

which I am in possession from now on? for it is true that the hope of Paradise consoles me throughout this life, and sweetens for me everything, which without that in it would be [60] unendurable to us."

One of our Fathers, seeing a good man—very simple, but an excellent Christian—who usually spent a very long time in his prayers, asked him the reason of it. This good man answered him, very artlessly, that the reason for this slowness proceeded from the fact that he did not yet know how to pray well to God; that he was often filled with distractions; and that,—in order that the devil should gain nothing upon him, and should weary of interrupting him,—he began his prayers over again, whenever he found that he had been distracted. "Very rarely," added this good man, "my spirit makes its way even to God; and then I do not perceive the time that I spend in my prayer, for my heart is so transported beyond itself, that I feel neither heat, nor cold, nor pain, nor weariness. I have not even a thought of the things of the earth; but only that God is good, and that it is good to be with him."

The Father continued to ask him what this great pleasure was like, which he felt at those times. "I have nothing like it," he answered; "all the satisfactions which I have conceived in this world are [61] nothing in comparison with a single moment of these delights which God causes me to taste,—neither the feasts, nor the riches, nor the pleasures, of which I now have a horror, and which formerly I esteemed the greatest in the world. If, however," he added, "I am constrained to make some answer, I see nothing which seems to me so near to these