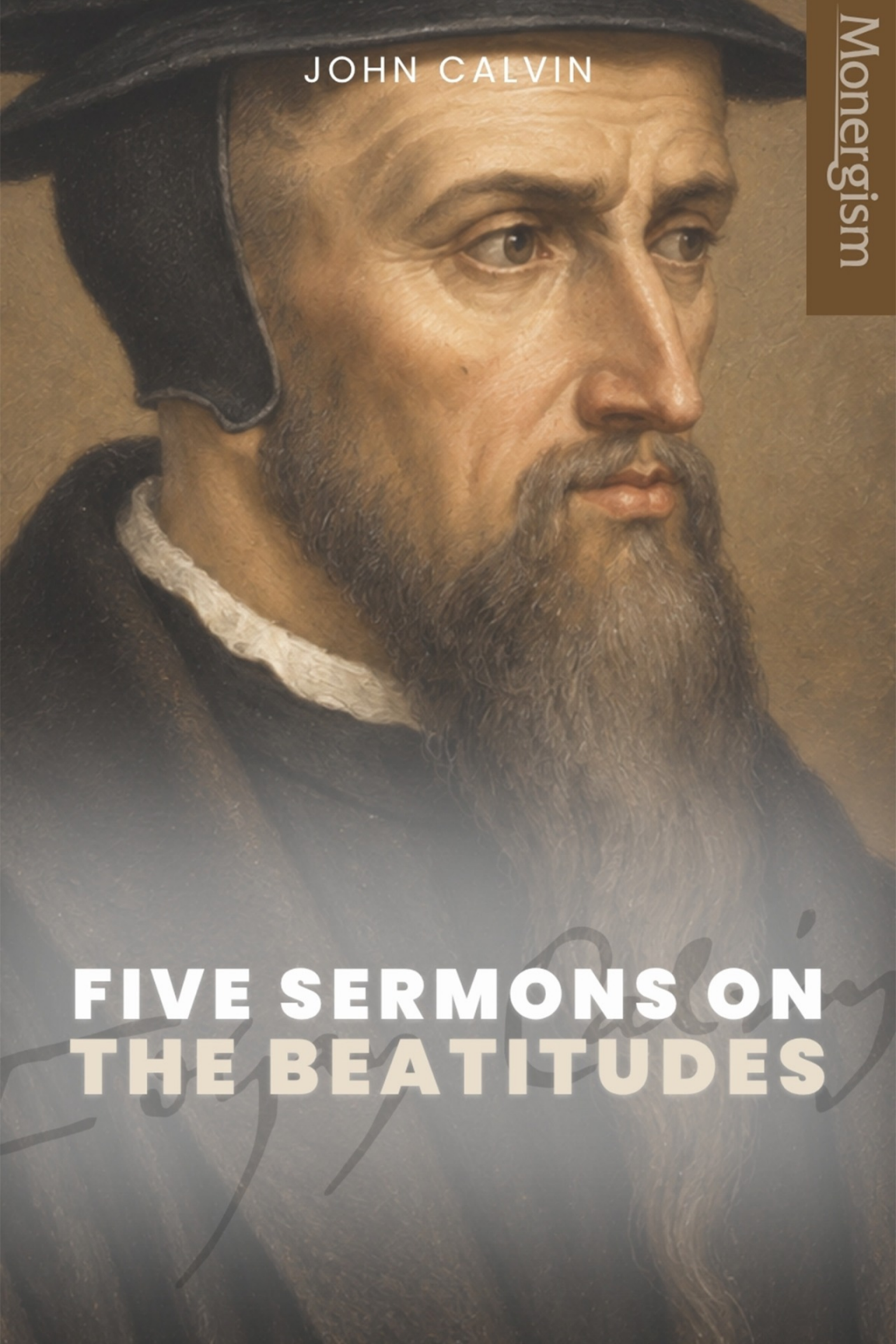


A detailed oil painting of John Calvin, showing him from the chest up. He has a long, grey beard and mustache, and is wearing a dark cap and a dark robe with a white ruffled collar. The background is a plain, light brown color.

JOHN CALVIN

Monergism

**FIVE SERMONS ON
THE BEATITUDES**

Five Sermons on the Beatitudes



JOHN CALVIN

A new English translation from the French text of 1562.

Edited for Modern English Readers

MONERGISM BOOKS

Monergism

FIVE SERMONS ON THE BEATITUDES JOHN CALVIN

Translated into English from Calvin's 1562 French text. The French source remained the controlling authority throughout the translation and editorial process.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The five sermons in this volume were originally preached by John Calvin in French and form part of his larger series of sermons on the Harmony of the Gospels. They are presented here in a new English translation prepared from the French text.

Artificial intelligence tools were used during the preparation of this edition to assist with the initial translation of the French text and with subsequent editorial revision. Every sermon was reviewed and revised by the editor. The French source text remained the controlling authority throughout the translation process.

The source text for this translation is Calvin's *Soixante cinq Sermons de Iean Calvin sur l'Harmonie ou Concordance des trois Euangelistes, saint Matthieu, S. Marc, et S. Luc*, collected by Denis Ragueneau and first published in 1562. The present volume contains Sermons 61–65 from that collection, the five sermons in which Calvin expounds the opening portion of the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes. The translation was prepared from the French text preserved in the collected edition of Calvin's works made available through the University of Geneva.

Our aim has been to produce a faithful translation that reads naturally in modern English while preserving the character and force of Calvin's preaching. Because these sermons originated in oral proclamation, the French often contains long sentences, repetition, and idiomatic constructions. Where a strictly literal rendering would obscure Calvin's meaning, we have adjusted wording and sentence structure while preserving his argument, emphasis, and theological substance.

Scripture quotations have been translated from Calvin's French as they appear in the source text, with biblical references supplied where helpful. Our purpose throughout has been to let Calvin speak clearly in English without modernizing his theology or recasting him as a contemporary preacher.

CHAPTER 1

THE CALLING AND PREPARATION OF THE TWELVE

Mark 3:13-19. *Then he went up into a mountain, and called to himself those whom he wanted: and they came to him. 14. And he ordained twelve to be with him, and to send them out to preach, 15. And to have power to heal diseases, and to cast out devils. 16. The first was Simon (on whom he gave the name Peter). 17. And then James son of Zebedee, and John brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, which is as good as Son of Thunder). 18. And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, 19. And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.*

Luke 6:12-19. *It happened in those days that he went to a mountain to pray: and spent the whole night praying to God. 13. And when it was day, he called his disciples: and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: 14. Simon, whom he called Peter, and Andrew his brother: James and John: Philip and Bartholomew: 15. Matthew and Thomas: James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot. 16. And Judas brother of James: and Judas Iscariot, who also was a traitor. 17. Then going down with them, he stood in a plain with the company of his disciples: and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to see, and to be healed of their diseases, 18. And those who were tormented by unclean spirits: and were healed. 19. And all the multitude were eager to touch him: for power went out from him, and healed them all.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ in the fifteenth chapter of John, wanting to keep his disciples in fear and humility, and to deprive them of every opportunity to be proud, tells them that he chose them, and that they had not chosen him: as if he were saying that he anticipated them by his grace, and that they had not acquired such dignity by their own efforts. And this is what Mark here means to declare in a single phrase, saying, that our Lord Jesus Christ chose those whom he willed. As if he were saying that it is not for us to investigate why these twelve of whom he is speaking here were preferred above the rest of the company:

because our Lord Jesus already had several disciples who willingly followed his doctrine. However, he leaves them as private persons, and takes only twelve. If we wanted to dispute here what greater virtue Peter possessed than another, what nobility there was in James, and what special dignity John possessed, we would be confused. And in fact, all such curiosity is cut off here, when it is said that our Lord Jesus Christ chose those whom it pleased him to choose, to show that it is not for us to call him to account, or ask what moved and induced him to act in this way: but that we must rest in his decree, even when the reason is hidden from us. And in fact, as for the salvation of our souls, it is certain that we cannot know any other cause, other than the good pleasure of God and his free mercy, which he was pleased to exercise. For if we believe that we are worth more than others who are neglected and abandoned, we thereby detract from the gratuitous goodness of God, by which we obtain salvation: and we do this if we want to be something before men and have some degree of reputation. For every mouth must be shut here, and we must know that God has chosen us, not for any value that he has found in us, or because we were better disposed than those whom he rejects, but in order to magnify his free generosity all the more.

So it was also regarding the office of the apostles. For it is certain that if our Lord Jesus Christ had wanted to choose people who were naturally fit and suitable for such an office, not a single one would have been found. Even the angels of heaven could not suffice for this: and how could poor mortal creatures supply what such a charge required? Now it was necessary for our Lord Jesus Christ to minister the mercy of God his Father here, of whom he was a minister. This becomes still clearer, in that he chose poor fishermen, uneducated men, who had never attended the schools, who did not know A from B, as they say. Afterwards, he did not take the others in the city of Jerusalem, or from the priestly order which was then highly prized and honored: but unknown people, who had not previously been in any esteem. We will see below the same of Matthew, as he was called. He sat at the customs post as a tax collector, who was detestable to all the people. Now if we want to know the reason why our Lord Jesus Christ preferred him as an apostle than those who were of higher rank and standing, it is certain that we will be confused, as we have said. Let us therefore attend to Mark's statement that our Lord Jesus Christ took those whom he wanted. By this (as I said) all our speculations and vain curiosities are kept in check, so that we do not presume to know more than is lawful for us about the works of God, and do not intrude too far into his counsel. Let us therefore be satisfied that whatever he does is governed by

perfect rectitude, wisdom, and justice: but nevertheless we are not capable of comprehending his reasons. That is the first point. And then for the second, let us also know that men are nothing, and can contribute nothing of their own to make God our debtor: as it is said, Who gave him the first, and he will repay him? Because if we want to be prized by God, we must have something. If he is neither bound nor indebted to us, what claim could we possibly bring against him? And so it is that of all that is ours, there is nothing that is not given to us from him. And yet, we ourselves, our very persons, and everything he has put in us belongs to him, and we must be indebted to him. Moreover, he lacks nothing, and nothing we do can add anything to him: as it is said in the sixteenth Psalm. Let us therefore conclude that when God calls us to some dignity and office, that it is by his good pleasure, and that we must not imagine that he found us more capable than others: but in order to humiliate us, he wanted to show that everything depends on his grace, and not on any merit. Now if this concerns temporal dignity, it is even more necessary to apply this truth when the matter concerns of our eternal salvation, for he has adopted us as his children, and to be members of our Lord Jesus Christ his Son, to be partakers of his heavenly glory: shall human beings attribute any part of this to themselves? And if they attribute something to themselves, are they not worthy of being stripped of it because of their ingratitude? So this is the first point we have to note here.

Now it is certain that Mark and Luke mention here in passing what occurred later, touching on the company of the twelve. Be that as it may, they do not mean that Christ had already installed them fully in the apostolic office (for this will be seen in his order) but rather, he had already set them apart in anticipation of it. Thus twelve men were reserved of twelve men who were of the number of the disciples, so that so that they might be employed when the proper time came, as we will see: but although at first they were not ordained apostles, and the office of preaching the gospel was not given to them. Nevertheless, our Lord Jesus Christ took them into his household, and thus came to him, that is to say, they attached themselves to him, so that he might afterward establish the proper order among them. It is true that he called them apostles, but it was with regard to the commission that he wanted to give them, and not because they already exercised it at that time. In short, let us note that these twelve were kept near Jesus Christ, in order to be prepared and trained. Even after they had been in his school for some time before opening their mouths, if they were so ignorant and so dull, that it is a shame to see that they

have profited so badly under such a master as the Son of God, who is the source of all wisdom, and the light of the world. Now what was it then if they had been sent out at once? How could they have proclaimed the message later committed to them, namely the message of salvation? It is certain that they could not have spoken a word properly. We now see the intention of our Lord Jesus Christ, is that he wanted to prepare these twelve whom he chose for apostles, before giving them the commission of which we will see below. And even then he said to them, that when he established them apostles, it was not yet to teach fully, but but to serve as a trumpet sounding, and then another pronounced what was to be said. This is how the apostles served only as heralds, to say that people should listen to Jesus Christ, that his doctrine was received, that the path was prepared, as we have already seen from John the Baptist. But still the apostles did not have so extensive a commission from the first time as John the Baptist, until after the resurrection. But this will be dealt with in its place.

