

NOVEMBER I.

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## ALL SAINTS.

THE Church in this great festival honours all the saints reigning together in glory; first, to give thanks to God for the graces and crowns of all his elect: secondly, to excite ourselves to a fervent imitation of their virtues by considering the holy example of so many faithful servants of God of all ages, sexes, and conditions, and by contemplating the inexpressible and eternal bliss which they already enjoy, and to which we are invited: thirdly, to implore the divine mercy through this multitude of powerful intercessors: fourthly, to repair any failures or sloth in not having duly honoured God in his saints on their particular festivals, and to glorify him in the saints which are unknown to us, or for which no particular festivals are appointed. Therefore our fervour on this day ought to be such, that it may be a reparation of our sloth in all the other feasts of the year; they being all comprised in this one solemn commemoration, which is an image of that eternal great feast which God himself continually celebrates in heaven with all his saints, whom we humbly join in praising his adorable goodness for all his mercies, particularly for all treasures of grace which he has most munificently heaped upon them.<sup>1</sup> In this and

<sup>1</sup> The dedication of a famous church in Rome gave occasion to the institution of this festival. The Pantheon or Rotunda was a temple built by Marcus Agrippa; the favour.

all other festivals of the saints, God is the only object of supreme worship, and the whole of that inferior veneration which is paid to the saints is directed to give sovereign honour to God alone,

ite counsellor of Augustus, and dedicated to Jupiter the Revenger, in compliment to Augustus upon his victory at Actium, over Antony and Cleopatra, as Pliny informs us. It was called Pantheon, either because the statues of Mars and several other gods were placed in it, or rather, as Dion thinks, because its figures represented the heavens, called by the pagans the residence of all the gods, which is the interpretation of the Greek name Pantheon. This masterpiece of architecture is a half globe, its height being almost equal to its breadth: the diameter is one hundred and fifty-eight feet. It has neither pillar nor window, but only a large round aperture in the middle at the top, which lets in the light. Underneath it, in the middle of the pavement, is an orifice of a sink covered with a concave brass plate, bored with many holes, to receive the rain, which falls through the aperture at the top. (See *Theâtre d'Italie*, t. 4. p. 14. et. fig. 57—59. in fol.) Such changes are at present making in repairing and embellishing the inside of this famous structure which began to decay, that only the outlines, as it were, of this most curious ancient masterpiece of architecture will be discernible. (See on the Pantheon, *Mémoires de Trevoux*, November 1758, p. 362.)

Theodosius the Younger, who came to the throne in 408, demolished all the temples of idols in the East: but Honorius, his uncle, though he caused them to be shut up in the West suffered them to stand as monuments of the ancient magnificence of the empire. When idolatry had been so long banished that there was no danger of any persons reviving its superstitions, these edifices were in some places purified, and converted into churches for the worship of the true God, who thus triumphed over those pretended deities in their own temples. When our Saxon ancestors received the faith of St. Gregory, writing to king Ethelbert, exhorted him to destroy the temples of the idols; (l. 11. ep. 66. ol. 60; p. 1165.) but afterward in a letter to St. Mellitus (l. 11. ep. 76. ol. 71. p. 1176. t. 2. ed. Ben.) he allowed them to be changed into churches. About three years and a half after the decease of this great pope, Boniface IV. was placed in St. Peter's chair, who cleansed and opened the Pantheon, and, in 607, dedicated it in honour of the Blessed Virgin and all the martyrs. Whence it was called St. Maria ad Martyres, or the Rotunda.

whose gifts their graces are: and our addresses to them are only petitions to holy fellow-creatures for the assistance of their prayers to God for us. When therefore we honour the saints, in them and through them we honour God, and Christ true God and true Man, the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind, the King of the Saints, and the source of all their sanctity and glory. In his blood they have washed their robes: from him they derive all their purity, whiteness, and lustre. We consider their virtues as copies taken from him the great original, as streams from his fountain, or as images of his virtues produced by the effusion of his spirit and grace in them. His divine life is their great exemplar and prototype, and in the characteristical virtues of each saint, some of his most eminent virtues are particularly set forth; his hidden life in the solitude of the anchorets; his spotless purity in the virgins; his patience or charity in some; his divine zeal in others; in them all in some degree his plenitude of all virtue and sanctity. Nor are the virtues of the saints only transcripts and copies of the life or spirit of Christ; they are

