

The Misery of Man and the Mercy of God.**A SERMON**

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PART II.

For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.—
Rom. xi : 32.

THIS text reduces the doctrine of the Bible to its two fundamental articles : The Misery of Man and the Mercy of God. Last Lord's Day I treated the first part, proving the misery of man. To-day I shall treat the second part, showing the remedy for man's misery in the mercy of God. In order thoroughly to understand this discourse it will be necessary to bear in mind that which has preceded it, and I shall, therefore, begin with a *résumé* of my last discourse.

The theme of that discourse was the first clause of the entire verse : " God hath concluded them all in unbelief." I began by explaining the text, and showed that the thought contained in it might be expressed in the following terms : God has declared that every man in his natural state is a sinner ; not that every man is vicious, which could not be said without contradiction in terms, since vice is a distinction, but that every man is in a state of estrangement from God, consisting in the fact that he ought to love God more than anything else, and that in his natural state he does love something else more than God.

I first established these two points from the Scriptures ; for, on the one hand, they condense the whole of God's law into a single fundamental precept, to which they subordinate all other duties, even love to our neighbor ; namely, that we love God above all things else. And, on the other hand, they prove that, by nature, man loves something else more than God. And this they do not only by isolated declarations, but when taken as a whole, and especially in those passages where they more thoroughly reveal these fundamental principles, as, for example, in the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. In the second place, I established the same two points from reason. For, on the one hand, reason shows God to man as a being supremely lovely both in Himself and in His relations to us as His creatures ; relations such that they should control our whole being, and such that unless we love God supremely we revolutionize our whole being. On the other hand, it is only necessary to depict what our life would be if we loved

God supremely to show that the natural man does not so love Him, and that he accords to Him only a cold esteem, reserving his supreme love for some other object—some men for the world, *worldly sinners*; some for the affections, *affectionate sinners*; and some for the conscience, independent of God, and therefore unreliable, *virtuous sinners*. Thus, in the name of reason as well as in the name of the Bible, we concluded with St. Paul that man in his natural state is a sinner.

You, then, whom God granted me grace to persuade that your natural state is sinful, and who cannot recall any period in your life when you were converted—that is, when you turned from one direction to a new one—and are compelled to admit that you are still in your natural state, in your state of sin, you can have not one single moment of peace until you escape from this state, for it is a state doubly wretched—a state of condemnation and a state of misery. It is a state of condemnation in which you are exposed to the just punishment of God because you are sinful, which I shall not attempt to prove, but which, since you have a conscience and a memory, you well know for yourselves. And it is also a state of misery in which you are made wretched by sin, though God does not punish you for it, and in which God Himself cannot make you happy; since He cannot make one be and not be at one and the same time. That is, you cannot be sinners, and therefore opposed to His will, and happy, that is, contented, with that will. Thus, equally sinful and miserable, equally incapable of happiness and unworthy of it, you need to be delivered from the penalty of sin and from sin itself; so that happiness is not possible for you, and what you call happiness is but a mockery of the name. Will you seek for this double deliverance in yourselves? You will soon discover by experience, if you do not find out by reflection, that there you will seek for it in vain. You cannot rid yourselves of the penalty of sin, for you cannot blot out the sin of your first disobedience by a later obedience, which, though perfect, could not be a work of supererogation, nor furnish you a surplus to apply to the past. Nor can you any more deliver yourself from sin itself; for, however determined you may be to obey God hereafter, you are as soil full of malignant weeds which cannot produce wholesome plants. And, says Jesus Christ, the flesh can only bring forth of the flesh—that is, sin cannot produce holiness, nor a sinful will reform a sinful will. So that, having no hope in yourselves, and being obliged to look elsewhere, you cry out in anguish: “Who then will deliver me?” God. He accuses you of a sinful state only to deliver you from it. He “concludes

you in unbelief" only that He may "have mercy upon you." Thus His word assures you. Look at the plan which His mercy has appointed for your deliverance and which this Word reveals to you. I say, which this Word reveals to you. For in this discussion upon which I am about to enter I shall simply present the thoughts of the Bible without seeking the approval of human reason, since it is too evident that in delivering sinful man God would not take counsel with sinful man, and that this plan will be among those "ways which are higher than our ways and those thoughts which are higher than our thoughts." This expression is usually applied to afflictions. But in the prophet's thought it really connects itself with free salvation, and the context leaves no doubt of this.

