident, whereby the son of a certain rich man was struck by another traitorously, so that he died, to their much sorrow. On hearing of this, this matron casting in her mind the circumstances of the case, and turning to her own heart, being taught by others' peril she tempered her own grief, and argued with herself, saying: How well it has come to pass, that thou canst not hear this of thine own son, nor fear for him from another? Does he not serve God in his monastery in safety, who might

have perished at thy side in the world.

Wherefore, from that day, turning towards the goodness of God, she gave great thanks, nor any more mourned for her son as one lost; but rejoiced above measure for his conversion, and loved especially the friars regular, whom she oftentimes received into her house. And this she herself told me at her own table.

The Novice. Gladly do I listen to what you say, and I hope it may do much good to me and many others. It is indeed to be deplored that many parents so inordinately love their children, as rather to bring them up for the world, than for God; that they covet rather to puff them up by riches and honours, than to make them strong in virtue and good conversation.

Alas! that they have no thought of how suddenly death separates children from parents, and that no man, how rich or noble soever he may be, can deliver himself, or any of his friends, from the law of death; and yet we must all appear before the tribunal of strict judgment, each to account for how he has spent his life, and receive, according to his several deserts, the irrevocable sentence,—either eternal glory, or everlasting punishment.

—
 THAT IT IS BETTER TO OBEY GOD,
 THAN OUR FRIENDS.

—
 THE SENIOR. Thou hast judged well for thy salvation; for he that hath resolved to serve God, ought to obey

Him rather than his relations. Hence it is the Truth said to the disciples that followed him: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." (Matth. x. 37.) These then, are not to be listened to, who would, for the comfort of your friends, persuade you to remain in the world; but those are above all to be imitated, who, for the love of Christ, choose rather to remove themselves far away from their friends, in order that they may serve God the more freely, adhere to him more devoutly, and pray more fervently for their friends. Whence, if they wish to oppose thee in the way of God, and to throw obstacles to thy entrance into religion, they are to be shunned and forsaken. For the great Lawgiver and master of all Religious, our Lord JESUS CHRIST, hath shown us a form of perfect renunciation, when he says: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luc. xiv. 26.)

Give ye ear, but not to what the Lord saith, seek ye first how ye may please your relations and friends; but while you are diligent in doing this, you bring no pleasure to me thereby: "Leave then the dead to bury their dead, but follow thou me." (Matth. viii. 22.) "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice," (Matth. vi. 33); "and ye shall have treasure in heaven," (Ibid. vi. 20.) if you have renounced all earthly things.

Oh, how foolish and blind are ye, who for a vile and most fleeting pleasure of the flesh, neglect to seek after the eternal joys of heaven; who now tremble to submit to the discipline of a holy rule, and who ponder not on the flame of unquenchable fire that burneth for ever.

Ah, there is a sad difference between the habit of an humble monk and the ghost-like look of devils. Great is the contrast between the devout song of religious, and the unendurable moans of the damned.

Oh, if men would but know the gift of God, and taste how sweet is the Lord, and how sweet it is to serve the Lord of heaven, willingly would they forsake all earthly things, which they cannot enjoy long, and fly together to the religious state, by which they might ascend in a straight course to heaven.

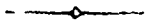
Whence our merciful Lord exhorteth all that are of feeble heart, not to be terrified at the salutary precepts in the rule; but rather, with all the humility of obedience, to receive the yoke saying "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls." (Matth. xi. 29.) Which may JESUS, the Son of Mary, vouchsafe to grant, who reigneth God, world without end. Amen!

OF A YOUNG CLERK, WHO, HAVING LEFT HIS STUDIES, ENTERED INTO A MONASTERY.

1. There was a certain young scholar, fresh in the flowers of early age, who studied letters at Daventry, who

was occasionally invited by promises and gifts, by some of his promoted companions and fellow-students, to come to Paris. But by the advice of certain devout persons, he was recalled from this intention, and was shown, that he should not put himself in peril, by the desire of greater learning.

Meanwhile, it happened that two brothers, his companions, of strong constitution and happy wit, transferred themselves from the school of Daventry to Paris: but they had been there but for a very short while, when both died in one day. Moreover, some other students, after much expense and daily labours, when they were about to shine forth in fame and knowledge, were suddenly called out of this life; which coming to the ears of the above-named youth, he was much struck, for they were his fellow-students; and in a short time bidding farewell to scholastic honours, he enrolled himself as a disciple of Christ among the regulars.



OF A CERTAIN PRIEST WHO WAS TEMPTED, AND AFTERWARDS RETURNED TO GOD.

There was once amongst us a certain priest, Alardus by name, who desired to renounce the world, and to take the habit of a canon-regular; but before he received the habit, the tempter was present with him, recalling to his memory, the former delights of the world, which he had long used prodigally. And he began to be exceedingly sad, for that he

had left his relations and friends, and was now, as it were, an exile from his native country, to live a desolate life.

As soon as this sadness had sprung up there succeeded other grievances, and these not few, like loud claps of thunder. For the malignant enemy struck him with the weariness of the place, and the difficulty of the rule, and suggested to him how well he might have lived with his friends in his own parts, and how much good he might have done to them. Now these are the darts of the deceitful serpent, with which he often strives to wound the hearts of the novices, to make them turn back from their holy purpose. But by the mercy of God, while this priest was standing in the very brunt of the conflict, the light of heavenly consolation shone in upon him, and dissipated all the mist of worldly sorrow.

Wherefore, by the spirit of God, having been re-inflamed and comforted against the wiles of the devil, he began to think within himself, for what he had come, and weighing with good judgment the purpose now aimed at, he raised himself with a manly resolution, saying: See how, by the providence of God, of thy own free-will, and as a suppliant, thou has entered into this place for the grace of amendment, and now thou hast found for thy necessities, much more than thou hast left behind. For Christ's sake thou hast put behind thee a few friends; but now thou hast received many more spiritual in the stead of carnal brethren, joined to thee by greater charity. All things, according to the use of this monastery, are thine, and are divided to thee in charity. Some labour for thee, some pray for thee, some read, others write for thee; no one here is idle; no one possesseth anything of his own,—all things are held in common. Behold thou hast so many services done thee, as there are clostral offices throughout the whole family.

What then have you to complain of? or why do you fear to serve God with a free heart? Bow thyself without delay to the most sweet yoke of Christ, take up the light burthen of the Lord upon thee, forget thy people, and thy father's house; and receive for little, great; for temporal, eternal things; for the vanities of this world, the most glorious kingdom of God, so that thou mayest be able to say truly, with the apostle Paul: "As having nothing, and possessing all things." (2 Cor. vi. 10.)

By these and such like thoughts, and by a daily meditation on the examples of the holy fathers, the mind of this priest was strengthened unto a better purpose, so that after the time of his probation, he put on the regular habit, and after the completion of a year, professed the solemn vows, where ever after, for thirty years, he lived a praiseworthy life in the order, till, in a good old age, he slept in peace.

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