The feast of this dedication was kept on the 13th of May. Pope Gregory III. about the year 731, consecrated a chapel in St. Peter's church in honour of all the saints, (as Anastasius relates in his life,) from which time this feast of All Saints has been celebrated in Rome. Gregory IV. going into France, in 837, in the reign of Lewis Denbonnair, exceedingly propagated this festival of All Saints. See John Belet, an English theologian who flourished at Paris in 1328. (*Rationale de Divinis Officiis et Festivitatibus*, c. 127.) Durandus, bishop of Mende, legate of Gregory X. at the council of Lyons, (*Rationale Div. Officiorum*, l. 7. c. 34.) Thomassin, *Tr. Des Fêtes*, Fronton in *Calend.* p. 145. Before the dedication of the Rotunda, the feast of all the apostles was celebrated on the 1st of May. The Greeks keep a festival of All Saints on the Sunday after Whitsunday. See Smith *De hoc. Statu Eccl. Græc.* p. 19. and Benedict XIV. *De Festis Sanct.* in *Dioecesi Bolon.* Op. t. 13.

also the fruit of his redemption; entirely his gifts and graces. And when we honour the saints we honour and praise him who is the Author of all their good; so that all festivals of saints are instituted to honour God and our Blessed Redeemer.

In all feasts of saints, especially in this solemn festival of All Saints, it ought to be the first part of our devotion to praise and thank God for the infinite goodness he has displayed in favour of his elect. A primary and most indispensable homage we owe to God, is that of praise, the first act of love, and complacency in God and his adorable perfections. Hence the psalms, the most perfect and inspired model of devotions, repeat no sentiments so frequently or with so much ardour as those of divine adoration and praise. This is the uninterrupted sweet employment of the blessed in heaven to all eternity; and the contemplation of the divine love, and other perfections, is a perpetual incentive inflaming them continually afresh in it, so that they cannot cease pouring forth all their affections, and exhausting all their powers; and conceive every moment new ardour in this happy function of pure love. So many holy solitaries of both sexes in this life have renounced all commerce and pleasures of the world, to devote themselves wholly to the mixed exercises of praise and love, and of compunction and humble supplication. In these, all servants of God find their spiritual strength, refreshment, advancement, delight, and joy. If they are not able here below to praise God incessantly with their voice or actual affections of their hearts, they study to do it always by desire, and by all their actions strive to make the whole tenour of their life an uninterrupted homage of praise to God. This tribute we pay him, first, for his own adorable majesty, justice, sanctity, power, goodness, and glory; rejoicing

in the boundless infinitude of his perfections we call forth all our own faculties and all our strength; summon all the choir of the creation to praise him, and find it our delight to be vanquished and overwhelmed by his unexhausted greatness, to which all our praises are infinitely inadequate, and of which all conceptions fall infinitely short; so as not to bear the least degree of proportion to them. To aid our weakness, and supply our insufficiency, in magnifying the infinite Lord of all things, and exalting his glory, we have recourse to the spotless victim, the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, put into our hands for us to offer a holocaust of infinite price, equal to the majesty of the Godhead. We also rejoice in the infinite glory which God possesses in himself, and from himself. Deriving from himself infinite greatness and infinite happiness, he stands not in need of our goods, and can receive no accession from our homages as to eternal glory; in which consists his sovereign bliss. But there is an external glory which he receives from the obedience and praise of his creatures, which, though it increase not his happiness, is nevertheless, indispensably due to him, and an external homage with which all beings are bound to sound forth his sovereign power and sanctity. Nor do we owe him this only for his own greatness and glory, which he possesses in himself, but also for the goodness, justice, wisdom, and power which he manifests in all his works. Compounds of the divine mercies, as we are, we are bound to give to God incessant thanks for all the benefits both in the order of nature and of grace, which he has gratuitously conferred upon us. We owe him also an acknowledgment of praise and thanksgiving for all his creatures from the beginning, and for all the wonders he has wrought in them or in their behalf. For this the psalmist and the prophets so often rehearse

his mighty works, and invite all beings to magnify his holy name for them.

