

## CHAPTER XIV.

OF THE LOVE OF SOLITUDE, AFTER THE EXAMPLE OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS, ABIDING AT NAZARETH.

1. *The voice of Jesus.*—My Child, after I had been at Jerusalem, engaged in the things which are My Father's, so long as My Father Himself willed it; I went down to Nazareth, and there unknown, I advanced in grace with God and with men.

Understand this My hidden life: study the sentiments of My Heart, and strive to imitate them sedulously.

Thou mightst have seen Me, with a serene countenance and a joyous Heart, now at home, intent on My various duties and occupations: now abroad, applying Myself to divers labors: always ready for everything: everywhere obedient: at all times and in every place, a spectacle full of grace, to God My Father, to My Virgin Mother, to Joseph, and to the wondering Angels.

Behold how the Son of God was employed for so long a time! behold how He grew up, like the lily of the valleys, hidden indeed from the world, but prominent and pleasing in the sight of heaven.

2. Wonder not, My Child, that I passed so many years in retirement, that I did not show Myself to the world, except after a long time. This example of Mine, this interior love of solitude, was exceedingly necessary to men.

Without this love of solitude, men, influenced by

corrupt nature, pour themselves out, as it were, into external things: most of them follow self-love, by imaginary and unusual ways and means of salvation and perfection—whereby they are deceived, and led astray from the spirit of their state and vocation; others obey a secret pride, undertake affairs and fill employments, without due preparation, without regularity—seeking not the things which are Mine, but those which are their own.

Whence it happens, that they wander from the right path. And as—on account of the ceaseless bustle, and their applications to external things—they heed not the divine inspirations, they fall from one error into another; they become more and more wrapt up in their delusions, until, at last, they render fruitless to themselves every means of salvation and perfection.

3. The object of the example of My hidden and inward life is two-fold: to teach men to guard against such evils, that they may keep the safe road of salvation; and to show to them, wherein true perfection consists.

Whatever glitters or resounds, whatever awakens in some manner the attention or admiration of men, upon this most men are wont to look, as something more perfect, and better adapted to glorify God, and to shine before their neighbor.

But how great an error! how great a delusion! For it all arises from secret pride, and ends in self-love.

In truth, perfection, as is made evident by the example of My Heart, consists in doing the divine good pleasure with humility and charity.

Without a regard for solitude, man is not wont