



Foreword

OUR Lord's words "*Whoever wishes to be My follower must deny his very self, take up his cross each day and follow in My steps*" (Luke 9:23) were spoken for people of all times and localities. They are equally applicable to the young, to the middle aged and to the elderly. They are a challenge to modern people—so surrounded by the comforts and conveniences of modern inventions—who take all these things for granted and, becoming immersed in the material, often forget their eternal destiny.

How often do we say, and hear others say: "Oh, if only I could have a little peace!" Perhaps our greatest hindrance to this peace we all desire so much is the constant urge to lift the veil and see what tomorrow will bring. We are surrounded by this attitude; our weather forecasts are all occupied with what is coming next. So we let today's moments slip by us almost unheeded.

One of the lessons our Lord teaches His followers is that we are not promised the whole of today: *The Son of Man is coming at the time you least expect* (Matt 24:44). Therefore, it is well for us to live our lives each day fully. You will say perhaps that your life is full, that you are on the go every minute. But we forget that we are made

up of body and soul and all this hyperactivity leaves no time for the soul to breathe.

As you thoughtfully and prayerfully read this book, turn the pages slowly and allow the wisdom contained in them to penetrate your inner self. If you will do this, you will find a great peace—even amid the turmoil around you and the trials that necessarily come into every life. The Holy Spirit will bring you His peace and His joy that you will never find in any of the things which the world promises you, but which promises are never kept.

It is the fervent hope of the publisher of this new edition of *THE IMITATION OF CHRIST* that this treasured little book will become a daily reminder of and a spur to follow the life of Christ to which all are called.



BOOK 3

ON INTERIOR CONVERSATION

CHAPTER 1

On the Way Christ Speaks Inwardly to the Soul

I WILL hear what the Lord God will speak within me, says a devout soul. Blessed is that soul who hears the Lord speaking within, and from His lips receives the words of comfort.

Blessed are the ears that heed the inner whisperings of the Lord, and pay no attention to the deceitful murmurings of this world; and blessed indeed are the ears which do not listen to the loud voices from outside, but instead are attentive to Him, Who inwardly teaches the truth. Blessed also are the eyes which are closed to things outside, but gaze intently on things within.

Blessed are they who acquire virtue and labor, by spiritual and corporal works, to receive daily more and more God's inward inspirations and teachings. They also are blessed who determine to serve God alone, ridding themselves of every hindrance from the world.

Listen, O my soul, to what has been said, and close the door of your senses that you may hear inwardly what the Lord Jesus speaks within your soul.

2. This is what your Beloved says: I am your salvation, your peace, and your life; keep close to Me, and in Me you will find peace. Abandon the love of passing things and seek those that are everlasting. What else are the things of time but deceptive? And how can any creature help you if your Lord abandons you?

Therefore, leaving all creatures and worldly things behind you, do your best to make yourself pleasing to Him, so that after this life you may come to life everlasting in the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER 2

How God Speaks within Us without Sound of Words

DISCIPLE: Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears. I am Your servant and beg You for the understanding to know Your commandments. Incline my heart to follow Your holy teachings, that they may seep into my soul as dew seeps into the grass.

In ancient times the Israelites said to Moses: "*You speak to us, and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we shall die*" (Exod 20:19).

But, Lord, this is not the way I pray; rather, with the Prophet Samuel, I humbly implore You to speak to me and I will gladly hear You.