It is in his saints that he is wonderful above all his other works.<sup>1</sup> For them was this world framed: for their sakes is it preserved and governed. In the revolutions of states and empires, and in the extirpation or conservation of cities and nations, God has his elect chiefly in view. By the secret unerring order of his most tender and all-wise providence, *All things work together for good to them.*<sup>2</sup> For their sake will God shorten the evil days in the last period of the world.<sup>3</sup> For the sanctification of one chosen soul, he often conducts innumerable second causes, and hidden springs. Nor can we wonder hereat, seeing that for his elect his coeternal Son was born and died, has wrought so many wonders, performed so many mysteries, instituted so many great sacraments, and established his Church on earth. The justification of a sinner, the sanctification of a soul is the fruit of numberless stupendous works, the most wonderful exertion of infinite goodness and mercy, and of almighty power. The creation of the universe out of nothing is a work which can bear no comparison with the salvation of a soul through the redemption of Christ. And with what infinite condescension and tenderness does the Lord of all things watch over every one of his elect! With what unspeakable invisible gifts does he adorn them! To how sublime and astonishing a dignity does he exalt them, making them companions of his blessed angels, and coheirs with his Divine Son! Weak and frail men, plunged in the gulf of sin, he, by his omnipotent arm, and by the most adorable and stupendous mercy, has rescued from the slavery of the devil and jaws of hell; has cleansed them from all stains; and by the orna-

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxxvii. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Mark xiii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 28.



ments of his grace, has rendered them most beautiful and glorious. And with what honour has he crowned them! To what an immense height of immortal glory has he raised them! and by what means? His grace conducted them by humility, patience, charity, and penance, through ignominies, torments, pains, sorrows, mortifications, and temptations to joy and bliss, by the cross to their crowns. Lazarus, who, here below, was covered with ulcers, and denied the crumbs of bread which fell from the rich man's table, is now seated on the throne of glory, and replenished with delights, which neither eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard. Poor fishermen here the outcast of the world, are made assessors with Christ in judging the world at the last day: so great will be the glory and honour with which they will be placed on thrones at his right hand, and bear testimony to the equity of the sentence which he will pronounce against the wicked, *Thy friends are exceedingly honoured, O God.*<sup>1</sup> These glorious citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem he has chosen out of all the tribes of the children of Israel,<sup>2</sup> and out of all nations, without any distinction of Greek or barbarian; persons of all ages, showing, there is no age which is not ripe or fit for heaven; and out of all states and conditions; in the throne amidst the pomp of worldly grandeur; in the cottage; in the army; in trade; in the magistracy; clergymen, monks, virgins, married persons, widows, slaves, and freemen. In a word, what state is there that has not been honoured with its saints? And they were all made saints by the very occupations of their states, and by the ordinary occurrences of life; prosperity and adversity; health and sickness; honour and contempt; riches and poverty; all which they made the means of their sanctification

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxxxviii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Apoc. vii. 3, 4, &c.

by the constant exercise of patience, humility, meekness, charity, resignation, and devotion. This is the *manifold grace of God*.<sup>1</sup> He has employed all means, he has set all things at work *to show in ages to come the abundant riches of his grace*.<sup>2</sup> How do these happy souls, eternal monuments of God's infinite power and clemency, praise his goodness without ceasing! *I will sing to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously, &c.*<sup>3</sup> And casting their crowns before his throne they give to him all the glory of their triumphs.<sup>4</sup> "His gifts alone in us he crowns."<sup>5</sup> We are called upon with the whole Church militant on earth to join the Church triumphant in heaven in praising and thanking our most merciful God for the graces and glory he has bestowed on his saints. Shall we not, at the same time, earnestly conjure him to exert his omnipotence and mercy in raising us from all our spiritual miseries and sins, healing the disorders of our souls, and conducting us through the paths of true penance to the happy company of his saints, to which he has vouchsafed most graciously to invite us?

Nothing can more powerfully incite us to aspire with all our strength to the incomparable happiness and blessed company of the saints than their example. Nor can any thing more strongly inflame us with holy emulation than the constant meditation on that glory of which they are even now possessed, and in which they earnestly wait for us to join them. How does their immortality inspire us with a contempt of the inconstant, perishable, and false honours of this world! How does the unspeakable joy of that state, which satisfies all the desires, and fills the whole capacity of

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. ii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Exod. xv. 1, 2. 11. 13. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Apoc. iv. 11. Ps. cxv. 1.