When I wanted to prove our misery in a state of nature reason could be summoned to add its feeble voice to the mighty authority of God. Reason has its own way of stating the need we have of the gospel, and the signs of divinity which this gospel bears. But when it has done this it has done all its work. Its testimony is exhausted. To-day let it keep silence. Let it listen to what God shall speak and not assume to sit in judgment upon its Judge. And do thou, O Lord, freely display to this assembly thy "foolishness," which is wiser than the wisdom of men, and by which it pleases Thee to save them.

And, in the first place, all the prophets of the Old Testament announce and the gospel begins with proclaiming a dispensation of divine mercy so consoling to sinful men, and which they have so little reason to expect, that it takes to itself the title, the Gospel, or the Good News. The first of these two deliverances which you seek you have. God consents to remit to you the penalty of your sins. He forgives you. Not that the condemnation which your conscience pronounces is not just according to the Bible. Far from abating from it, the Bible, on the contrary, pronounces it with still greater emphasis. For, to cite only a single example, in this chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where, last Lord's Day, we heard it declared that every man is a sinner, it is also declared that every man is without excuse, a position which it proves from the manner in which the corruption of former nations originated. And this demonstration, so far from being taken from the history of nations in distinction from individuals, is applied by St. Paul in his conclusion to every man in particular, because the history of nations is found in miniature in the history of the individual. For, just as the corruption of nations began because they voluntarily shut their eyes to light such as God had granted them, and God was compelled to with-

draw this light and leave them in their darkness, which betrayed them into the most frightful disorders, so, also, every honest man knows that he cherishes sin in his heart because he has willfully quenched the light which God gave him at the first, and compelled God to take from him that light and leave him in that ignorance which has betrayed him into sin. According to St. Paul, it is because of this that every man is a sinner, and has irreparably lost the possibility of "justification by works," that is, life eternal, merited by conduct which is conformed to the law of God.

But now, adds St. Paul, God seeing that no man henceforth could attain a blessed immortality by this first method opened another, different one, and proposed to him "justification by faith," that is, eternal life, as a free gift granted to the sinner. Why? Simply because He is merciful—"justified freely by grace," the pleonasm of St. Paul's, not for any merit or worth in man, but in spite of all his demerit and unworthiness. And how? "By the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." My brethren, let us not wrest the Scriptures. These declarations can have but a single meaning. Jesus Christ suffered in our stead the death which we all deserved. God treats His innocent Son as if He had been as sinful as man is, that He may be able to treat man as if he had been as innocent as His Son. He wishes to remove our sins from us as far as the east is from the west, to cast them into the depths of the seas, to remember them no more, to lift us from a state of condemnation.

It is at this point that I want you to remember that I appeal only to the authority of the Bible. I do not call for the testimony of reason, which, indeed, I could not secure, and which I do not need, because I do not express my own thoughts, but the thoughts of God, nor clothed in my own language, but in the language of the Bible. And should you ask me for some connecting link between the forgiveness of our sins and the death of Jesus Christ; by what strange law divine justice can be satisfied with punishing sin without punishing the sinner; how God can afflict the innocent instead of the guilty, and pardon the guilty on account

of the innocent, I have only one word to answer : *I do not know !* And should you ask of me a discourse in which redemption shall be explained, I should follow the example of that philosopher of antiquity from whom certain persons demanded a definition of God ; I should require of you at first a week in which to prepare this discourse ; after this week I should ask of you another ; after the second, a third, and so on, until I should finally answer that I could never finish it ; for the more philosophy meditates upon God the less can it define Him ; and the more I meditate upon redemption the less can I explain it.

