

children of Adam, when they, whom he had come to save, already began to persecute him unto death. His whole life was but one continued scene of extreme poverty; in so much that he himself was heard to say: *the birds of the air have their nests, and the foxes have their lurking holes: but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.* Matt. vii. 20. The Lord and Master of all things wanted for every thing. And while he so plentifully ministered to the wants of all his creatures, he denied himself so much as a home of his own, or a covering to shelter him from the inclemency of the weather.

But not to speak of his poverty, nor of the monstrous ingratitude which he met with from those among whom he was pleased to be born; whom he honoured with his presence in the flesh, and blessed with the sight of his stupendous miracles, and the hearing of his heavenly doctrine: to say nothing of the manner in which they contemned and persecuted, reviled and blasphemed him: let us but take a view of this Man-God in the last stage of his mortal existence, when about to discharge the last farthing of that debt, which was owing to divine justice; and then let us imagine, if we can, the value of that time, for the recovery of which, when lost, so great a price was paid.

Behold him in the garden of Gethsemani, loaded, like the emissary goat, with the sins of men, (*Ler. xvi. 10.*) ready to expire under the pressure of so grievous a load; and in the excess of his agony, bleeding at every pore. See him next betrayed by his bosom friend into the hands of his enemies, by whom he is insulted, blindfolded, buffeted, and spit upon. By whom he is clothed with a fool's coat, and treated as a fool; scourged at a pillar, and crowned with thorns, vested in derision with a purple robe, and, in this guise of a mock king, insulted with the feigned and ludicrous homage of a vile and lawless soldiery, who smite him on the head with a reed, which they put as a sceptre into his hand. By whom, in fine, after seeing a Barabas, the worst of men, preferred before him; being now abandoned by all his friends, and, as it were, for a moment even by his heavenly father; he, the glory of Israel, and the expectation of the nations, is nailed to an ignominious cross between two thieves; on which, like a common malefactor, he at length expires.

Then indeed was the atonement for our sins completed. Then was our peace with the offended Deity ratified and signed with the last drop of the blood of a God made man. Then were the gates of heaven, which had hitherto been shut against all the children of Adam, thrown open. The mystical veil of the sanctuary was torn asunder, and the *Holy of Holies* no longer concealed from our view. Already the grave begins to yield up its dead; and the holy city witnesses the first fruits of the resurrection. Even death itself, once so terrible, is now become more the object of our hope than of our fear: and that which was to have been the gate conducting to endless misery, has now become the entry into never-ending bliss.

O Divine Goodness, who has stretched forth thine almighty arm to save us when about to be swallowed up for ever in the bottomless abyss! Who thyself hast drunk off the cup of sorrow, in order to spare us the bitter draught! O what return can we ever make thee for all thy favors? But thou askest nothing but our love: O thou author of all our good; and only wishest us to profit of all all thy endeavours to secure us that eternal happiness for which thou hast created us: nor ever to be so mad any more as to throw away upon trifles the precious moments of a life, which thou hast purchased for us at so dear a rate.

2°. But if, from the consideration of the price paid down for the recovery of our time we pass on to consider the immense advantages accruing to us from the right employment of it; we shall find that not only in whole, but in every part, it may be made infinitely valuable to us. For although God, on account of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, might indeed have restored us to our forfeited inheritance, only on condition that we never sin again, and that our whole life, from the first dawn of reason till our departure out of this world, be spent in the most exact observance of his commandments. yet he has been pleased to accommodate his mercy more to our weakness; and besides leaving us in the sacrament of penance a second laver of regeneration, in which, if truly contrite, we are washed anew from the defilements of actual sin; besides having instituted other sacraments for our further sanctification and preservation; he has, in order to give our time its full value extended the merits of the incarnation, sufferings and death of his only Son, to any good actions we perform for his sake: and has given those actions a merit and a value in his sight which they would not have had, even in our original state of innocence.— Thus he has put it in our power to be every moment of our life bettering our condition in the world to come; and by labouring diligently in the practice of those virtues which he recommends, to make that weight of glory, which awaits us in the kingdom of heaven, much greater than it would have been even if Adam had never fallen. Nay, he has attached this increase of our future glory to our most ordinary and indifferent actions, if performed with the proper intention, that is, with a view to please him: in so much as he himself declares, *even a cup of cold water given in his name shall not its want reward.* Matt. vi. 20. No actions surely can be more common and indifferent than eating and drinking; and yet even these, according to St. Paul, may be done *for the glory of God*: and, if done for the glory of God, they necessarily deserve an eternal reward. *Whether you eat or drink, says he, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God.* 1 Cor. x. 31. So that, according to this great apostle, we can do nothing, that is innocent, which may not add something to our glory and happiness in the life to come. How precious then must that time be, every moment of which, if well employed, may secure to us some additional, eternal, and consequently infinite reward!

Indeed, if there is any thing, which the saints in heaven can regret, it is only the loss of their once precious time, by the right use of which they might have raised themselves to a still higher degree of glory in heaven, than even that to which they have attained.

Christians! what have we been doing hitherto? Have we been laying out to interest the precious talent with which we have been entrusted? or have we not rather, like the wicked and unprofitable servant, mentioned in the gospel, buried it in the ground, (*Matt. xxvi. 25.*) by minding only the things that are on the earth, and not the things that are above. Coloss. iii. It is well, if instead of augmenting our stock, we have rather increased our debt, by adding daily new sins to the former. Let us then now at last begin to set our accounts in order, to repair our past losses, and to make the best of that part of our time which as yet remains, that we may not have the misfortune some day to hear that dreadful and irrevocable sentence passed upon us, which was passed on the slothful servant: *Take him, said his Lord, and bind him hand and foot, and cast him into exterior darkness, there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

3°. It is true we are apt to flatter ourselves that at some future period of life we will exert ourselves to repair the time we have lost; that some day or other we will take care so to settle our accounts with our Judge as to have nothing to fear, but rather all to hope from his sentence. But, besides that it is an article of faith that we cannot make the least step towards our eternal salvation, without the grace of God; and that he seldom fails to withdraw it from those, who make it only a pretence for continuing to offend him; who has made us so very sure of that time which is to come? or who has measured out to us so very exactly the length of the race, which we have yet to run? Tell me then, if you can, how many years, how many months, weeks, days, or hours as yet remain, ere you may be summoned hence to give an account of your stewardship! Alas, so far from knowing that we shall have time sufficient to make up for the past, and to provide for an eternity to come; we cannot so much as assure ourselves of pushing life beyond the last point, to which it has arrived. Only the present moment is ours; the next may belong not to us, but to those who have survived us.

This third consideration of the uncertainty of time, ought to make us prize it the more; as, when least expecting it, and in the twinkling of an eye, we may be deprived of it for ever. What folly is, it not then to neglect making our best of it, while we may: not to seize the fleeting moments, as they pass, and distinguish each of them by some good action or other, which shall be remembered when time shall be no more! The very heathens of old could not help valuing time the more because of its uncertainty and the shortness of its duration.— *As our life is short,* says Sallust, *we should be the more diligent in performing great and useful actions; lest, like the brutes, that study only to satisfy their appetites, we waste our life in indo-*