<sup>5</sup> "Nil Deus in nobis præter sua dona coronat." S. Prosper Carm. de ingrat. 1.



the heart, make us sovereignly despise the false empty pleasures of this life, and trample under our feet the threats and persecutions of a blind world, with all that we can suffer from it or in it! Are we not transported out of ourselves at the thought that, by the divine mercy and grace, we are capable of attaining to this state of immense and endless bliss? And do we not, from our hearts, this moment bid adieu for ever to all pursuits, occupations, and desires which can be an impediment to us herein, and embrace all means which can secure to us the possession of our great and only good? Do we not burn with a holy desire of being admitted into the society of the friends of God, and being crowned by him in his blessed company with eternal joy and glory? A certain general who, from the rank of a common soldier, had, by his valour and conduct, raised himself to the dignity and command of lieutenant-general, used sometimes familiarly to converse with his soldiers, and tell them that he once carried his musket, stood sentry, lived and bore fatigues like them. He used to relate how in sieges he had dug the trenches, carried fascines, being the first man in mounting a breach, making an assault, or forcing a dangerous pass. He gave them an account upon what occasion and by what means he was made a sergeant, and gradually advanced to the posts of lieutenant, captain, colonel, and general officer. It is not to be easily conceived with what ardour his soldiers were fired by such discourses, and by such an example which they had before their eyes. The greatest fatigues and dangers were to them at that time no longer a subject of complaint, but of joy and ambition, whilst every one seemed to himself to see a door by such means open to him to some degree of preferment. Yet they could not but be sensible how great the odds were against them, through how many dangers the very least promotion was

to be purchased, and after all that could be done by them, after the greatest exploits and most happy success on their side, the reward and honour which they had in view was too extraordinary, too precarious, and depended too much upon the caprices of favour and fortune rationally to raise high expectations. In the affair of our salvation the case is quite otherwise. The option is in our own breast: how exalted and how immense soever the glory is to which we aspire, it is God who invites us, and who is our light and our strength: by his grace, which can never fail but through our fault, we are sure to attain to that state of bliss which will never have an end, and which is far beyond all we can imagine possible. So many happy saints are already arrived there. By their example they have pointed out the way to us. We have but to tread their steps. They were once what we now are, travellers on earth; they had the same weaknesses which we have; *Elias was a man subject to the same infirmities as we are*, says St. James:<sup>1</sup> so were all the saints. We have difficulties to encounter, so had all the saints, and many of them far greater than we can meet with. They had the allurements of vice, and several of them the flatteries of courts to resist, with a thousand particular obstacles from kings and princes, from the interest of whole nations, from the seduction and snares of fawning worldly friends, from the rancour and injustice of enemies, sometimes from the prisons, racks, and swords of persecutors, and from an infinity of other circumstances. Yet they bravely surmounted these difficulties, which they made the very means of their virtue and sanctity by their victories and triumphs over these enemies, and by their extreme watchfulness over themselves, their fervour in continual

prayer, mortification, and penance, their plentiful alms-deeds, and their ardour in the exercise of all good works, to which their alarming dangers served much more strongly to excite them.

Do we complain of our frailty? The saints were made of the same mould with us. But being sensible of their weakness, they were careful to retrench all incentives of their passions, to shun all dangerous occasions of sin, to ground themselves in the most profound humility, and to strengthen themselves by the devout use of the sacraments, prayer, an entire distrust in themselves, and other means of grace. It was by the strength they received from above, not by their own, that they triumphed over both their domestic and their external enemies. We have the same succours by which they were victorious. The blood of Christ was shed for us as it was for them; the all-powerful grace of our Redeemer is not wanting to us, but the failure is in ourselves. If difficulties start up, if temptations affright us, if enemies stand in our way like monsters and giants, which seem ready to devour us,<sup>1</sup> let us not lose courage, but redouble our earnestness, crying out with Josue,<sup>2</sup> *The Lord is with us. Why do we fear?* If the world pursue us, let us remember that the saints fought against it in all its shapes. If our passions are violent, Jesus has furnished us with arms to tame them, and hold them in subjection. How furious assaults have many saints sustained in which they were supported by victorious grace! Many, with the Baptist, happily prevented the rebellion of these domestic enemies by early watchfulness, abstinence, and retirement. Others God suffered for their own advantage to feel their furious buffets; but animated them to vigilance and fervour, and crowned them with victories, by which they at

<sup>1</sup> Num. xiii. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Num. xiv. 9.