Now therefore we see how our Lord Jesus Christ, following what we have touched on this morning, did not want to exercise the office of Master, Prophet, and Teacher only during his earthly ministry, but he wanted to provide for the future of his church, so that it was not deprived of the doctrine of salvation. And in this we see what care he had for the salvation of all his people. For these twelve were chosen, not only for those who lived at that time, but for our use, and so that today we might still receive the benefit of the instruction they gave. Also today the zeal and constancy of Peter show us the path to salvation, and again John's voice, called a voice of thunder, still resounds everywhere: and we must be deeply touched by it. So let us learn that our Lord Jesus Christ showed that he wanted the gospel to continue its course: and that not only did he want it to be heard from his mouth: but that after his death and resurrection he there should be men to proclaim the reconciliation that he had made with God his Father through him. And for this cause he took those of whom he is speaking here.

Now it is said that he withdrew to the mountain to pray, and that he remained there all night. Here let us touch briefly on prayer, of which it is made mention, because it will be discussed at greater length below: and yet it is not expedient to develop the subject fully now. It is true that our Lord Jesus Christ for himself had no need to pray: but as he was head of the church, and as he was subject to all our infirmities except sin (for there was no blemish in him) and had taken our nature to be truly united with us, he needed, because of this

brotherhood, which he had taken, to pray to God. And in fact, he gave us the example. For if we think that it was a pretense, and that he only showed what we must do without being touched on his part, there is no point. And we will see below that he prayed in earnest. For where will we find such vehemence and ardor that he sweated blood and water when we wish to invoke God? This will be related of him later. When we cry in our requests that we have to make to God, is this not a sign that we are moved, and that we are not only pretending, but that necessity presses us? Now the tears of Jesus are written to us in the eleventh chapter of John, when he raised Lazarus. In short, then, let us note when it is recited that our Lord Jesus Christ prayed, that in this we know how he not only humbled himself, but emptied himself for our salvation: as also Paul speaks of it, expressly using this word *annihilate*. If our Lord Jesus Christ had humbled himself only to some intermediate degree, it was already a lot: but when he wants to be subjected to all our infirmities, and he takes them on his person, except (as I said) that there has been no evil or disordered affection (for there has been nothing which contravenes the perfection of the justice and the Law of God, in short, he has been exempt from all things which can be called vicious or reckoned among sins): what sign of love has he shown us? and where is this going? And by this we see that he needed to pray. As now that he has to choose disciples, he asks God his Father to preside over and govern this choice. Because he did this as a man. For as he is God, this in no way befits him: but as he is our head, there is such a union that he has taken with us, that what belongs to us he transfers to himself, and serves as our pattern in every respect. It was therefore necessary that God govern this election he had to make. And that is why he prayed so carefully. Because it was not as usual, hurriedly or merely as a formality: but he worked on it all night. And this is still worth noting. Because it is to shame us in our cowardice and coldness. It will seem to us that we will do a lot when we pray to God in the morning and in the evening, that we will have some devotion, even though there are many obstacles to turn us away from it. Now here our Lord Jesus Christ gives us another example when he stays up until the morning, being in worry and anguish until he has rested in God, until he has handed over to him every care he bore for his church. And if we allege that this happened only to our Lord Jesus Christ, we see how David spoke of himself: we see how Paul, not for boasting, but to give instruction to all the faithful, says that he bowed his knees day and night before God. Let us therefore learn to correct ourselves when we feel such laziness in ourselves, and when we only pray half-heartedly: indeed, and with great difficulty is there the tenth part of what

should be there, or even the hundredth: and that we know that this example of our Lord Jesus Christ must serve as goads to prick us and amend ourselves for such sluggishness: or at the least that we groan before God, and pray that he Please forgive us in that we fail, and who could close the door to us, that our petitions might otherwise find no access to him: and that we say, Lord, although I am here a poor miserable creature, who am not worthy to raise my head to heaven to ask you, nevertheless you will not fail to hold my hand, and to extend it so far, that however far I may be from you, notwithstanding this do not drive me away from your grace: but that you extend your infinite virtue to me, and that you do not stop listening to me, whatever my condition may be. So here is again what have to remember from this passage.

Now it is said that he called Simon Peter and the sons of Zebedee. It is true that the form is Boanerges, derived from Benai reges, that is to say, children of thunder: and the changes are made like this. Because when we put some specific word from one language into another, very often we do not render it as it is. As of Peter himself, when he is called Cephas. This is not what Jesus Christ said in the first place: for what similarity is there between Cephas and Peter? But let's take the Greek and Latin word, still there is a big difference between Peter and Petre that we will say. Therefore, we need not occupy ourselves greatly in that there is something syllable changed: because also the Evangelist expressly supplies the meaning of this title which was attributed to John and his brother James. It is true that this word suits all apostles, to be sons of thunder. For we know what is said by the Prophet Haggai, that the preaching of the gospel was to move heaven and earth, and to make everything tremble. Now Peter was an ambassador of the gospel as well as these two brothers here, and nevertheless this title is not attributed to him, but that does not prevent that par excellence our Lord Jesus Christ did not want to show how he wanted to work in James, and in John his brother. And in fact, the name Peter is also suitable for all the faithful, as he himself speaks of it: for he exhorts us to be built to be used in the church of God, that we may be living stones, and that we may be placed on the foundation which has been laid there, namely our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter therefore shows, although this is common to him with all children of God, namely, that they are living stones to serve in the spiritual building of the church. Yet the name was rightly given to him because he was already ordered to show great firmness, and such constancy, that we can, looking to him, be as well strengthened on our part. Moreover, let us note that our Lord Jesus Christ did not wish here to praise the virtues which they had of themselves. For to

whom could James and John have thundered by their own power? Because they were always on the water, and all their rhetoric was to talk to fish, which are mute creatures. So then they did not have what is here attributed to them. And the same must be said of Peter. For we see what his fall was afterwards, and it would not have been for a single blow that he had been thus stumbled, if he had not been held from above by the virtue of the Holy Spirit. There was therefore nothing in Peter except all debility, it was only water, and he would have fainted at the first blow: but our Lord Jesus Christ attributes to him a title according to the virtue that he wanted to give him. And we must judge the like of the sons of Zebedee. They were called children of thunder: not that their word had such effect as thunder (as we have heard before in the Psalm), that God by this voice causes the deer to abort in the forests, that he uproots the trees, that he makes the mountains tremble. So it was very far from John and James, where there was only simplicity, who were poor, uneducated men, and who were even ashamed to show themselves in large company, that they could by themselves have become sons of thunder. But when our Lord Jesus Christ provided them with such grace, and he also bestowed the name upon them. And thus we see in short, that it was not to make idols of these three disciples of whom we speak here, and that it was not so that people would think that what was attributed to them came from themselves: but rather our Lord Jesus Christ wanted that his goodness was recognized in them, and that the riches entrusted to him by God his Father, were all the more magnified. And for the rest, there is also no doubt, since he intended to employ Peter, that he gave him this honorable title, so that he would have more authority.

The same is true of John and James. So today when we read the small body of teaching Peter left us, let us know that this must so much ground us in the truth of God, that we should never be shaken, so that our faith may stand firm, and that it is constant, even if it is agitated: and however much that the devil never ceases to wage many battles against us, nevertheless that we always remain upon this enduring truth, especially as he who was one of its ministers, namely Peter, bears the name which must teach us that we must not be variable. And then when we read both the gospel of John and his canonical epistles, let us be moved to receive in fear and reverence what is contained there: and in truth we see how his teaching truly thunders. For it is impossible for mortal man to attain by himself to the majesty of his doctrine: and if we were not so dazed as we are, it is certain that we would be delighted with every word that is contained therein. In

short, this is what we have to remember from these titles which must serve as an instruction to us, even so that the doctrine which was brought by Peter, by John and by James, is so much more authoritative for us.

However, here we could ask a question, How our Lord Jesus Christ chose Judas Iscariot. If we say that he did not know him, he would therefore have prayed in vain, and would not have been heard by God his Father. That would be an intolerable absurdity. But again we will see below that he knew the man's disloyalty. It was therefore not by mistake or inadvertence that he chose it. And why did he put him in this sacred number, of which he says and pronounces that he chose his apostles to make them as judges and governors over the people of Israel, as if there were twelve princes over the twelve tribes? To put Judas there, a thief and a traitor, even a man who became an embodiment of iniquity, it seems that in this our Lord Jesus Christ appears to have done something astonishing. But let us note first of all: that it was necessary for us to be by this means armed and equipped against the scandals which occur every day. It is true that in general we will also be amazed when we see that God permits wicked people to be who are advanced in his church, and who seem to be like the pillars of Christianity, until their impiety is discovered. And when it is said that he not only permits this, but that he disposes of it thus, who would not want to contradict it if it were lawful for us? Because we think, How? The church is called the temple of God. There must be no defilement in it, but it must be without spot or stain. And must he therefore allow there to be confusions and such pollutions, where there must be no one who does not have an Angelic purity and perfection? That is how we would judge the matter, even according to our imagination. But God wants us to exercise in another way, and wants (as we will see in his place) that his church be like a dragnet, where good and bad are collected, that it be like a threshing floor where chaff is mixed with good grain. Now, in a nutshell, we have indicated something of the reason. But still we would not know the reason, yet we must submit to his ordering even when the reason remains hidden. Because all our objections will gain us nothing. However, let us note (as Paul says when speaking of heresies) that there must be some, so that those who are truly approved by God, may be plainly revealed. And why? When things are well managed, and great and small live in harmony to serve God, even if there are some hypocrites, they will be ashamed and put on a good face: and they will even want to be the most advanced. But when there comes some trouble and scandal, then those who have not had a living root, and the fear of God well rooted in their hearts, will abuse such an opportunity,

and will take occasion to abandon all restraint even more. We will see when there is some false doctrine preached, that many who had professed complete unity with the church, will nevertheless lend an ear to the heretics: and if there is some evildoer who wants to break order and civil government, others will cast off all restraint and openly support him. This is why God wants his church to be mixed in this way, and for there to be wicked people, despisers, profane and dissolute people, mixed among the good and faithful. And not only does he want this to happen to the common people, but to those who preside, and who are in a higher degree of honor, who ought to serve as examples. As it is said that Antichrist will sit in the sanctuary of God: as also S. Paul says, that among the shepherds and those who will be called to this office, there will be many ravening wolves, who will be ready to devour the flock. And he even speaks to men whom he himself had chosen and called, and said to them: Of you and of your company such shall come forth. In this way God tests the constancy and pure simplicity of our faith, when he lets Satan go free, to create such confusion in his church. However, he also keeps us humble, teaching us to pray that he would deliver us from all scandals, and that he does not allow things to go into decline. For we would be nonchalant if we thought that things should get better and better: we would scarcely think of praying to God, nor having recourse to him. But when we see that we are subject to such frailty, that we must be mixed among the wicked and despisers of God, who will cause a lot of scandal among us, this leads us to sigh, and to pray to God that he does not allow things to dissipate: but that he would hold out his restraining hand, that he advances more and more the good that he has already begun: and not only continuing the good he has begun, but confirming and increasing it. Here is therefore a point that we have to note here: that Judas was elected from the number of the apostles, even so that if today those who are esteemed above others should fall, this does not prevent us from always remaining steadfast in obedience to our God: that we do not depend on men, and that we do not say: How can this be? that such a man who was thought to be a pillar of the faith, carried himself so disloyally, that he wickedly renounced the doctrine he had professed for so long, that he became altogether an apostate. And what can we expect from now on? What path can we safely follow? So that we may not be troubled on this account, here is Judas before our eyes, who was elected apostle: and yet when he fell and went to perdition, the church remained firm. For it was preserved by the power of the Spirit of God. So when we see some fall who had been regarded almost as angels, let us know that God will have pity on his own: and that what

Paul says in the second chapter of 2 Timothy remains firm: it is that the Lord knows those who are his, and everyone who names the name of the Lord must depart from iniquity. This is God's sure seal, declaring that his people remain safely in his keeping. And let us also remember what our Lord Jesus Christ promises in the tenth chapter of John, namely that of all that he has received from God his Father, nothing will perish.

