

by those who visited his poor cottage, concerning the pious pictures with which it was hung, to draw their minds to God in the most eloquent but simple manner. But where did this illiterate peasant receive so many lights?—In what academy was he taught? At the foot of the cross. It was in this book, always open, he acquired all his learning, and gathered these treasures of celestial science, with which God enriched the Bernards, the Bonaventures, and the Aquinas.

The Archbishop of Paris, on hearing of John's pious exertions, exhorted him to continue them, and gave him testimonials of his approbation. Many persons of the first rank went to his conferences, and returned much edified. Even the Pope's Legate in France admired the talents of the poor vine-dresser, and never omitted to speak of him in the most flattering terms.

John Bessard imposed on himself an obligation of visiting all the sick in the village; for the space of forty years few died therein that had not the happiness of being consoled by him in their last moments. The Holy Scriptures, with which he daily fed his soul, furnished him with abundant reflections calculated to tranquillize and render meritorious the trying moments which preceded their entrance on eternity. When he came to their bedside, they thought it was the angel of the Lord, such consolation did he afford. All desired to expire in his arms, trusting that the friend of God would procure their admission to the eternal tabernacles.

He divided his time between these charitable exercises, manual labour, and holy prayer. This latter was his sweetest delight. No sooner did he call to mind the presence of God than

he fell into a rapture, in which he remained several hours. O! what extatic delight does the soul taste in the practice of solid piety! From his own experience, Bessard often spoke of them in exalted terms. The graces received in the holy Sacraments, excited in him sentiments of the most lively gratitude. Convinced that without being fed with the bread of angels we cannot arrive at the 'mountain of God,' he went to communicate every Sunday and festival, besides some other days. His eyes were bathed in tears of love when he returned from the banquet of the Lord, and his sighs attested how deeply he felt the bounty of Jesus Christ in admitting him to his divine feast. Like the spouse, he then declared that his only regret was not to be able to make a return of gratitude proportioned to the gift. He sometimes spent more than two hours in making his thanksgiving after communion. On week-days his occupation would not permit it to be so long, but he knew well the secret of making his whole life a preparation and thanksgiving for this divine Sacrament, by great purity of heart and constant union with God. He seldom used a book after Communion—his heart alone spoke; he rarely moved his lips, and when he did every word indicated how absorbed he was in God.

He prepared himself for the holy Eucharist by the sacrament of Penance. Profoundly humbled before the priest, in whom he only beheld Jesus Christ "the great High Priest of men," he protested his unworthiness of the holy absolution, and his lively contrition procured for him an inexhaustible source of grace.

But the Sacraments were not his only channels of grace; in prayer he