length brought these enemies into subjection. Of this many are instances who had had the misfortune formerly to have fortified their passions by criminal habits. Saint Austin, after having been engaged many years in irregular courses, conquered them. How many other holy penitents broke stronger chains than ours can be, by courageously using violence upon themselves, and became eminent saints! Can we, then, for shame think the difficulties we apprehend an excuse for our sloth, which, when we resolutely encounter them, we shall find to be more imaginary than real? Shall we shrink at the thought of self-denial, penance, or prayer? Shall not we dare to undertake or to do what numberless happy troops of men and women have done, and daily do? So many tender virgins, so many youths of the most delicate complexion and education, so many princes and kings, so many of all ages, constitutions, and conditions have courageously walked before us! "Canst not thou do what these and those persons of both sexes have done?"<sup>1</sup> said St. Austin to himself. Their example wonderfully inspires us with resolution, and silences all the pretexts of pusillanimity. To set before our eyes a perfect model of the practice of true virtue, the Son of God became man, and lived amongst us. That we may not say the example of a God-man is too exalted for us, we have that of innumerable saints, who inviting us to take up the sweet yoke of Christ, say to us with St. Paul, *Be you imitators of me, even as I am of Christ.*<sup>2</sup> They were men in all respects like ourselves, so that our sloth and cowardice can have no excuse. They form a cloud of witnesses, demonstrating to us, from their own experience, that the practice of Christian perfection is easy and sweet. They will

<sup>1</sup> Tu non poteris quod isti et istæ"—S. Aug. Conf.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 1.

rise up and condemn the wicked at the last day, covering them with inexpressible confusion: *Thou raisest up thy witnesses against me.*<sup>1</sup> To animate and encourage ourselves in the vigorous pursuit of Christian perfection, and in advancing towards the glory of the saints, we ought often to lift up our eyes to heaven, and contemplate these glorious conquerors of the world, clothed with robes of immortality, and say to ourselves: These were once mortal, weak men, subject to passions and miseries as we are now: and if we are faithful to our sacred engagements to God, we shall very shortly be made companions of their glory, and attain to the same bliss. But for this we must walk in their steps; that is to say, we must with them take up our cross, renounce the world and ourselves, and make our lives a course of labour, prayer, and penance. We are lost if we seek any other path. We must either renounce the world and the flesh with the saints, or we renounce heaven with the wicked.

There is but one Gospel, but one Redeemer and divine Legislator, Jesus Christ, and but one Heaven. No other road can lead us thither but that which he has traced out to us: the rule of salvation laid down by him is invariable. It is a most pernicious and false persuasion, either that Christians in the world are not bound to aim at perfection, or that they may be saved by a different path from that of the saints. The torrent of example in the world imperceptibly instils this error into the minds of many,—that there is a kind of middle way of going to heaven: and under this notion, because the world does not live up to the gospel, they bring the gospel down to the level or standard of the world. It is not by the example of the world that we are to measure the Christian rule but by the pure maxims of the

<sup>1</sup> Job x. 17.



gospel. All Christians are commanded to labour to become holy and perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect, and to bear his image, and resemble him by spotless sanctity, that we may be his children. We are obliged, by the law of the gospel, to die to ourselves by the extinction of inordinate self-love in our hearts, by the crucifixion of the old man, and the mastery and regulation of our passions. It is no less indispensable an injunction laid on us than on them, that we be animated with, and live by, the Spirit of Christ; that is, the spirit of sincere and perfect humility, meekness, charity, patience, piety, and all other divine virtues. These are the conditions under which Christ makes us his promises, and enrolls us among his children, as is manifest from all the divine instructions which he has given us in the gospel; and those which the apostles have left us in their inspired writings. Here is no distinction made between the apostles, or clergymen, or religious and secular persons. The former indeed take upon themselves certain stricter obligations, as means of accomplishing more easily and more perfectly these lessons; but the law of sanctity and of a disengagement of the heart from the world is general, and binds all the followers of Christ, all who can be entitled to inherit his promises. Now, what marks do we find in the lives of Christians of this crucifixion of their passions, and of the Spirit of Christ reigning in their hearts and actions? Do not detraction, envy, jealousy, anger, antipathies, resentments, vanity, love of the world, ambition, and pride discover themselves in their conversation and conduct, and as strongly as in the very heathens? It is in vain to plead that these are sins of surprise. It is manifest that they are sins of habit, and that these passions hold the empire in their hearts. An interior disposition of charity, meekness, and other virtues would give a very contrary turn to



their conversation and behaviour, and would make them like the saints, humble, peaceable, mild, obliging to all, and severe only to themselves. The dirt lies always lurking in their hearts; the provocation and occasion only stirs it up, and shows it to be there. It is in vain that such persons shelter themselves under a pretended course of a pious life, and allege that they are regular in their prayers, in frequenting the sacraments, and in other duties, and are liberal in their alms: all this is imperfect so long as they neglect the foundation, which is the mortification of their passions. They are unacquainted with the very soul of a Christian spirit, which was that of all the saints.