Because he will take good care of it, even until the last day. That is the first point.

Yet when we see such falls, we must be warned to examine ourselves diligently. For when Paul speaks of the Jews, he says that let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. This is how we must be warned to remain humble and modest, when we see that those who seemed much nearer to God than we are, nevertheless come to be alienated from the church. So we must think, Alas! how much sooner would this happen to us unless we were miraculously preserved by the grace of our God? So this is what we still have to remember. Now on this point let us also learn that those who are raised in honor should not be proud: but they should think that their fall will be far more ruinous than if they had remained in a low and small condition. For when a man only falls at ground level (as they say) well, he will be able to get up again: but if a man is on a roof, or he is at a very high window, and he falls from there, there is no more remedy. So when God has given us this grace to draw near to him and to be set apart from the common rank, to place us there as upon a platform, in order to be seen from afar: let us note that if we stumble from there, it will be much worse for us, than if we had been people of low estate and little public notice. So this is still what we have to observe. For in fact, when it is said that Judas was in the company of our Lord Jesus Christ: and not only that, but that he was an apostle (which was still much more) and yet that he was called a devil, what shall we say here? Nevertheless, let us learn not to despise what belongs to God because of human vices. For if we wanted to base our judgment on the person of Judas, what would it be? The office of apostle would not only be mocked today, but we would detest it when we say that a devil was an apostle: and what would follow from that? Because we would like to murmur against what is shown to us here. But, whatever it may be, let us know that although men are the most guilty in the world, their guilt must not detract from what God has instituted and approved. For example: When we see magistrates and officers of justice who will be perverse and malignant, who will want to pervert and overthrow all order, people corrupt in character and

dissolute in life: when we therefore see them such: when we see tyrants who will only plunder, and even pillage and devour the poor people, does this mean that the office must be diminished, and that the dignity and glory that God has placed in it, must therefore be obscured? No: but we must distinguish human corruption from God's ordinance, which remains whole and inviolate. As it is with the Ministers of the Word, we will see some wicked wretches, some of whom will only be flatterers, and who will make merchandise of the word of God (so to speak): others will only be mercenaries, and will preach only for gain; others, full of ambition and pride, who will only ask to show off: the others will be full of avarice.

We will also see some dissolute ones, some debauched, others drunkards and people of such a manner: but all this does not prevent the word of God from always having its reverence between us, and from the name and title of Pastor always being sacred to us, knowing that it is founded in God, and does not depend upon men, who change, and are more inclined to evil than to good. So this is what we have to remember in short, while waiting for the rest to be treated more fully.

Now let us bow before the majesty of our good God, acknowledging our sins and praying that he would so govern us by his Holy Spirit that we may remain steadfast in his truth. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT AND THOSE WHO MOURN

Matthew 5:1-4. Jesus therefore, seeing the crowd, went up into a mountain: and when he was seated, his disciples came unto him: 2. And he, having opened his mouth, taught them, saying, 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4. Blessed are those who mourn: for they will be comforted.

Luke 6:20-21. *Then lifting up his eyes to his disciples, he said, Blessed are you who are poor: for the kingdom of God is yours. 21. Blessed are you who are now hungry: for you will be satisfied.*

There is no doubt that the Evangelists did not on occasion want to note as a summary of the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ: because they did not undertake to record every word: but it was enough for them to show in brief how our Lord Jesus Christ gathered his little church from the beginning, and what teachings he gave to his disciples. - It is said here that having retired into the mountain, and casting his eyes on the disciples, he showed them where the true blessedness of human beings lies. As for what Matthew expresses, which he opened his mouth, it is a way of speaking of the Hebrew language. It is true that he did not write in Hebrew, like. this can easily be judged: but however much they all wrote in Greek, they always retained the idiom of their native language. And we will see this in all other nations. For if a Frenchman or a German is not thoroughly trained in Latin, he will always have traits of what he learned in his childhood: and God willed that this should be so that we know the truth that this was not written by strange people: but by those who had been brought up in the country, who were plain and uneducated men, and who knew nothing more than their language, and what their mothers or nurses had taught them: that is to say who had not been to learned schools to pursue advanced studies. Thus it is as much as if it were said that our Lord Jesus Christ began to speak.

Here then is a preface to indicate that he began to address his disciples on a subject which was very useful, and which also deserved to be diligently observed and retained. Because its intention is to show in what human beings ought to rest, and what they must seek above all. This question was much debated among the pagans: for this is the principal question that the Philosophers have discussed among themselves, namely, the highest good, as they call it: and it is as much as if it were said, The happiness of men. Now there is no one who does not desire to be happy: and even if unreasoning creatures could speak, and were capable of this felicity, they would say, Yes, it is only to be happy: and would aspire to that. The man therefore who feels his miseries and is troubled by them, must, on the contrary, know where his true good lies, and once he has discerned it, he strives toward that end as long as it is possible for him, to know how to be happy. Now those among the pagans who were more earthly, said only that we were blessed when there was no pain in us: the others, when we have all our pleasures and sensual delights: the others put happiness in virtue alone. And these spoke with greater refinement. For the name of virtue will always be held in honor: and even if the thing is despised, even the basest person will still be ashamed of not valuing what is more honorable than all. Others proceeded more subtly, and said that virtue in itself could not make us happy, but that to enjoy happiness, we governed ourselves as it was appropriate: and when virtue was joined with contentment, that such a condition was to bring supreme happiness. However, after all the arguments on either side, if "everyone still desires to be at ease: and we are so preoccupied with this imagination, that we always consider unhappy those who are afflicted with poverty and scarcity, or with illnesses, or who drag themselves painfully through this world, and who never have a day of health, or who are in reproach and disgrace, all the more that this is contrary to our nature. Because we will never be able to persuade ourselves otherwise, however, we will be governed by our natural reason and judgment: we will never be able to make ourselves believe that a man is happy, when he is beaten, tormented, and when he is despised, when he is plundered, and when he will only moan and sigh all the time of his life. In short, we cannot believe the happiness we desire, with disgrace, with poverty, with hunger and thirst, and all other afflictions.

Now let us look at what condition our Lord Jesus Christ calls us into his school, it is that we renounce ourselves, and that each one bears his cross. Now this word cross is as much as if it were said, that each person carries his own gallows, that we are there as poor people always having the knife on our throats,

that we are afflicted and mocked, and that not only do we almost have death constantly before us, but that we are held in disgrace and slandered, that we are insulted, that people spit in our faces. We must feel this, and we must carry it valiantly like a burden that will be placed on our backs, as if a man had to walk, he will carry his package on his back. Thus, our Lord Jesus Christ clarifies to us that we cannot walk after him, and cannot also be among his number, unless each person takes up this burden. And what is it? It is not to enjoy our comforts: but on the contrary, it is that we are condemned as people, that death threatens us, that we are besieged from all sides, that our life is one continual languishing. Brief, as for this world, let us be held and deemed miserable. It is therefore the very alphabet, which is taught to us in the school of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now what would it be like if we remained in this imagination which is so imprinted in our brain, so much so that it is as though it were born in us, namely this opinion, that if we are thus afflicted in the world, that we cannot be happy. There is no one who would not flee and distance himself from our Lord Jesus Christ, and none of us would willingly be his disciple: even if his doctrine were approved, and we were convinced that he is the Son of God, and he who calls us to himself. If this were, we would still say, See, does he not know our weakness and our fragility? And why then does he not support us? In short, everyone would draw back when we remained in this opinion, which is (as I said) so rooted in us that we cannot count ourselves blessed if we were not at rest and at ease. This is why our Lord Jesus Christ preached this to his disciples, showing them that our blessedness does not consist in the world applauding us, in honors, riches, delights and pleasure. But on the contrary, even if we are oppressed to the end, if we are in continual tears, if we are persecuted, if we are apparently ruined, this does not make our condition worse, and does not lessen our happiness. How? Because we must consider the outcome. So where our Lord Jesus Christ takes us back to correct this false opinion with which we are possessed, and which so twists our minds that we cannot submit to its law, it is to know that we must look beyond the present, and look at what is the outcome of our afflictions, of our tears, and of the persecutions that are made to us, and of the sufferings that we have to endure. When we therefore see how God turns all these things to our good and salvation, then we will be able to conclude that we are still blessed even though it is our nature recoils from it.

But he begins with the poor in spirit. Some have have interpreted this too subtly, as if he were saying that the spiritually poor are those who despair of themselves, who know that they have no virtue, no wisdom, no righteousness.'

Now it is true that this doctrine is good and sound: but it does not fit this passage. Luke does not use the word spirit: only he speaks of the poor. And in fact the Hebrews in their language have the same word, by which they mean a person humbled and brought low. And why? For prosperity fills us with pride and presumption: and this is why we want to be seen and want to maintain our pretensions: and on the contrary we forget all haughtiness, when God has beaten us down by affliction. So much so that afflictions tame us, this is why the word can signify both poverty and humility. We see this with regard to the body. For if a man is robust, and in the prime of his years, and he does not know that it is an illness, he becomes high-spirited, it is only a question of jumping, we cannot hold him: but if he has an illness of two or three months, he will move painfully, he will be completely changed, and instead of before he had indulged in every kind of excess, and had given himself over to intemperance, that nothing he was difficult, he will hardly be able to swallow a piece after having chewed it: he will not be able to drag himself out of bed, where he was only running before. And as we see it happening to the body, so it is to the soul. For when we have all our wishes, it is certain that our desires overflow: they are like foam upon the sea: there is nothing that can hold them back. And in short, we are puffed up, we are like drunks, who no longer know what it is to be restrained. But on the other hand, when God has put us in shame before men, and everyone has had his turn at mocking us, when we will be defamed, when we will have hatred, envy, grudges set up against us, when there will be false accusations and slanders imposed on us, when we will be poor and miserable without aid or relief.