But, though I cannot explain redemption directly, I have a way of explaining it indirectly. Though I cannot conceive of it in itself and as to what constitutes it, I can conceive of it in some sort by what precedes and what follows it. I can see the peace which it re-establishes. When God was asked by Moses to let him see His glory, and to let His goodness pass before his eyes, Moses knew before God passed that He was to pass ; but, while he was passing, Moses did not see, for God had "covered him with His hand." It is the same with redemption. God passes before us, sacrificing His Son for the expiation of our sins. While the sacrifice is in progress we see nothing ; God has put His hand before our eyes. But before this sacrifice we see the anguish of the troubled conscience ; and after it God takes away His hand and we see the peace which He has restored. Let us be content. Let us not be so unreasonable as to wonder that God has been unwilling, has not been able in our present state, to make all things intelligible to us. A day will come when we shall "know as we are known." At present let us believe God upon His Word ; let us accept the good news as news. God proposes to forgive all men, because Jesus Christ has suffered for all men.

But it is in vain that the sinner is delivered from the punishment of sin if he is not also delivered from sin itself. God, therefore, offers us a second deliverance. At the same time that He forgives us, and which is wonderful, by the same means He awakens in our soul the germ of holiness, according to this profound utterance of the 130th Psalm, "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared."

The second part of the plan of God's mercy, that which has for its aim the deliverance of man from sin itself—in other words, the bringing of him back to love God with supreme love—is founded upon the principle, divinely simple and suggestive, which may be called the philosophy of evangelical holiness. Love cannot be commanded. It comes into existence, without compulsion, upon the exhibi-

tion of certain attributes which attract it. If a Being appeared to us devoid of these qualities He would not appear lovely to us. We should be able to love Him only as we made ourselves. If, on the other hand, He appeared endowed with these qualities, if He appeared lovely to us, not only should we love Him without effort, but we could not help loving Him. If, then, we sin, if we do not love God, it is simply because we do not know Him ; for if we knew Him we should know that He possesses in the highest degree that quality of all most suitable to attract our love—namely, *great love for us !* “ Whosoever sinneth,” or “ whosoever loveth not,” says St. John, “ knoweth not God ; for God is love.” In order, then, to bring man to love God it is necessary to show man that God loves him. For this purpose God reveals to men His true name, which is Father ; sends to them His Son Jesus Christ, who alone, having always been in the bosom of the Father, has seen God, who alone knows all that is fatherly in Him.

How well did Jesus Christ fulfill this mission, and how impossible to see the Son and doubt the Father’s love ! Christ comes ! Three years and a half He talks of the Father ; and all that He says can be put into this single expression : *God loves you.* Then that which He proclaims in His life He demonstrates by His death. And upon the cross He not only says, *God loves you !* but, *Behold how God loves you !*

For, what love can equal that which God manifests for us in the sacrifice of His Son ? When I wish to give myself some idea of it I represent to myself such a sinner as I am at first approaching the judgment-seat of God, calling to mind the sins of his life and the small proportion of them which he can remember, and discovering in them ground for his condemnation a thousand times ; reflecting that, if his heart condemns him, God is greater than his heart, and that his condemnation will be still more severe because God sees in him all the evil which he himself does not see and remembers all that He has forgotten ; hearing, too, those threatenings of the Scriptures, the anticipated decisions of eternal justice, which pronounce penalties upon every transgressor of the law, and which treat as a transgressor of the whole law the man who has broken a single commandment ; overwhelmed with these reflections, full of remorse for the past, full of disquiet for the future, and yet compelled to advance in a despair which increases every step He takes, entering the presence of the Most Holy One, the chief of sinners, and finding, instead of a Judge before whom he dared not lift up his eyes, and from whom in gloomy silence he awaits a terrible sentence, a Father who says to him,