What, then, is the first duty of one who desires to become a disciple of Christ? This is a most important point, which very few sufficiently attend to. The first thing which a Christian is bound to study is, in what manner he is to die to himself and his passions. This is the preliminary article or condition which Christ requires of him, before he can be admitted into his divine school. For this such a practice of the exterior mortification of the senses is necessary that they may be kept under due government; but the interior denial of the will and restraint of the passions is the most essential part, and is chiefly effected by extirpating pride, vanity, revenge, and other irregular passions, and planting in the heart the most perfect spirit of humility, meekness, patience, and charity. The motives and rules of these virtues ought to be studied and meditated upon, according to every one's capacity: both interior and exterior acts of each must be frequently and fervently exercised; and the contrary vices diligently watched against and vigorously curbed. By diligent self-examination all the foldings of the heart must be laid open, every vicious inclination discovered, and the axe

laid to the root, that the disorder may be cut off. Thus we must study to die to ourselves. By the frequent use of the sacraments, assiduous prayer, pious reading, or meditation, and the practice of devout aspirations, we must unite our souls to God. This crucifixion of self-love and union of our hearts to God are the two general means by which the Spirit of Christ must be formed and daily improved in us, and by which we shall be imitators of the saints. This task requires earnest application, and some consideration and leisure from business. How much time do we give to every other improvement of mind or body! the student to cultivate his understanding in any art or science! the artisan to learn his trade! and so of every other profession. And shall we not find time to reform our hearts, and to adorn our souls with virtue?<sup>1</sup> which is our great and only business, upon which the good use of all other qualifications, and both our temporal and eternal happiness depend. In virtue consists the true excellence and dignity of our nature. Against this great application to the means of our sanctification some object the dissipation and hurry of the world in which they live: they doubt not but they could do this if they were monks or hermits. All this is mere illusion. Instead of confessing their own sloth to be the source of their disorders, they charge their faults on their state and circumstances in the world. But we have all the reason in the world to conclude that the conduct of such persons would be more scandalous and irregular in a monastery than it is in the world. Every thing is a danger to him who carries the danger about with him.

But can any one pretend that seculars can be excused from the obligation of subduing their

<sup>1</sup> "Vacat esse philosophum, non vacat esse Christianum." *S. Eucher.*  
*ad Valer.*

passions, retrenching sin, and aiming at perfection? Are they not bound to save their souls; that is, to be saints? God, who commands all to aim at perfection, yet whose will it is at the same time that to live in the world should be the general state of mankind, is not contrary to himself. That all places in the world should be filled, is God's express command: also that the duties of every station in it be faithfully complied with.<sup>1</sup> He requires not, then, that men abandon their employs in the world, but that by a disengagement of heart, and religious motive or intention they sanctify them. Thus has every lawful station in the world been adorned with saints. God obliges not men in the world to leave their business; on the contrary, he commands them diligently to discharge every branch of their temporal stewardship. The tradesman is bound to attend to his shop, the husbandman to his tillage, the servant to his work, the master to the care of his household and estates. These are essential duties which men owe to God, to the public, to themselves, and to their children and families; a neglect of which, whatever else they do, will suffice to damn them. But then they must always reserve to themselves leisure for spiritual and religious duties; they must also sanctify all the duties of their profession. This is to be done by a good intention. It is the motive of our actions upon which, in a moral and Christian sense, the greatest part, or sometimes the whole of every action depends. This is the soul of our actions; this determines them, forms their character, and makes them virtues or vices. If avarice, vain-glory, sensuality, or the like inordinate inclinations influence the course of our actions, it is evident to what class they belong; and this is the poison which infects even the virtuous part of

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 20. Ephes. iv. 1.