in short, we are exercised by every form of adversity: then we will learn that it is modesty, and we lower the head which was previously too high raised. But especially since many do not fail to always nourish their pride, even though God strikes them with heavy blows, and gives them enough opportunity to humble themselves: especially, I say, that there are many as incorrigible, this is why it was necessary for our Lord Jesus Christ to say this word of the spirit. As if he said, Those who are poor are blessed: even on condition that poverty has tamed them, and that it has so profited in them, that their spirit is impoverished, that is to say that they do not have a proud or self-confident spirit, as many have. Because they are continually champing at the bit. We see wild beasts, when they are chained, or in some iron cage, they will not change their rage. We will hold many bears, wolves, and lions prisoners: but if they always remain as they were. So it is with men, however tightly our Lord Jesus restrains them, if they refuse

and grind their teeth: and then their pride overflows more than ever: and God must also press them on the other side, so that we see the venom from which they die, which will come out. Not that this amends them: but they are made worse, and they must burst all restraint, and show their diabolical rage against God. This (say) is what we see in many. Is poverty of no use to them? No: but on the contrary, it is to make their condemnation before God still heavier. For they act contrary even to nature. It is no wonder if the great ones of this world, and "they who are so prized, and to whom we applaud, who have everything their heart desires, who are rich, who have their table well stocked, and brief, who have all desirable things: if these forget themselves, let them be intoxicated in their ease, and consequently let them glorify themselves and be puffed up with pride: but when a man is poor, that everyone is angry with him, that he bears many defamations, and that in short, he languishes in this world, and is as if half dead, if still he does not stop always taking pleasure and glorying in himself, that he always remains hard and stiff-necked, does he not fight against nature? So outward poverty is not enough. For there are many poor people who are not humiliated for this reason: but resist God as much as possible. Let us therefore note that poverty must penetrate our hearts, and that it must purge us of all pride and arrogance, and that we know that we are nothing. He therefore who is poor in his own estimation, that is to say who of his own free will humbles himself and attributes nothing to himself, and does not make himself believe in this or that, but is content to be stripped of worldly supports, this is the person Christ calls blessed. We now see what is the substance of these words, and we also see the benefit we must draw from them. Now we will ask if, on the contrary, those who are rich in spirit are cursed. And it is very certain that our Lord Jesus Christ intended the contrast to be understood. It is true that then afterwards he will say that blessed are those who are persecuted: and this does not mean, however, that it is necessary for all to be persecuted, otherwise we would have to be like these hypocrites who flatter themselves: but when he says, Blessed are those who are persecuted: it is because we do not flee from this persecution, when it pleases God that we should endure it, that we will be unjustly afflicted, that we bear everything in patience. But as for this passage, it is very certain that Jesus Christ wanted to make a comparison between the riches of spirit, that is to say this proud self-confidence where men deceive themselves when everything prospers with them, and between poverty of spirit, that is to say this humility, when man by affliction is truly brought low so as to no longer glorify himself, and to have nothing left except to resort to God.

Here then in short is what we have to gather from this passage: that all those who are rich in spirit, that is to say who esteem themselves and bathe in their earthly delights, and who want to be something here, who attribute much to themselves because of their possessions and their nobility, their honors and credit: that all such people are under a curse and shut out from Jesus Christ, as it will be expressed then afterwards, and we will see him in his place.

So this is what we have to observe in short.

And we have already seen the reason why in the song of the Virgin Mary, when she said that God casts down the mighty and the kings of this world from their seats, and puts them to the ground, and that he raises up the little ones, and those who before were despised. If she had only said that, there would have been little argument, How then? Does God take pleasure in making such changes, to toss men about like a ball, or like a coin passed from hand to hand, or like dogs from which we can make the most of what we want: one will be worth twenty sous, and then a hundred, and then a thousand, and then it will be put in such a place that it will only be worth a single denier. If therefore God dealt with men in this way, it would seem to us to have some absurdity. For this cause the Virgin adds, that God fills the hungry, and may he send away all those who were full. It therefore shows the cause why God makes such changes in the world. For it is very difficult for a man who will have enough to feed himself, even in delights and pomp, when he will be honored by all, when everyone will applaud him, not come to become puffed up: as we also see the great ones of this world swollen with ambition. There will be such arrogance that they are like people who are drunk and almost dying: who when they have filled themselves with bread, wine, and meat, they are so full that they can hardly turn around. The virgin Mary therefore says, that inasmuch as men thus abuse the goods which God gives them, it is necessary that after having been drunk, they return empty, and that God teach them that it is to be thus emptied of their vanity: and on the contrary, that he satisfies those who are hungry. Now this word hunger here carries the sense of humility of spirit. There are indeed some who are hungry: but they have no appetite for any meat. But when a poor man, feeling his scarcity, has recourse to the one who can provide for it, and in all humility he asks humbly to be relieved, this is true poverty of spirit. So then, when we are poor in spirit or our afflictions, that is to say, we will feel our need and be driven to seek help from God: there lies our blessedness.

Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ also says in the same sense, that the kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor. of spirit. In which it means that we must not be captivated by appearances: but always look at the end and the outcome. When the philosophers, who prize virtue above all else, wanted to show that afflictions do not make a man miserable, they had to have imagined a man hardened, as if he were an anvil, which the hammer could never soften. Now it was only a frivolous imagination and mere insensibility, when all is said: and even if there were some who had a good reputation before men, and who were considered very virtuous and constant, if there was only a kind of frenzy in them: for they were all full of rebellion against God. Their principle was, Well, I'm a mortal man, I have to endure it: I can't avoid that, so I have to go through it. Because they proposed necessity as their maxim: And what would be gained from resisting? I must therefore submit to what I cannot escape. This is (says) their patience, which is otherwise a fury, when one continues to be always rebellious against God. This is their constancy, which is rather a stubbornness. Because if they had little, they would have liked to retreat: but they had to sit down, especially since they had this opinion that everything was governed. by some blind destiny. Now then all such teaching was nothing but vanity: but our Lord Jesus Christ shows that it does not lead us into empty speculations which have no effect at all: but on the contrary, that it gives us a good foundation, on which if we lean, we will never be shaken: and how much that all the storms and whirlwinds of the world arise, and that it seems that heaven and earth must mix together, however much our blessedness will remain secure, provided that we look to the Kingdom of heaven. This is therefore what we have to remember here: namely, that in order to enjoy this happiness of which the Son of God speaks to us, we must first learn that the world is only a passage: that it is not our rest, that it is not here that we must seek our life: but that it suits us to press farther on, and raise our sights to the celestial heritage. And so, all those who are attached to this world, those who depend on their common opinion, and those who want to enjoy their happiness here, it is impossible for them to know that this doctrine is valid: so much so that they will always contradict this teaching. It is true that the faithful will not fail to have great struggles within themselves, when they think, How is it possible that I am very happy, and yet that I am condemned to be miserable? For this is what poverty of spirit entails: it is knowing that man is as though brought to despair, and that he is plunged into an abyss until God provides. Now there are severe inward conflicts here. For it does not seem that it is proper, that we can be happy, and yet we must be in

anguish, that we must have our minds full of bitterness, and that after having groaned, we do not know what to say, except that the end is to conclude, Alas, if God had not pity on us, we are more than lost!

And so, when we have reasoned as well as we can according to the world, it is certain that we will always return there, Woe to us if we are poor, if we are hungry, if we are tormented. But when we know that God has put us in this world to test our obedience, and that we are only passing through it, that we have no settled rest there: but that we have an inheritance which is prepared for us in heaven: when therefore we can reach there, then we will conclude, There lies our blessedness which before was hidden from us. And this is also where Paul brings us back, when he shows that the faithful can glory in their afflictions: especially (he says) that affliction produces endurance and hope, and then having felt how merciful God is toward his own, we are all the more confirmed in hope, which does not put us to shame. After having dealt with this, he again expresses what I have just said: that the promise is made to us, and that if our salvation lies in hope, it must be hidden: for we do not hope for what we see: we will not say, I hope that my dinner will be prepared, when the table is set, and the meats are placed on it: but we hope for what is still unseen by our senses. So it is with our salvation. It is true that there is an invincible certainty in the truth of God: but it is a question here of the sight of our eyes, and of our apprehension. We must therefore not only be uncertain about it, but also know that we are far from it, and that we in no way understand it. If our salvation therefore lies in hope, it is hidden: and if it is hidden, we must be blessed not by what we presently apprehend nor by the goods that we now have: but inasmuch as we groan here below, and wait for God to call us to Himself, and for us to be gathered by our Lord Jesus Christ who is our life and the fountain of all goods. So we now see what our practice must be is that we learn to meditate on the promises of eternal salvation which are contained in the word of God. Now these promises draw us away from the world: and it is as if God were holding out his hand to us, to say, Poor creatures, you are here plunged into the quagmire: when you follow your pleasures, when it is only a question of laughter, you think you are at the end of all happiness, and it is only a shadow that vanishes. So do not deceive yourselves any more: but learn where your good lies, and lift up your hearts to me. So this is how God's promises help us to withdraw from this world. And when we have passed the present things, then we will know that poverty, affliction, anguish, distress, and everything that is to reduce us to nothing, is not to worsen our condition: it is enough that God loves us, it is

enough that his love is declared to us, and that by faith we apprehend it when we have to leave this world. So then let us walk, and finish our course, until the opportune time has come, when he brings his promises to fulfillment. It is true that in this world God still spares us so far, that he will make us taste a part of his goodness, and that he will give us something to rejoice in: but these consolations are brief: we must not rest satisfied with them. We must therefore always return to this point, that although God has pity on our infirmity, and that for this reason he does not treat us so harshly, but that he even nourishes us, and that he gives us more than nature still requires: how much, I say, let it be, if it is nevertheless that there are so many afflictions and miseries mixed among it, that we always have regrets, and that we will say, I am a wretched man: until we have learned to come straight to him. And for the rest, it teaches the same thing in the following sentence. For these are not different things: but it is good for us that this is reiterated to us, as though it were being chewed for us (by way of saying) so that we could swallow it more easily. Because it is a very doctrine difficult to digest, as everyone experiences in themselves.

And yet he says, that blessed are those who mourn, and that in the end they will rejoice, and will be consoled. He shows us the like that we already have. For if we are poor in spirit, we must also weep: that is to say, we must be distressed. For we are not without feeling, like those visionaries of whom I spoke, who would like man to show such constancy, as if he were an anvil or some rock. Now all these things are contrary to our nature: but we must feel our miseries, and they must bring us so low, so that we are broken and crushed, that we cannot lift our heads, that we cannot breathe (so to speak) that we are like poor people dying. This is why our Lord Jesus Christ here combines weeping with poverty of spirit. As if he were to say, When I say that your happiness is not diminished, although you are oppressed by many afflictions, it is not that I mean that you resist with such stupidity that you feel nothing, that you are there like blocks of wood without being moved by anything: no. You will cry (he says) you will feel the privation, the reproach, the illnesses, and everything that will make you languish in the world. You will feel it, and will be wounded to the heart, so much so that you will cry. But whatever happens, that will not prevent you from remaining blessed. And why? We must come to this conclusion: Wait for consolation from above. So it is not said that by weeping we are blessed because of our virtue, and that those who make tears come out of our eyes are tyrants, and wicked men who do us wrong. This is not to say that we should remain shut up within ourselves: that would be a very poor blessedness:

because we would always be unhappy, when we had carefully examined what is in us. But when we know that God has promised to console us, provided that we cry to him in humility, that we seek him, that we are patient in obeying him: let us not doubt that in the end he will have pity on us, and that even all our afflictions will be so many profitable trials: - and then that they will be like goads to prick us, and to make us move forward in fulfilling our duty. When we know this, then our happiness will be certain and well known to us. And why? For we will seek it in God, and not in ourselves. And thus we see how different this doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ is from everything that can be learned from the books and writings of the pagans, whatever wisdom they may have had in their times: that although they had a profound and eloquent minds, it was nevertheless nothing but smoke and deception: but what is shown to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, has a firmness which will never fade away. And why? We must look beyond ourselves first of all, and out of the world, and seek in God what we lack, and what we cannot find here below. This then is what we have to remember. Now it is true that there will be many who will cry: but their tears are like the howling of brute beasts: as when a bull bellows, or an ox being slaughtered cries out: so it is with many people. And what is this? These are not real tears and yet this is what the unbelievers are like. For they will cry enough, and cry Alas, more and more: But what? They merely howl, like I said. So let us learn to lament to our God. Because this is also where our tears must be directed. And when we do so, we will feel what David says, Lord, you have put my tears into a phial. For just as we have precious fragrant water, or some precious ointment, so David says that God preserves our tears. It is true that they will fall to the ground, or we will wipe them from our hands: but when we cry before God, it is certain that not one will be lost: but that he will carefully preserve them all. And it is to bring us to this consolation of which he is here spoken. So we see how these two sentences all relate to one goal, which is to know that if we are disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, even if we carry the cross, if we drag our gallows, if we are poor people condemned, if we are mocked, insulted and defamed, that nevertheless this will not prevent us from being always blessed, and from always having something to rejoice in. Now it remains to note what is said in S. Luke. S. Matthew says simply, Blessed are the poor in spirit, and those who weep: And it is expressed in S. Luke, Blessed are you who weep: and you who are poor are blessed. So then, let us not only understand this doctrine in general: but let us know that our Lord Jesus Christ speaks to each of us, and that he wants us to enter into it, and that after having examined ourselves, we

recognize that it is not without cause that he thus wanted to prepare all his own. This is how it is necessary for each one to appropriate the doctrine to himself, and for him to know that our Lord Jesus Christ speaks to him as if in secret: and that he says to him, It is necessary that if you are poor, that you be so in spirit, that you be truly humbled, - that you bear this self-abasement in your heart. And then we know that however much the world deems you miserable, and how much your natural sense tells you as much: however, you can boldly answer me Amen, and accept the beatitude that I propose to you: and you will see in the end that you have not been deceived, but that you will arrive at the inheritance, to which you will know how God gives joy to his children after afflicting them in the world: and how he fills them, after allowing them to hunger.

Now let us bow before the majesty of our good God, acknowledging our sins and seeking the consolation he has promised to those who mourn before him. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

THE MEEK THOSE WHO HUNGER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE MERCIFUL

Matthew 5:5-7. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. 6. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. 7. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Luke 6:20. Then, lifting up his eyes to his disciples, he said, Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

If men only retained what nature teaches them, it is certain that our condition would be as happy as it is possible to wish for. For God created us all in his image, so that each person should recognize himself in his neighbor: we are one flesh. Briefly, although faces and minds are very diverse, the fact remains that we cannot erase or abolish this unity that God has established between us. If this remained imprinted on our memory, everyone would live peacefully with their neighbors: and we would be as if in an earthly paradise: but on the contrary, we see that everyone seeks their profit and advantage: everyone wants to dominate: there is only pride, and we are all angry, and as soon as we are angry, the venom comes out: there is only rigor, and even pride. And then there are revenges which disturb everything, it seems as if lightning must fall from the sky whenever someone is offended. We therefore see in short that if we have many troubles to endure, we should not look very far for the cause: it is only men who torment themselves. Now it is true that everyone will claim an excuse, that he for his part he would like to be gentle and patient, and patiently support those with whom he converses: but it is impossible for us to have our spirits under such restraint, because we must howl with the wolves. For whoever becomes a sheep will be eaten. This then is the common excuse that we will bring, and with which men cover themselves, because they are so full of bitterness, arrogance, and pride, that they cannot suffer anything from each other. And all the more we must remember the lesson given to us here by the Son of God.

Because although we think that our condition is much worse, when we endure injury without taking revenge, he pronounces that the peaceable and gentle will own the earth. This is incredible in common sense. For experience also shows that those who are the most brazen and violent, dominate, and gain the upper hand, and that the mouths of the simple must be closed, and that they do not even dare to complain, even though they are plundered and flayed. This then is our sense which will always persuade us, that if someone is gentle, he will be exposed to all injuries and outrages, and that he will not be able to find a small corner to breathe, even though everyone will pursue him as if he were a lamb in the middle of a large herd of wolves. Now our Lord Jesus Christ did not want to disappoint us in this promise, saying that those who are good will possess the earth. And in fact, although this doctrine is hidden from all profane people, if the faithful have such a taste for it that they see clearly that it is not in vain that this was once pronounced. For however much those who are as it were filled with frenzy, and who always delight in beating, striking, plundering, and using every form of violence: however much (say) these people seem to triumph, as it seems, yet if we make a right examination to inquire well into what is in them, we will find quite the opposite. Because the world must always be their enemy. It is true that we will not dare to rebuke against them, when they have acquired the ability to exercise even tyrannical acts: but if they do not, however, stop being angry and disgruntled in themselves, they know this, and they must be so tormented in their hearts, and so pressed, that they distrust everyone, that they are troubled, that they have blind suspicions which wake them up, and which are like thorns to prick them on all sides, and like awls piercing their eyes, and they are so frightened, that they wander like desperate people, without anyone pursuing them. But even though they had no such anxieties of sided with men, it is certain that God shows himself to be judge towards them: * and everything as they disturb, and the heaven and the earth by their impetuosity, also God disturbs them within, so much that their conscience will always be (as it is spoken of in Isaiah) like the waves of a sea which will be stirred up by storm: they will fight there within themselves, and will always be I do not know how: brief, there will be no rest, as the Prophet said. And this is also why it is said in particular in the Law, that the life of such people will be as if hanging in a net, and that their eyes will be sunken in their heads, that they will always be there as people trembling: and when it comes to morning, they will say Alas could I come until evening? And when they have come until evening, they will say, Alas could I pass this night well? And what would I do if I were attacked? Thus we

see, provided that we are not blinded by our vanity and lies, and false opinions: we see, I say, the accomplishment of what is here stated. For we will see with the eye what is the state of all those who act like wolves among men, and who devour and plunder their neighbors, who want to gain everything through pride and arrogance. For they have no rest. Let them own the land, let them be great lords, if they do not know how to set foot anywhere, so that they do not remain paralyzed by fear. Whether they have their castles and fortresses, whether they have as many guards, as well equipped as they want, it is certain that there they are in prison. If they are in the middle of the fields, although they are well accompanied, if they are never assured, they are always in fear and trembling. Briefly, wherever they go, if they always see clearly that they are like Cain, that is to say that they have no rest, that they are agitated with worry, now on one side, now on the other. In possessing therefore they possess nothing: for they cannot enjoy what they think they have. So it is with all the great ones of this world. They are consumed within with their perplexity, and yet there is no occasion for men to be troubled. But who is the cause? This is all the more so because they want to trouble everyone; God must put them in such trouble that they do not know what to become. And how? Let everyone be their enemy, and let big and small threaten them. For even if no one dares to say a word, if without lifting a finger against them we still resent them: and even if everyone is silent, what is more, we honor them, if it is nevertheless necessary that God has his hand extended to chastise them according as they are worthy of it.

But on the contrary, even though poor people who walk sincerely, and who are patient, endure, and endure many outrages and oppressions, so much so that they do not fail to possess the earth, as is spoken of in Psalm 37. For when they do not have a foot of land, when they do not have a meadow, a vineyard, a field, or a house, yet they know that God has given them a dwelling in this world: and when they are like birds resting upon a branch, if they will still have this rest, to say, Well, God will govern me wherever I am: still the earth will give me its bosom to receive me: and as much as it is ordained for this use, - God will not allow me to have some habitation there, but will keep me there as his guest as long as he sees himself to be good. Now when a man has this, and knows that God maintains him and will always maintain him, he is in a much better possession than all those who extend their paws and their claws everywhere, and who are not content with kingdoms, duchies, nor with countries, nor with cities, so much so that they would like to swallow up everything: and yet it finally happens to them that they do not know where to retire, nor where to

hide, that they have nowhere to hide. their refuge, because God is their opposing party, and everyone is their enemy. This assurance of a dwelling, therefore, that the faithful have in the world, even if they are strangers and vagabonds, is it not much better than such domination which is forever tormentor to those who seek it? And moreover, the faithful will also know that God is their protector. Because what would it be otherwise? Let us see what is the malice and rage of all unbelievers: they are like their father Satan. There would therefore be only murders in this world: and as many as there are good and peaceful ones, they would soon be scrapped, were it not for God having his secret protection to guard them. We will see this, I say, if we do not close our eyes to our knowledge to obscure the grace of God which is made clear in this place. And moreover, we also know that our Lord Jesus Christ was given to us as our Shepherd. It is true that the main thing is that our souls are preserved by him, until we achieve the eternal salvation that he has acquired for us. But even in this mortal life, he wants to be the guardian of our bodies. So then, let us be sheep. Because he is not Shepherd of wolves. If we want to make wild beasts, and give free rein to our violence, and double the evil already done (as they say) and as soon as someone has done us some outrage or molestation, let us be armed to take revenge, and try to do the worst we can: we must not seek Jesus Christ for our Shepherd. But he wants us to hear his voice: as the sheep themselves give us the example. We must therefore have this simplicity: and it is certain that then we will find that the protection of the Son of God is worth, who says that he will display the power of God his Father to maintain and safeguard us.

In short, although this cannot enter the human mind, that the meek will possess the earth, and that rather it is said that all those who are benign, simple and patient, are miscreants: and that it would be better for them to take revenge boldly, than to suffer their simplicity to be abused: we will nevertheless find that this sentence is true, that there is nothing better, nothing more desirable, than to hold fast to this simplicity, and to have a human spirit to patiently support the actions that will be done to us, and not to return evil for evil: but rather to overcome evil with good. For when we do so, we will find that it is the true way to possess the earth. And in fact, what are all these brave people seeking who want everyone to tremble in their gaze, and who thus make themselves feared? What do they ask? Of owning the land, or even of tyrannical domination. Yes, for themselves. For (as I have already said) they make themselves prisoners throughout the earth, whether in fields or in towns, or in castles and fortresses, everyone is an enemy to them: and what is more, they make war on themselves:

and then God persecutes them wherever they are. As for us, let us return to what the Son of God declares to us by the Son of God, which is the eternal truth which cannot fail. Let us therefore believe that according to his words, if we can hold ourselves in check, and be patient, if we can have this gentleness to which he commands us, and to which he exhorts us, truly we will inherit the whole world, and that God will give us the grace to enjoy here his goods, even with thanksgiving, and with a frank and free heart, and that we will always be able to be at rest, however much we are troubled. However, let us note that this promise is not fulfilled today in everything and in everything: it is enough that we have some experience of it in part. For it is not without cause that it is said, that the final day is truly the day of our redemption, and that it is to refresh the children of God, and to restore them. So let us wait patiently until the possession of this inheritance which our Lord Jesus Christ here promises appears, and until we know that the earth is given to us. And let us be content, however, that we have to run here to complete our course, and our pilgrimage: let us be content (say) wherever we are, even though we are angry and tormented, while others mistreat and plunder us, may God console us and makes us feel in our consciences, that we own what we have as his children and heirs: and that we always pass besides, and let us not be envious of those who think they have gained everything, when through their pride, through their violence, and tyrannies, like savage beasts, they seem to have secured everything. Here, in short, is what we have to remember from this passage. And so we hate this diabolical proverb, That we must howl with the wolves: but that we prayed for the protection of our Lord Jesus Christ more than all our revenge, and all the defenses we could have. Because he is certain that in this infinite power which has been given to him to maintain us, he will show that he is stronger than all. This is, in short, what we have to remember from this passage.