“My son, depart in peace: thy sins are forgiven thee.” If by this end his whole existence undergoes a change; if an insufferable burden falls from his heart; if peace and hope re-enter, or, shall I so express it? rush into his soul; if he lifts upon his fatherly Judge eyes, in which one knows not whether surprise does not surpass joy itself, will not the first accents which escape from his lips be: “What love, my God, what love!” Ah, well! I say to myself. But the love which God has displayed upon this supposition is tame compared with which He has shown in the death of His Son. Here all that which is tender in His mercy is subject to what is terrible in His holiness. Here, at the same time, I am taught that He shows me favor. I am also taught that His law is so inflexible and my sin so enormous, that He could not desire to show me favor without also caring for justice; that it was not only needful that my debt should be paid, but that He only was able to pay it for me. Here forgiveness is a sacred office, in which His love for the sinner, declared in the absolution of the sinful, stands in contrast with His hatred of sin, declared in the shedding of blood. “What love, my God, what love!” And who, then, is the Victim who sacrifices Himself for me? Is He a man? No, say the Scriptures. Is He an angel? No, say the Scriptures. He is the Son of God, His only Son, in whom He has centered all His love; who was in the beginning with God; who is one with God; who is God. So that the Creator gives Himself for the creature in the person of His own Son. “What love, my God, what love!”

But, finally, why such love? Is there anything in me which has deserved it? Have I only anticipated His love by loving Him? No. He has “first loved me.” The secret of His mercy is wholly in His mercy itself. He has had compassion on me merely because it pleased Him to have compassion. He has saved me simply because I was lost! When I was a child “of disobedience and wrath,” His “enemy,” then it was that He determined to sacrifice His Son for me. “What love, my God, what love!” And yet I do not see the depths of this love. It is a deep that I cannot fathom; but the deeper I go I find only fullness of love. In the depths of it which I see I discover a love which transcends my imagination; and in the depths of it which I am unable to penetrate I have a presentiment of a love which confounds, which absorbs, which astounds all my thoughts. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. “God is love. Whosoever loveth not hath not seen God. But I, when I know

Him—I, when I see Him in Christ, how can I help loving Him? Bought with such a price I am no longer my own, and I give Him my whole heart.”

By such a manifestation of the love of God to sinful man Christ would have done all that would be necessary to convert him to love God, if this manifestation had found man's spirit ready to receive it. It did not find it so. The thoughts of God expressed in redemption are so far removed from our human thoughts that they would make no impression upon the human soul were it not for a special preparation to which it is subjected. This demonstration is clear, irresistible; but it is put into a language which is foreign to us, so that it is first necessary that we receive into our hearts an Interpreter. Hence, this Preparer of our hearts, this Interpreter of redemption, is promised to us under the title of the Holy Spirit.

Do not imagine that the promise of the Holy Spirit was for the apostles alone; it was for all Christians, in all time. Among apostolic gifts, that which was necessary for the rapid propagation of Christianity, that which they received for the sake of others, is not needful for us as it was for them, nor is it promised. But, among apostolic gifts, that which was needful for the conversion of their hearts, that which they received for themselves, is as necessary for us as for them, and is equally promised. It is to all men that Jesus Christ says, “God will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.” It is in epistles addressed to all the churches that the apostles write: “You have received an unction from the Holy One;” that is, the Holy Spirit. “Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in you.” “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.” But if these affirmations, so distinct, left us still in doubt, it would remain no longer after the declaration with which the apostle Peter concludes his discourse on the day of Pentecost, and from which it is plain that he wished to prevent in his hearers the very error which, in your minds, I am now opposing: “You shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you and to your children and to them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” My brethren, when God has spoken let us no longer resist. The Holy Spirit is promised to all Christians.

And do you know who the Holy Spirit is? Let us learn it from the Bible; let us listen without unbelief; let us not enfeeble the force of its expressions; let us no more make our demands and still not listen to what God has clearly promised us. The Holy Spirit is not the reaction of our spirit upon itself in meditation and prayer. The Holy Spirit

is not simply an impression naturally produced upon our spirits by just and salutary thoughts. The action of the Holy Spirit is direct, real, supernatural, exerted upon the spirit of man by a God equally sovereign over our hearts as over our nature, and who can at will give us and take from us our thoughts and feelings ; or, to keep more closely to the terms of the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, thinking, willing, loving, acting in the spirit of man. The Holy Spirit is God in man.

