

virtues shalt thou practice, if thou do but cherish solitude!

All the Disciples of My Heart have ever held as certain, that they were so much the nearer to My Heart, the farther they were with their heart removed from creatures.

8. My Child, if thou art truly humble, thou wilt seek after solitude: for, as much as it is able, humility loves to be concealed, and dreads to be noticed. If thou art enkindled with a true and divine love, thou wilt seek after solitude: for the flame of love, exposed to every breath of the world, is easily extinguished, unless it be frequently fed in solitude.

Or what is worse, charity, if always dissipated, becomes, by degrees, a disguised sensuality.

Solitude, when adapted to each one's circumstances, and properly kept, becomes sweeter little by little, and secures numberless advantages.

For it is the safeguard of innocence, the dwelling of peace, the abode of the interior life, the school of holiness, the place of heavenly secrets, the chosen means of divine communication.

If thou art desirous of enjoying these things, love sacred solitude: frequently will I invite thee, frequently will I lead thee into the same, that there I may speak to thy heart.

7. Be not deterred from cherishing sacred solitude—even should men occasionally censure thee, on account of thy love of retirement. Let talkers have their say: for thyself, attend thou to what is good.

If thou desirest to suit thy life to the opinions of others, thou wilt have to assume as many dif-

ferent shapes as thou meetest men: for there are as many opinions as there are minds.

When the divine Will does not make known to thee, that thou shouldst be with men, stay thou alone with Me.

Thus the Saints, unless called forth by the divine Will, would have continued in solitude, even to their dying hour, unknown to men.

Nevertheless, My Child, as often as by My Will—in whatsoever manner it be made known—thou art sent forth by Me, thou shouldst leave thy solitude with the same readiness and freedom of mind with which thou didst enter it.

At My bidding, leave thou as speedily as possible, or rather exchange for the better, whatever useful occupation detains thee—gladly accommodating thyself, without any sign of displeasure, to circumstances which present themselves.

Do not bind thyself to any preconceived method, rather than to My divine Will; do not, through a false exactness, and an ill-regulated strictness, render piety hateful or unlovely.

If thou hast learnt of My Heart a truly interior spirit, thou wilt safely follow a middle course, avoiding both extremes.

Therefore, imitate not those dissipated persons, who—thinking that the time spent in solitude is lost, or perceiving that things interior are distasteful to them—do ever seek pretenses of pouring themselves out upon outward objects, entangle themselves with what does not concern them, frequently neglect what they ought to perform, and do what they should omit.

Neither follow thou the footsteps of those who,