Now it is said consequently, His-happy are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, because they shall be satisfied. It is simply said in Luke, Blessed are you who now are hungry: for you will be satisfied. Matthew adds the word righteousness, for greater clarity. But so many people misunderstood it, Because we sought a meaning too refined and subtle, that we must have a zeal for justice, that is to say a desire for things to go straight, for everything to be well regulated: and that when we are thus affected please, God will also give us the grace to see a such a reformation in the world, that we will have what to look forward to. It is true that this doctrinethere “would be a good place in its place: but the Evangelists have very well and faithfully exposed the meaning of our

Lord Jesus Christ. Because it is certain tain that we cannot collect the words of Luke this meaning so subtle and deep, that it gives us you are starving for justice, and seeing them iniquity that are committed in this world, we long for God, praying to him to put it in order. So then when it is said, Blessed are those who have hungry, it means what we have already seen by here before, how blessed are they who groanfeels, and these poor people are there anxious, and have their refuge to God to be relieved. And why So does Matthew add this word of righteousness?

But the meaning is plain and fitting. Because he wants in particularexpress, that the children of God will not have not only hunger and thirst, that is to say, they do not will not only deprive of help and comfort, so much so that the wicked devour them: but they will have a just cause, because they will not have not given the opportunity to be molested in any way çon. And even they will not ask to be privileged, do not do them favor by doing harm to no one: they will not want to have their case won by illicit means: they will only ask that they be given justice, and that they not be tormented without cause. But however much their desire may be just and equitable in itself, nevertheless they will not obtain it at the first attempt. Now it would seem that they were utterly miserable, were it not for the promise which is given here, that they shall be satisfied.

So then we see the natural meaning of what our Lord Jesus Christ says here. In the first place he admonishes us that we cannot be at ease and at rest: but on the contrary, that we will be hungry and thirsty, that we will not have all our wishes: but that we will be deprived of everything that is required for this life: that when we need to drink and eat, we will not be able to find any: that if we are fed we are poorly clothed, or we will be poorly housed. Afterwards we will be tormented, and looking from side to side, we will have no support: so that it will seem as if someone has to spit in our face. Now this condition is very hard and annoying: and especially when we look closely at our infirmity. Because we are so delicate that it doesn't take anything to put us in despair. Let us therefore learn to rest in this hope, that in the end we will be drunk, and that God will provide for all our needs: and that if today we are there like those near death, because they have no strength to maintain themselves, nor help for that matter: even then that we are in such extremity, that nevertheless this hope supports us like a firm support, and that we look to God whose office is to satisfy those who are hungry. And even when we can protest that we do not want to be confronted more than with another, and when we have a just cause, let us not

find it strange, however, if this happens. For as much as we will not stop being trampled, as we will not seek that anyone be burdened or interested for our profit, and as we will not ask in short except that justice and equity reign and take place: if we still have to be hungry and thirsty: and - God will let us languish for a while, to test our patience OR our faith. For if we were now at rest, so that nothing failed us, that men tried to please us, and that no one gave us any annoyance or hindrance, where would the practice of this doctrine which is here laid down be?

So we must be hungry and thirsty. And as we have seen that we must be gentle, and even though we live among wild beasts, who have their teeth sharp, and their paws ready for us to tear, to dismember, and to swallow, however it is necessary that we always persist in patience and simplicity: so it is necessary that we hunger and thirst to pray to God: and again that he permits us to suffer although our cause is just nevertheless that we are not overwhelmed with such sadness, and despair, that it is to make us lose all self-control: but that we are kept in this waiting, that in the end it will provide for all our needs. So this is still what we have to remember about this passage.

Now then our Lord Jesus Christ says, Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Here is another teaching deeply opposed to the imagination of men. For where do we think that our happiness consists, except that we are not tormented by this or that: but that we are spared, and that if anyone is bad, let him endure it, and that we know nothing of it, and that it does not annoy us: and that not only are we peaceful in our persons, but that nothing else troubles us, when we will thus have everything that our appetite desires, that we will not conceive any sorrow or anger, nor anguish from all the extortions which are committed in this world. And that's why many people think they're happy when they're nonchalant, when they can live at ease without looking at anyone else. And in fact they want to cover their ears, so that no one faces them with any report that affects them. For we have two kinds of passions which torment us: each one, feeling his evil, despite himself: and then there is also compassion, when we see a sick poor person being so very tormented that nothing more: when we see someone who is unexpectedly afflicted, the other stripped of worldly goods, and then poor orphans who have lost their father, or a woman who has lost her husband; afterwards, when there will be very great confusions, as in fact we see them, this means that we become angry. Now those who want to be happy (i.e. according to their sense), first they want to be spared, and that no harm be done to them, neither in their persons nor in their goods: they

want everyone to applaud them: they want to be happy, and always cheerful, and have only all prosperity: - that people around them laugh, and that they are flattered. That is for an item.

And then it's still not enough. But when we come to say, Alas, here is such a poor man who endures a lot, he has such scarcity and poverty, he suffers from such illness, it is pity to see him: this again annoys them.. And in fact, we will see profane people harden themselves to their knowledge, so that they are far from having any pity for the poverty and misery that others endure, that there are who will be very happy that everyone is starving: and if they have a large quantity of corn, provided that they fill their purses they would like the earth to be almost devoid of inhabitants: it is all right for them to starve poor people, provided that they face their tasks well. And under one species we can understand much more. So this is how the despisers of God cast aside all compassion and pity, in order to exempt themselves from all molestation and anxiety. But on the contrary it is here said, in addition to the fact that we must be patient in our own miseries (as we have shown above) that we must also embrace the miseries of our neighbors, and as though we were clothed in their condition, in order to be touched when we see them endure: and so that we have a tender affection to groan with them, and to weep with the mourners as we are exhorted to do by Paul. Just as here before it has been shown to us that if our life is subjected to many miseries, annoyances, oppressions and injuries, we nevertheless do not fail to be blessed, because God blesses all our afflictions when we look to him: also now our Lord Jesus Christ has led us a step further: this is to know in addition to this that each faithful must be gentle in himself, and must groan patiently when he is afflicted and tormented, that we must be united with those who suffer, and be so touched, with compassion, because of the adversities and tribulations which they endure that we seek the means. to help them, as if we ourselves endured: that we know (say) that because God has associated us, and that he wants us to be a body, it is necessary that as all the members must being one, each one also takes his share of the afflictions, to give relief to those who can no longer bear it. So this is what we have to remember here.

But mercy in short is nothing other than a sorrow we feel from the sadness of others. However much a man is healthy and prosperous, however much he has to eat and drink, and sees no danger threatening him, yet when he sees his neighbor endure, he must be touched therein, let him be miserable with him, let him take part of his burden to relieve him as much. That is mercy. And it is

the word almsgiving, which we use in our language: but this word has not been well understood. Because when we speak of giving alms, it will be without being moved by any humanity. Well, we'll give to a poor person: but it's like a ransom, or as a tribute and exaction that one would give with regret and grievance: for however there is no question that the rich person who will give of his substance, has this consideration in himself, to say, Here is a member of the body of Jesus Christ, we are all united together. So much the more we must observe, that it is not enough to provide for those who lack our help, except that we have this interior affection well rooted in our hearts: namely, we endure a part of the evil which is showing itself: and that we know, because God has bound and conjoined us together, that it is not necessary for each one to separate, not to be satisfied with his person: but that instead to be thus nonchalant, to have a good time and to be peaceful, and to feast without having any anxiety, we must extend our affections according to which the rule of charity leads us to do so. And when we see some sick, others poor, and destitute of all good, others be in some frustration and distress, whatever it may be either of the body or of the spirit: that we think, Alas, this is our body: and then afterwards we show by effect that we are merciful. For we can protest a thousand times that we have pity on those who endure: unless we help them, all our protests will be nothing. As many will say, Alas, it is great pity for this poor man: however they will turn away, and will not help him in any way: after they have said that there is great pity, there will be no one who will be moved: In short, we will see the world full of mercy, if we believe mere words: but there is only hypocrisy. As James vividly reiterates in his epistle, chap. 2. And even it is too heavy an impudence when one says, Alas, what pity! and yet no one wants to lift a finger, or even move their tongue, when it comes to helping those who are thus oppressed. It is therefore necessary first of all that we learn to be human, to have compassion for those who endure: and then that we look at the means that God has given us, and that each person uses it faithfully. But the promise is added at the same time, because we are so cowardly that it is pitiful. And also the doctrine that the Son of God announces to us here is completely contrary to our sensuality, and is very difficult for us to believe. The promise must therefore awaken us. For if only it were said that blessed are the merciful, everyone would keep the teaching at a distance: but when our Lord Jesus Christ shows us that we need mercy, even as much towards his heavenly Father as towards men: and that the true way to obtain it is for us to be merciful: when this is shown to us, it is at least an opportunity to think about ourselves more closely. And then when we begin to

taste what is here explained as in passing, let us conclude that in truth it is a part of the blessedness of the children of God, to be merciful. Because in fact we must think well that we need mercy. Let us take the one who has all his wishes in this world, who has everything he desires: if there are still many difficulties that will come to him.

There are no princes, kings, or great lords who have not once had terrible blows dealt to them: now they will endure in their bodies, now in their spirit: and God shows us by this, that however much they would like to make a nest above the clouds, so as not to feel any molestation, however it is necessary that they be in their rank, and that they know themselves to be mortal men and fragile creatures. If those who seem to be already lodged as in a separate paradise, nevertheless need mercy: and what will it be of us?

So, when we think carefully about this, it would certainly be to induce us to be pitiful, however much we see the miseries, scarcity and afflictions of our neighbors. If we allege on this, that the world hardly cares to have pity on those who have been pitiful: there is one thing, which is that we know that the hearts of men are in the hand of God, who bends them as he sees fit: and when there is only felony and haughtiness, malice and venom, God can nevertheless incline them to humanity. So even if men do not take into account the fact that we have shown mercy towards those who were in need, and that we have tried to provide for them: although that the world despises all this, nevertheless God will so bend their hearts, that when we are in some need, we will prove that God did not want to defraud us of our reward, saying that we will find mercy when we have done it: according to what we will see again below, that our Lord Jesus Christ will say that each one will receive in the same measure as he has done to others. And in fact, it is not without cause that James pronounces that judgment without mercy will be made to him who has not shown mercy. But we must go even further. For let us take the position that God allows there to be only ingratitude in this world, that it seems to have been wasted effort for all that we have done to help those who were in want and needed us, so much so that we will have to come before the great judge, who will not let us other way to hope in him if not through his mercy. So even if there were only all cruelty in the world, and we were wasting our time trying to do the right thing, let us think what need we have of the mercy of God. For James could not say anything more horrible to scare us than this word, Judgment without mercy. And in fact if they had us appear before the judicial seat of God, and there we were treated harshly, what would that be? It would be better that we were aborted, and that

we had been lice or fleas, and frogs, and all the vermin of the world. Now then that all our good and all our salvation is based on the sole mercy of God: what a joy does he promise us, by saying that he will show us pity and compassion when we thus bring to him our miseries with which we are full, having, however, compassion for our neighbors: and that this will be to move him to gather us to himself, instead of us being worthy of being dismissed as abominable, that this, says, induces him to show mercy to us? When then we have this promise, is it not necessary? not that we are brute beasts, devoid of sense and of all reason, if this does not move us to show mercy? This then is what we have here to remember. But still let us not doubt that God will give us some taste of what is here celebrated to us by his Son, who is his true witness, and who came out of his bosom (as it is spoken of in the first chapter of the Gospel according to John) to certify us of his will. Let us not doubt therefore when we have been pitiful, that we will find pity and mercy, even among men: and however clever and ungrateful they may be, if God will still pursue them so far that when we are in some need, we will be helped, even without them thinking of serving God in doing so, or being moved by charity: but he will take it from them as he does. formerly to the Egyptians, who although they were enemies of the people of God, were forced to put into their hands the most precious things they had.