The Scriptures attribute to this Spirit many kinds of influences, and especially that of which we have just recognized the need. He shows us the love of God as displayed in the redemption. They represent that the Spirit of God sheds abroad in our hearts the love of God—that is, reveals to us, or better, communicates to us, God's love toward us ; that this Spirit witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God, reconciled to Him by the death of His Son, since by this Spirit and Him alone can we receive Christ as our Lord, our Messiah, our Redeemer. But listen to the apostle Paul, who treats this doctrine directly in writing to the Corinthians : “ I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” “ Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man.” You see that the apostle speaks of redemption, and that he says that unaided man has not susceptibility to receive it. “ But,” he adds, “ God hath revealed it unto us by His Spirit.” “ For we have received the Spirit of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” When, therefore, you have received the Spirit of God you will be able to believe in the redemption and to feel its power. Because the redemption conveys a vivid impression of God's love to you, your heart will of itself turn toward Him, and you will, in your turn, commence to love Him. Then will pass upon you an experience of all things new : new light, new feelings, new tastes, new memories, new hopes ; in a word, as the Scriptures represent, “ a new life.” Then, though obliged yet to keep up a warfare with sin, according to the Scriptures, you will be no longer the slaves of sin, according to the same Scriptures ; you will still stumble as you walk the way of salvation, but you will no longer follow that of perdition ; you will more and more “ abstain from every appearance of evil ;” and at last you will belong to those whom the Scriptures call righteous, converted, renewed, the redeemed of the Lord Jesus Christ, the children of God, weaned from this world and ripe for another, knowing how to live and yet ready to die.

Thus God's mercy has left nothing undone for the salva-

tion of the sinner. Man needs a double deliverance ; sinful, he needs forgiveness ; wretched, he needs a change of heart ; and God offers them both in Jesus Christ. He forgives him on account of Jesus Christ, who has suffered the punishment due to his sins ; He changes his heart by showing His love in the redemption which he has been persuaded to believe and submit to by the Holy Spirit.

But in order to avail ourselves of this plan of mercy have we nothing to do upon our own part ? or rather, finally, what have we to do ? Yes, we have something to do. God, who created us without our agency, will not save us without that agency. Whoever would receive to himself the two graces which Jesus Christ brings—forgiveness and change of heart—must have a certain disposition of the soul which has been termed *faith*. The Scriptures clearly insist upon this and upon this alone. Without multiplying proofs of it, it is only necessary for me to recall two marked illustrations : one in the ministry of Jesus Christ, the other in that of the apostles. When Jesus Christ was solicited by the sick to heal their bodily infirmities, by which He symbolized the healing of the soul, He said to them : “ Believest thou ? If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” And when St. Paul was interrogated by the jailer of Philippi as to what he should do to be saved, he replied to him, “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” So that if on one side we may be saved “ by grace,” on the other we participate in that grace only “ by faith.”

But what is faith ? Learn again from the Scriptures : faith has two significations, according to whether it is regarded in its principle or application. Faith, considered as a principle, is the general conviction that the Bible is the Word of God, and therefore that all which it says is true. This is faith in God. Faith, considered in its application, is the particular conviction that this is true which God has declared in His Word, that we are all lost and may all be saved in Jesus Christ. This is faith in Jesus Christ. The second—that is, faith in Jesus Christ—indeed, is only a consequence of faith in God—is what St. Paul demanded of the jailer of Philippi, and which is *also* demanded of all of us in order to salvation. If you wish a more exact and at the same time a simpler conception of faith you will find it in this expression of the leprous man : “ Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean. I am lost ; I cannot save myself ; Thou canst save me. Save me, Lord ! ” This is faith. The moment you experience this disposition there will be no promise in the Bible which you cannot personally appro-

priate, and Jesus Christ will no longer be *the* Saviour ; He will be *your* Saviour.