those who have never studied to mortify their passions. Thus the very virtues of the foolish drudgers for popular fame among the ancient philosophers, were false; they have already received their reward, the empty applause of men. The Christian who would please God, must carefully exclude in his actions all interested views of self-love, and direct all things he does purely to the glory of God, desiring only to accomplish his holy will in the most perfect manner. Thus a spirit of divine love and zeal, of compunction, penance, patience, and other virtues, will animate and sanctify his labour and all that he does. In the course of all these actions he must watch against the dangerous insinuation of his passions, must study on all occasions to exercise humility, meekness, charity, and other virtues, the opportunities of which continually occur; and he ought from time to time, by some short fervent aspiration, to raise his heart to God. Thus the Isidores and Homobons sanctified their employs. Did the Pauls or Antonies do more in their deserts? unless perhaps the disengagement of their hearts, and the purity and fervour of their affections and intentions were more perfect; upon which a soul's progress in sanctity depends.

But slothful Christians allege the difficulty of this precept; they think that perfectly to die to themselves is a severe injunction. God forbid any one should widen the path, which the Saviour of the world has declared to be narrow. It is doubtless difficult, and requires resolution and courage. Who can think that heaven will cost him nothing which cost all the saints so much? What temporal advantage is gained without pains? The bread of labourers, the riches of misers, the honours of the ambitious, cost much anxiety and pains. Yet, what empty shadows, what racking tortures, what real miseries are the enjoyments which worldlings purchase at so dear a

rate! But it is only to our inordinate appetites (which we are bound to mortify, and the mortification of which will bring us liberty and true joy) that the doctrine of self-denial appears harsh. And its fruits in the soul are the reign of divine love; and the sweet *peace of God which surpasseth all understanding*,<sup>1</sup> which springs from the government of the passions, and the presence of the Holy Ghost in the soul, and is attended with a pure and holy joy which fills the whole capacity of the heart, and which the whole world can never take from the servant of God. This precious gift and comfort does not totally forsake him under the severest interior trials, with which God suffers his servants to be sometimes visited in this life for their greatest advantage; under which they are also supported by the prospect of eternal glory. And even in this present life their sufferings are often repaid by the inexpressible consolations which the Holy Ghost infuses into their hearts, so that they receive a hundred fold for all that they have forsaken for God. *The wicked have told me their fables; but not as thy law, O Lord.*<sup>2</sup> *A voice of joy and salvation rings in the tabernacles of the just.*<sup>3</sup> Compare the state of the greatest worldly monarch with that of the humble servant of God.<sup>4</sup> Power, riches, and pleasure constitute the king's imaginary happiness. Nations conspire to obey his will, or even prevent his inclinations: the earth is silent before him; at his orders armies march, lay whole countries waste, or sacrifice their lives; he punishes by his very countenance, and scatters favours at pleasure, without any one asking him a reason; even princes approach him with trembling, count it their greatest happiness and honour if he vouch-

1 Phil. iv. 7.

2 Ps. cxviii. 85.

3 Ps. cxvii. 15.

4 See St. Chrysostom's short treatise, *Comparatio Regis et Monachi*, ed. Savil. t. 7. p. 861. Ed. Ben. t. 1. p. 115. Also translated in Blosius's works.



safes to receive their homages, and, with the countenances of slaves, study in his eyes what sacrifice he requires of them. Is this that happy state of independence and power which the world admires? Certainly there cannot be a baser slavery, than that of the world and the passions. Only the servant of God enjoys true liberty and independence, who fears only God, and has no concern but for his duty, is equally resigned under all vicissitudes of fortune, as much raised above all consideration of human respect as he is disengaged from this world, yet, by charity, shares in the prosperity of all his neighbours as in his own; neither can injuries or affronts reach his person, who, fenced by meekness, patience and charity, receives them as great opportunities of his spiritual advantage, and considers them as sent by God in infinite wisdom and tender love and mercy. A king is exposed to greater disappointments and troubles as his concerns are greater, and his passions usually more impetuous. And is not the very grandeur and happiness of a king dependent upon others? and upon men whose favour is caprice? If he would reign by being feared, so as to say in his heart, "Let them hate, provided they fear me," he bears in his heart all the seeds of tyranny and pride, and will be sure to have almost as many secret enemies as he has subjects. If he studies to gain the affections and love of his people by clemency and kindnesses, he will find the generality so blind as neither to know what is for their good, nor what they themselves desire; likewise ungrateful, whom benefits only embolden to be more insolent. If his power be so frail and so troublesome, shall we admire his riches? Is not he rather the poorest of men whose wants are the greatest, and whose desires are usually the most craving? Him we ought justly to esteem the richest, whose necessities