So, what. be that as it may, let us look higher. It is to know that we have to account for our life, and that if we have been pitiful in this world, we will know God to be such also towards us. Moreover, mercy does not lie only in this compassion that I have said, when someone is hungry and thirsty, when he is sick, when he is tormented by whatever injury and oppression is done to him: but also in supporting the infirmities and vices of those who, for their part, deserve to be remitted. It is true that we must here take the measure that the Scripture shows us. For we must be so merciful to those who have failed, that it is not to feed them with flattery, nor to hide the evil so that it grows, and increases more and more. We must therefore be pitiful, when we see our neighbors still being subjected to many infirmities, and we support them in this: not to be like them, but to be human towards them by showing them their faults, instead of being very happy: as there are many who only laugh and complain, if they see some bad thing having happened: that instead of that, we groan, to say, Alas, this poor man has offended God. Let us be displeased, because we see a soul perishing which was so dearly purchased by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we see the justice of God violated, that we see his glory diminished: may these things move us with compassion. This then

is how we will find mercy towards God, when we have pity on all those who have failed, and who are stumbled by frailty, and when we bear with them, and try to set them straight. Now Paul puts us both: that is to say, he shows us that we must not be favorable to use mercy towards those who have failed to feed them in their evil: and nevertheless that we must not be too severe, and without measure, so as not to tolerate them. For he says that we must rebuke those who have failed: even, but in a gentle spirit. And so let (he said) consider within yourself that you can also fall: and when you have known your weakness, you will have pity on those who are like you. Thus we see in everything and in everything how we must exercise humanity to take mercy on those who have committed some offense, and to provide for those who need our help, and to help those who will be unjustly oppressed, and to maintain their quarrel, even if we provoke the rage of the wicked by this means against us.

Now hearing all these things, let us also note what is said in Luke, Blessed are you, he says. It is to show that it is not enough to have understood this doctrine and to have confessed that it is true: but that we must practice it each for himself. And this is so that this does not merely pass before our eyes, and does not strike our ears only to remember, Blessed are they, Blessed are they: But that we may know, that our Lord Jesus Christ wants us to apply everything to our instruction, and that first of all we Let us learn to be gentle and patient in all circumstances.

the injuries done to us. Then let us learn to hunger and thirst patiently. Even when we know that we have wronged no one and are pursued unjustly, let us remain gentle. Finally, let us have pity upon those who suffer and help them according to the ability and opportunity God gives us.

Let us apply all these things to ourselves. Although God now gives us only a partial experience of his Son's teaching during this mortal life, its perfect fulfillment awaits us on the final day. In the confusion of this present state, let us show compassion toward those who suffer and patiently bear our own afflictions. Even when others treat us with cruelty and inhumanity, let us remain gentle and kind. The one who spoke these promises possesses all authority, and he will fulfill them when he gathers us into the heavenly fellowship for which we now hope.

One brief announcement remains. The magistrates have agreed to call our brother N. to this city, where he previously served in the ministry. To preserve the freedom of the whole church, he will be presented next Sunday. If anyone knows a reason why he should not be received, he should report it to the magistrates before Sunday.

Now let us bow before the majesty of our good God, etc.

CHAPTER 4

THE PURE IN HEART PEACEMAKERS AND THE PERSECUTED

Matthew 5:8-10. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. 10. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 6:22-23. Blessed are you when men hate you, exclude you, reproach you, and reject your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. 23. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; their fathers did the same to the prophets.

Everyone will confess that the main virtue that should be in us is purity and sincerity of heart. For without this it is certain that all the good that could be highly valued is nothing but smoke and rubbish before God. So everyone will praise integrity: but there is an evil, which no one wishes to practice. For we see that without cunning and malice we cannot converse between men, without being subjected to many troubles, because clever men have their nets set to surprise us. It therefore seems to us that they must be followed: and yet, after each has given his sentence, that we must walk roundly and without pretense, and have a pure and clean heart, there is no one who does not decline, and who does not seek devious devices, and who is not disguised. So our Lord Jesus Christ pronounces a common sentence at once, when he says that those who are clean and pure in heart are blessed: but if we look at the custom and the way of living, and even as men delight in their schemes, and that they never proceed except by circuitous and crooked paths, we will find that not without cause our Lord Jesus Christ brings his disciples back to sincerity and integrity. Now he assumes that they will see God: and uses this way of speaking, because those who have the most confused hearts will be the most keen to know how to guard themselves, and even to circumvent others. Nothing escapes them: for they make their speeches, and search into hidden matters, and when we have to deal with them, they know how to conduct their case so well that they disguise themselves by

any means without anyone detecting them. And so it might seem that they are pure in heart. Indeed, but firstly they are so withdrawn that no one can approach them and discern what intention they have. This is so twisted that we could never judge it. And then, they also like to fish in troubled waters (as the proverb says) and like to have things where equity cannot be seen. These then are like the clever people of this world, although they see much more clearly than the children of God, yet their hearts are always in darkness and obscurity. However, the faithful are considered simple: and it will not even seem that they half realize what would be expedient: just as they do not delight in tricks: and very often they could make their profit, and they pass on that. Because they have not accustomed themselves to these little practices, to snatch profit from every side, as many do: they close their eyes, say, to all this for their own sake. And why? Because they will never want the damage of anyone, to make their profit.

This is why our Lord Jesus Christ brings this response, that if the world mocks our simplicity, and it seems that it brings us more harm, let us be satisfied with a greater reward, it is because we will see God. For when we have not had too keen an eye to look at the profits of this world, the comforts and advantages, the delights and honors to attract them to us: when we have not given our sight to this, we will have a better look which is here promised to us: that is, we will enjoy the presence of God where our happiness, joy and glory lie. Besides, it is a superfluous curiosity to dispute deeply in what way we can see God. For since its essence is spiritual, we cannot contemplate it with our eyes which are corporeal: and we do not properly attribute sight to spirits. But we know first of all, that the angels who have no body, do not fail to contemplate the majesty of God: as will be said hereafter when our Lord Jesus Christ speaks of little children, that their angels, who are their ministers, see the face of the heavenly Father. Now it is true that we cannot see God: for we would have to be like him, as John says in his epistle: and we are very far from it. So to have the enjoyment of this look of which we speak here cannot be before the final day, when we will be conformed to the glory of God. And how will it be possible that our bodies have any similarity to the infinite majesty of God, seeing that it is a spiritual essence? But to inquire too curiously about this would be to exceed our limits. Let us just keep on walking: and when we have completed our course, God will show us what he is doing in his Kingdom. There are many today who would like to know, through a curiosity no less impertinent than stupid, what the glory of the faithful will be in Paradise, whether they will sit or stand, whether they will walk around, whether they will hear creatures from this world, what use it will

be, and what purpose all this will serve. In short, they will want to amuse themselves with such speculations which are of no benefit, and will want to explore every chamber of paradise, to find out what is happening there: and yet they take no care to approach it. Now we are on the way: let us walk, let us walk while we are in this world. And when we have arrived at our heritage, then we will know what it is. And in fact if a man wanted to buy some house, and it was ten leagues away, and then he sat down to say, I want to know what this house is built of, what convenience it has, where it is situated, and yet he would not go near it: what mockery would that be? So that we learn to profit more and more in the knowledge of God, in order to adore him purely, and put our trust in him, to invoke him in all our needs. And when we have taken advantage of all these instructions, we will see in the end that it is this happiness, and joy which is promised to us, and of which we will be capable, although now the way is completely unknown to us as it is said that our senses cannot understand what God has prepared for us.

However, it is enough for us that our Lord Jesus Christ clarifies here, that if we are his disciples, in the first place we must not be addicted to our schemes, to see more clearly than is lawful for us, and to disguise ourselves in order to deceive one and circumvent the other: and moreover, that if we do not make our profit in this world, as it will seem, because we will go in sincerity, and that we will leave escape many things, even and we will even lose in our knowledge if God is offended. When, therefore, having a peaceful mind, and not being too shrewd to fish in troubled waters, we will lose: let us know that if the world condemns us, we have our reward which must suffice and satisfy us, it is because we will praise God. Because this word of Seeing in Scripture is taken for enjoyment. You will not see death, you will not see the Kingdom of heaven: that is to say, you will not possess it. So it is as much as if our Lord Jesus Christ said that God will be our heritage, when we have not captured by wicked trafficking in goods in this world, and when we have not had our senses twisted into malice, when we have not also pursued ruinous causes, nor attracted to our advantage all that we will have little: and we must not regret it of this. And why?

For this is not a sufficient reward if God makes it clear that he gives himself to us, that he wants to be. our heritage, and that he also wants us to be to him? For where lies all our good and our blessed hearts quote, if not in this? Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ used this similarity of seeing, following the common way of Scripture, because he was here is a question of a pure and whole

heart. Because otherlies, because our hearts are purged from all malice, and that there is sincerity and integrity (as I said) we are so much less indulgent to many nasty deals: and those who are entirely blinded and plunged into darkness, see much clearer in this place. Or even but it is in another way: it is through, as if they always wandering around as if through slits, and that they did not want to be in an obvious place.

Now therefore our Lord Jesus Christ pursuing this similarity, says that if we do not see in this world what people naturally desire, and what they are too delighted about, that we expect let us say that God manifests himself to us, and that we may possess him so fully, that there we have everything our rest.

He then adds that Blessed are the peacemakers. This word is misunderstood vulgarlies: because it is commonly taken to mean merely peaceful: and it means much more. Because a man could be paid possible, which however would not be peaceful: it is to say, that it would not procure peace towards the others. Because this word is composed of making peace. Gold therefore, in order to avoid ambiguity, we must retain the proper meaning of this passage: namely, we must be diligent to promote peace everywhere.

But we know, however, that we must begin with ourselves. Because how can whatone of. to procure us peace, and appease the troubles and disputes which will be moved, otherwise only For his part, he gives an example? It would be nice to see a man who will take on a quarrel with everyone, who will be impatient and impetuous in all his actions, and that if there is any noise, he is there to help peace, peace there: and when he sees a disturbance, that he comes there to say, we must not skirmish like this. And what authority will he have when so soon as soon as anger rises in his head, which he will strike down and storm, and yet he will want to promote peace everywhere?

Let us therefore learn that to make peace, we must first of all, let us be peaceful. And t comlying? We spoke above of those who are of a gentle spirit: and this is a part of peace. For if we are patient, it is certain that it will not matter to us that we do not converse let us live here in good harmony and at rest. Who is the cause of all the troubles that men make among themselves, when they war against each other like this, that they are like dogs and cats in eating each other, if not their impatience? That no one can tolerate being wronged, and that everyone is so addicted to their own profit, that we want to be pleased in everything: and if this is not the case, we immediately have our weapons in hand. And then afterwards we will bring the reproaches, and then

the enmities will come, and will grow until they come to mortal hatred, to kill and wound, and to spare nothing. This is how impatience is the cause that men cannot be peaceful together, but are agitated by troubles in their own right, so much so that each one is like a devil to his neighbor. Let us therefore learn to be patient, and not be so devoted to our own advantage or our honor that we cannot easily forgive the wrongs that will be done to us. This, I say, is how peaceful we will be.