But how shall one acquire this faith ? Must God give it ? Yes, for the Scriptures say, " For unto you it is given to believe on Him." Must we idly wait till we attain this faith ? No ; for the Scriptures say again : " Be diligent ; seek the Lord ; work out your own salvation." But how can you harmonize two things which seem so contrary ? In theory they cannot be harmonized, but in practice they can. You will harmonize them by asking for faith ; for by asking you recognize the truth that you need some One to give, and at the same time by asking you seek, you act. Ask, then. Pray for faith. In order to heal you God will ask you only one question, Wilt thou be made whole ? Wilt thou believe ? Not, Do you desire, do you long to believe ? but, Will you ? do you will it more than all things else and at whatever cost ? Do you will to know the truth ? That is, will you, to know the truth, make every sacrifice which God exacts of you ?—the sacrifice of your idleness, your negligence, your pre-occupation, your interests, your affections, even your personal opinions and your boasted independence ? Will you listen to God in the Scriptures with a sincere determination to accept His testimony whether or not it conform to what you have hitherto believed ? Are you willing to be forgiven ? Are you willing to experience favor like a vile criminal ? Are you willing to be embraced in the same act of forgiveness with robbers, with " the chief of sinners ?" Do you will to become holy ? Do you will to do all that you shall find required in the Word of God, agreeable or not to your inclinations ? To have your own will no more, but to follow only God's will ; to give to Him all that you have and all that you are ? Do you will—to speak it all in one word—O littleness ! O cross of nature !—to renounce yourself ? Do you will to be worth nothing, to merit nothing, to know nothing, to count for nothing, to be nothing, to keep back nothing for yourself—nothing, nothing at all ? If this is your will, if these are your dispositions, ask God boldly for faith. Do not fear to be too bold, only fear being too little so ; for to doubt that God is willing to hear you is to doubt His express promise. If, on the contrary, you do not will this, if these are not your dispositions— But why should I disturb you with discouragements ? Ah ! if you do not perceive these dispositions within you ; if you perceive but the beginnings of them ; if you perceive only the desire of them, very well ; present to God these beginnings, this desire. Strengthen yourself before Him by the example of that unhappy father who supplicated Jesus Christ to heal his child, and when

interrogated whether he believed, answered, weeping, "Lord, I believe ; help Thou my unbelief !" and who was, nevertheless, not repulsed. Pray in the same manner ; if not with full faith, yet with the little faith you have ; if not with utter self-renouncement, yet with the little self-renouncement which you have. These imperfect prayers will obtain for you, first, graces as imperfect doubtless as your prayers. These graces will stimulate you to better prayers, which will obtain for you more abundant graces ; and so from prayers to graces, and from graces to prayers, you will come slowly into the truth, and will finally reach the way of God's mercy.

My brethren, in this discourse and the preceding one I have unfolded the necessity and the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. If any one is about to reject them, I would first ask him what he rejects. Is it only the form, the language, the arrangement of thought ? Each of you is free to reject these, for they come from me. Is it, on the contrary, the foundation of these discourses, the very ideas themselves ? You do not believe it true that man is by nature sinful ; that he needs forgiveness such as can be secured only through the expiatory death of the Son of God ; that he needs a change of heart, which can be wrought only by the Spirit of God ; that he is lost, and can be saved only by Jesus Christ—only "by grace" "through faith." If this is what you reject, I want to add one thought : Take pains, at least, to know the case, and to know what you reject. It is not man ; it is not the word of man. It is the gospel. It is Jesus Christ, who alone is the gospel. He shows precisely what you reject. A lost man, rejecting God the Saviour, Christ the victim ; the Holy Spirit, the Renewer. Here all men agree who ever believed the Scriptures at all. It is the gospel of the Reformed Church of France, the gospel of Calvin, the gospel of Luther, the gospel of Pascal, the gospel of Fénelon, the gospel of *The Imitation*, the gospel of John Huss, the gospel of St. Bernard, the gospel of St. Augustine, the gospel of St. Polycarp, the gospel of St. Paul, the gospel of St. John, the gospel of St. James, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of God ! So that if you reject it, though you may be called Christians, and may believe yourselves to be Christians, you are no more Christians than a philosopher who rejects the Platonic philosophy can be a disciple of Plato. What I have preached to you is not my opinion. It is the truth. It is not my doctrine. It is *the* doctrine. It is more. It is the life. If you do not believe it, you abide in death. What do I say ? If you do not believe it, what *do* you believe ? Who are you ? To whom do you belong ? Whence