are fewest, and who knows not what more to ask or desire; and this whether he lives in a cell or a palace. A king's pleasures are much abated because cheaper than those of others; for human enjoyments consist greatly in the pursuit; or at least it is by the eagerness of the pursuit that they are chiefly enhanced. If he be a stranger to virtue, his breast, amidst the glittering pomp which surrounds him, will often be miserably torn by all those passions which successively tyrannize over him, and will be a prey to corroding cares which embitter all enjoyments. The beautiful fat ox in the fable could not taste the rich pasture, but ran and roared as it were, to call for compassion and help, because a contemptible insect, a little gnat, shot its sting into his nostrils. A man, who governed the Persian empire under the king, could not take his rest, or find any pleasure in all that he possessed, because Mordecai, the Jew, refused to bow down to him at the gate of the palace. Thus does the most trifling check, or the most petty rage or envy raise storms in the breasts of the wicked. Their pleasures are base, empty, and vain; whatever false joy they may give for a passing moment, this is dearly earned by succeeding pains; however these may be disguised from others, they are not less sharp or gnawing. Many who are seated on the pinnacle of human grandeur, are a burden to themselves, whilst they are the object of others' envy.

Have we not then reason to conclude with St. Chrysostom, that happiness is not to be sought in the gratification of pride and worldly passions; which the oracles of eternal truth clearly confirm? But we are assured by the same unerring authority that it is to be found in a steady practice of virtue. Hence the virtues in which the renunciation of ourselves consist, as humility,

compunction, meekness, and the rest,<sup>1</sup> are by our divine Redeemer himself styled Beatitudes, because they not only lead to happiness, but also bring with them a present happiness, such as our state of trial is capable of. This Christ gives in the bargain as an earnest of his love and promises. But the recompense of the saints reserved in the kingdom of God's glory is such as alone to make every thing that can be suffered here, for so great a crown, light, and of no consideration. The examples of the saints show us the path; and their glory strongly animates our hope, and excites our fervour. "It is our interest," says St. Bernard,<sup>2</sup> "to honour the memory of the saints, not theirs. Would you know how it is our interest? From the remembrance of them I feel, I confess, a triple vehement desire kindled in my breast; of their company, of their bliss, and of their intercession. First, of their company. To think of the saints is in some measure to see them. Thus we are in part, and this the better part of ourselves, in the land of the living, provided our affection goes along with our thoughts or remembrance: yet not as they are. The saints are there present, and in their persons; we are there only in affection and desires. Ah! when shall we join our Fathers? when shall we be made the fellow-citizens of the blessed spirits, of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and virgins? when shall we be mixed in the choir of the saints? The remembrance of each one among the saints is, as it were, a new spark, or rather torch which sets our souls more vehemently on fire, and makes us ardently sigh to behold and embrace them, so that we seem to ourselves even now to be amongst them. And from this distant place of banishment we dart our affections sometimes toward the whole assembly,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v.

<sup>2</sup> S. Bern. serm. 5. de Fest. Omnium Sanct. n. 5, 6.

sometimes towards this, and sometimes that happy spirit. What sloth is it, that we do not launch our souls into the midst of these happy troops, and burst hence by continual sighs! The Church of the first-born waits for us; yet we loiter. The saints earnestly long for our arrival: yet we despise them. Let us with all the ardour of our souls prevent those who are expecting us; let us hasten to those who are waiting for us." Secondly, he mentions the desire of their bliss; and, lastly, the succour of their intercession, and adds: "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends. You know our danger, our frail mould, our ignorance, and the snares of our enemies; you know our weakness, and the fury of their assaults. For I speak to you who have been under the like temptation; who have overcome the like assaults; have escaped the like snares, and have learned compassion from what yourselves have suffered.—We are members of the same Head.—Your glory is not to be consummated without us," &c.

This succour of the saints' intercession is another advantage which we reap by celebrating their festivals, of which the same St. Bernard writes: "He who was powerful on earth is more powerful in heaven, where he stands before the face of his Lord. And if he had compassion on sinners and prayed for them while he lived on earth, he now prays to the Father for us so much the more earnestly as he more truly knows our extreme necessities and miseries; his blessed country has not changed, but increased his charity. Though now impassable, he is not a stranger to compassion: by standing before the throne of mercy he has put on the tender bowels of mercy," &c.