

veniences of this life, in which so [115] long they have placed their supreme good.

Their inward attachment for these things makes that which at first seemed to them easy, when they only measured it by reason, to become so difficult in the execution, that you see them becoming confused at every turn, and losing courage, complaining that Christianity is of no service to them and brings them no profit in this life.

These feelings are revived whenever any of them become sick, or die, or when some other misfortune happens to them. You would say, to hear them talk, that their sole aim in becoming Christians was to live long,—they, or at least their children. And I do not know if the manner of stating the Commandments of God, where a long life is promised to those who honor father and mother, does not, ordinarily, impose upon and deceive them.

I no longer wonder why the Epistles of the Apostles are so full of *modicum nunc si oportet contristari in variis tribulationibus*. They wrote to Catechumens and Neophytes who could not [116] be sufficiently fortified on that side; and we very often find ourselves in the same trouble as that great Apostle of the Gentiles, who said, *Filioli quos iterum parturio, donec formetur Christus in vobis*.

It seems that that passage in the 14th chapter of the Gospel of saint Luke cannot be better understood than in reference to our poor barbarians, in the mention there made of those who, at the very last, were invited to the supper of the adorable Man-God to fill the places which remained empty at the banquet table, and, in fine, to supply the absence of all those who had been earlier invited. These were people