come you, and what do you here? If you should defend yourselves, the very stones of this structure will cry out that the worship which they see you offer here to God is a contradiction. For, not to mention Communion days, when this liturgy—by authority of which you are invited to approach this Holy Table, and which you recognize as true by accepting the invitation—declares you to be “miserable sinners” who have no hope but in the mercy of God; that “Jesus Christ is the real Paschal Lamb that was slain for you,” and that you have “need of the Spirit of God to transform you into new creatures;” not to mention this, each Sunday you do not accompany the heart, but only the outward gesture, when I open the services with prayer. For this prayer supposes two parties, the first of whom is represented in my first and the second of whom in my second discourse. When the pastor says aloud, “We acknowledge before Thy holy Majesty that we are poor sinners, born in corruption, inclined to evil, of ourselves incapable of doing good, and that we every day and in multitudes of ways transgress Thy holy commandments: and that we deserve from Thee only condemnation and death”—if you reject my first discourse, you say in a low voice: “I am not a poor sinner, I was not born in corruption, I am not inclined to evil, I am not, of myself, incapable of doing any good thing, I do not daily and in multitudes of ways transgress God’s commandments, nor do I deserve condemnation and death.” And again, when the pastor says aloud, “We take refuge in Thy grace, and we implore Thee to relieve us of our misery. Have mercy upon us, O God, Father of mercies, and forgive our sins, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Grant us, also increase in us, the graces of Thy Holy Spirit!”—if you reject my second discourse, you must say in an undertone: “As I do not deserve condemnation, so I do not solicit favor. I was not born in corruption. I do not need to be renewed by the Holy Spirit. And as I do not believe that the innocent can suffer in place of the guilty, I do not ask to be forgiven for the sake of Jesus Christ.” So that, if you reject this doctrine, you cannot put yourself in agreement with the Protestant Church, nor with the Reformers, nor with the pious souls of the Catholic Church, nor with Christians of all ages, nor with the Church Fathers, nor with the Apostolic Church, nor with the Apostles, nor with Jesus Christ, nor with God, nor with yourselves. You must extricate yourselves in some manner from a position so false; you must either go forward or go backward; either take the thing or give up the name, receive the doctrine or admit you are not Christians.

Oh! ye in this assembly whom God has made thoughtful

through these discourses, employ this seriousness faithfully. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Who shall say that this is not your "accepted time," your "day of salvation," which, if you neglect, will never return; which, if you faithfully improve, will be to you the era of a new life? Forget all human influence, all human impressions. See only two parties—God and yourself. Say to Him: "My God, up to this moment I have believed myself a Christian, but now I begin to see that it has been only in name. I perceive that all is not well with me, that I am not at peace with Thee. Give me this peace, Lord. I will renounce everything else. Wouldst Thou have my property? Take it. Wouldst Thou have my reputation? Here it is. Wouldst Thou have my health? Here is my health. Wouldst Thou have even the objects of my affection? Must I give up friend, father, mother, wife, child? Behold, I accept the sacrifice. Thy will supreme! Thy truth supreme! Thy spirit supreme! First my conversion—'Turn me and I shall be turned.'"

My God, if any one prays to Thee thus, he is not far from the kingdom of heaven. Help him, oh, help him to do what only remains to be done by sending down into his heart the Holy Spirit to urge him, to entreat him to continue the work and conclude it; the Holy Spirit, the heavenly Advocate of truth, without whom no earthly advocate can help being "but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." Amen.