And moreover, it is not enough, although we do not give occasion to anyone to molest and annoy us: but we must pursue peace as long as we have it: and even if we have to bear some damage, and we have to give up part of our right, if we nevertheless have to pass. For peace must be so precious to us, as God recommends it to us, that everything else is nothing to us. Now when a man does not cause any trouble, when he does not annoy anyone, when he also gives no one cause for complaint, and for him not to be assailed, or even if he is, he will gently bear many harms, rather than making great pursuits: after all this, we must still practice the doctrine that Jesus teaches here, which is that we try to make peace in everything. It is not enough therefore for everyone to abstain from all excess, evildoing, or harm: but when we see someone having a bad cause, we must oppose it: when we see some innocent poor person afflicted, we must maintain him as much as we can: and try to provide for him and relieve him. When we see two men pitted against each other, let us have pity to see two souls in the process of perdition, who have been redeemed by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ: let it look bad on us because the devil dominates, who is the prince of all contention, and let God be rejected, who is the author of peace: and then we try to appease all quarrels. And this is also why God curses on the contrary those who sow discord and enmity between men, who are like firebrands, and who by their relations make former friends hate one another: or if when there is something opening that one suspects of the other, we comes along to inflame their suspicions. Because it is as if there were a wound, and instead of there put some good ointment to cure it, someone poured poison into it or venom, to enpoison and set fire to it. So let's learn here that we are as if banished from the school of our Lord Jesus Christ and his church, when we cause quarrels and enmity between people: and on the contrary, that to be his disciples not only must each of us be peaceable in its place: but that we try, enas long as we have, to break all enmities, and cut them down, to dampen the fire when it is lit, and also to obviate all quarrels: when we see let's hope that a few

people would come together to fight each other, that we remedy this early, and that we were not waiting for Satan to have won, but that we anticipated. So this is, in short, what we have to retain.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ, to assert such a doctrine among us, says that such, that is to say, those who bring peace, will be called children of God. Is there anything more desirable than to be recognized and confessed as children of God, and to be able to claim him as our Father? For without this, what is our condition? If God gives us away, what more is left? For even if we have all our wishes in this world, do we not know that everything will be cursed and turned into confusion for us, unless God is favorable to us? For there is no true guarantee of all prosperity and all good except that we feel the favor and paternal love of God towards us. So what we must simply aspire to is to know that God is our Father, and that we have this privilege of being able to call ourselves his children. Moreover, we cannot obtain such a good, as Jesus Christ pronounces here, unless we are peaceful. For God not without cause is called the God of peace. So we must resemble him in this, or we do not belong to him in any way, whatever protest we make in our mouths. Here then is a proof that God is our Father, and that we desire to live in obedience to him, it is knowing when we destroy, as far as we are, all discord. Now it is true that we will often be forced to have war with the wicked: and again let us pursue peace as long as it is possible for us, as we are exhorted by Paul, if it is necessary that we endure many clashes and storms. And what's more, we will often be blamed for being the cause of the troubles and emotions that are occurring.

And this is why also our Lord Jesus Christ says goodbye at the same time we are blessed when we suffer persecution, when we will say of us, that we will be returned, and as excommunicate: brief, that we will be held detestable, provided that it is for the Gospel above all.

This is how we will be confessed to God, again that the world calls us troublemakers and mutineers, and that it seems that it is only up to us that everything be peaceful. We must therefore grant these two things here: it is that we are peaceful, even patiently carrying the injuries done to us, remaining calm and gentle in spirit so as not to feed us in our quarrels. And then secondly, we must make peace in everything, again that we must battle against the devil, who is father of contentions, troubles, and noises. Yet in doing this, we must always prize God's truth above outward peace. And then battalions also for righteousness, that is to say for righteousness. It is therefore not enough that we put peace without discretion, "but it is necessary that the link of this peace is that

God dominates in the middle, that men are united together to serve it with an agreement: and then, it is also necessary that those who want to carry it away by outrage and violence, be repressed, and that the innocent be maintained in their rights. Example: Today, when there are quarrels between men, those who want to be the most skillful and valiant in boasting of being peaceful, will settle the matter quickly, without looking at who is wrong or right. Then, they will simply divide the difference. There will be one who will be a bandit, who will cut his brother's throat: the other will simply ask to hold his own, and will be content to have his right. Here is someone who places himself between the two parties as a peacemaker. Now do not fight any more, but let each one take his portion. Does this mean that a bandit robs an innocent poor person and yet we are there as if blind not to discern between white and black? Let us therefore learn that it is not enough that we grant quarrels: but it is necessary that justice always prevails, and that it takes place.

And thus we see in what condition it is that we must procure peace: and for this cause our Lord Jesus Christ says, that we must be persecuted for righteousness. Under this word he understands in the first place that we maintain the rights of each one, that we have no respect for people to favor these things, and to reject those things, but that we see that we live in good equity, that those who rise up in audacity and violence are put down, and that those who do not otherwise ask that we leave them alone.

wheat for their good, be maintained and bear. That's its first one. But if the justice of men must be recommended to us, what is this compared to that of God, that is to say his truth, which is the rule of all righteousness? Therefore, when we have to suffer and hate, and sins, and slander for having maintained the quarrel between the good and the simple, we must have an even greater zeal to be God's witnesses, so as not to allow us to blaspheme against his truth, or to in any way pervert the doctrine of the Gospel, in which all our good and our salvation consists. This is also why the two are connected. He spoke in general of justice: and then he puts, of the Son of man, and of the Gospel. Our Lord Jesus Christ therefore wants us to try to give reason to everyone: and yet he also wants his truth to be privileged above all, and the glory of God his Father, and the Kingdom which has been given to him: let this therefore be preferred to all the rest. Now in the first place, we can never be truly peaceful without being attacked from all sides: because everyone wants to have prosecutors and advocates: that is to say the least. And when equity governs us, and we are not in favor of one party or the other, we will have to blame both sides. And we usually

see that those who act as true servants of God, when they judge a cause, they will not satisfy any of the parties. And why? Because often neither party will seek reason, because each would like to have oppressed his neighbor, and to be exalted above all men. This is how we are: but again when we openly declare that we seek that the good be maintained over everything, then we will be more harshly assailed. And why? Those who have a bad cause are willing to be people of credit and authority: they are powerful and rich, having the favor of the world: and this is how hard war must be taken. Not that there are not many poor people who are as mean as the rich, and if they dared to release their venom which is hidden there, and they had the ability to do so, they would clearly show that they are no better than the rich: but the fact is that they will not commit outrages such as those who trust in their credit and their wealth, and who are in vogue among men, will do. Now, if we want to maintain justice and righteousness, it is certain that we will have to wage war against those who have a sword in their hand, that is to say who are equipped to strike down everything and to take revenge on us, even though we have done them no harm.

This is why we need to practice this doctrine. For our Lord Jesus Christ did not deal with things that unknown to us or very rare: but it monster to which we must apply all the time of our life. True is that by walking like he belongs and by not favoring anyone, he seems although we must not be hays, and that everyone must leave us in our state, that we we must not do any molestation. And in fact, Peter also says, And when you do no wrong to no one, who will be your enemy? But this is naturally: but even if it is necessary that the children of God after having been patient, after having trying to dampen all quarrels, they all prepare times to suffer many insults and insults, and to cause a lot of trouble. And why?

I have already said that if we maintain the right, it is certain that we are moved by the rage of blow of people against us: and these too will have a large suit and a large tail. So much more therefore that we will have been peaceful on all sides.

So much more will the world be fond of slander of us: so that we will be walked around the tables and through the streets, and everyone will detract from us. Well, that's it for one: but still there is also this, that whoever wants to live holy in Jesus Christ (says Paul) must prepare himself to persecution. It is true that God will give us good some relaxation, but as long as we have always a lot of enemies. Because Satan has many supporters in this world, and they are driven

by his spirit, so much so that they cannot endure the clarity of the Gospel, nor endure that God has dominion over them, as over children. We must therefore maintain the quarrel of the Gospel, and be witnesses to the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ: even if we have war with a great multitude of people, even those who counterfeit the faithful, and who pretend to agree with us in the same religion: it will be necessary, I say, that we have mortal war against them: and also even more so against those who openly defy God, and who would like the Gospel to be exterminated from the world.

This is how familiar this doctrine must be to us, so that we do not find it strange if we are molested often and sometimes. For there are many who believe that they have had the best of the world in the Gospel: and if we want to attack them, when they have this excuse in their mouths, they have not been given the opportunity. And why did he come and attack me like this, seeing that I didn't ask him for anything? Didn't I have to have pushed him away? It seems to them that they are even, although since then they have been overwhelmed. But on the contrary it is said that although we are gentle, if we have a zeal for justice and equity, the world will have to rise up against us, and we will have many enemies: and even more so when we are zealous for the glory of God and the truth of the Gospel: for there will have to be open war: and even then we will be reproached for being the cause of all evil. As today the Papists allege, Blessed are the peacemakers: when they want to burden us and accuse us that we are the cause of the noises, contentions and debates that are in the world, and that they would be in peaceful possession of their tyranny, it seems to them, and that all their idolatries and inventions would be in vogue, except that by force of shouting we warn the world to turn away from such stinking. Above that they will say that we disturb the peace, and are enemies of the church. Nay: but (as I said) it is necessary that this war be conjoined with the honor of God, and even with reason and mutual equity between men: and even more, that it be conjoined with the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine of our salvation. So this is how we will have to take the war: but it is for justice, that is to say for a good cause and necessary. For we would have to renounce God if we wanted to be peaceful with everyone. And so be it, on what condition could we agree with the Papists? What action will we take? They would be very happy to have us: but in what way? That we were apostates like them, that we were excommunicated from the Kingdom of God: that we were in their foul and stinking burgundy, as they all are: in short, that we were children of the devil, as they are.

This, I say, is what they would like to attract and attract us to if they could. But woe betide such peace. Let us have war sooner, provided that it is always for the testimony that God approves, and that we fight under his banner, and to ensure that he is served and honored, that we are content to bear the enmities of the world: and that all the divisions which are on our side, do not proceed except from the fact that we do not want to consent to the evil and the impiety of the wicked. For the rest, however, let us note carefully this word from righteousness. For the wicked will also be able to boast that they suffer: and then they will glory in being disciples of Jesus Christ. As time passed there were many heretics who boasted of their Christianity, under the shadow that everyone persecuted them. And today these fantastic Anabaptists, who have caused so much trouble in the world, who challenge both the police, and the Magistrate, and the union of the church, who sow so many errors that nothing more, they always have this sentence in their mouths, that blessed are those who suffer persecution. Or even but is it for justice? We clearly see the opposite. And so, let us learn to have this word well engraved in our hearts, and let our conscience test us before God that we have just quarreled when we are persecuted. For this is the mark by which Jesus Christ wanted to discern the thieves, thieves, murderers, blasphemers, and adulterers from among his disciples. For the wicked will suffer persecution, and we must persecute them as much as we are, as David protests in the Psalm, saying that he hated them for their iniquities, not for their persons. We must therefore persecute the wicked: but yet if they cannot boast of being maintained by God for all this. For it is not for justice that they suffer, like the martyrs and witnesses of Jesus Christ: or even like those who maintain good quarrels in this world, who ask to support the innocent, and to lift them up when they are oppressed. For these also suffer for righteousness, and they have the mark to be trusted by God.

Besides, this material cannot be disposed of at all for now. It is therefore enough that we refrain from being peaceful, so that however we do not derogate from the honor of God, that his glory is not prejudiced, and also that his person is not burdened by it. However, the peace which was announced to us in the Gospel is above all to be prized and esteemed: as when we have today Jesus Christ, who is our peace with God his Father, who ordained that this appointment should be announced between God and men. And this is also what Paul brings us back to, when he wants all contentions, all divorces, and all false opinions to be put to rest. And how? he said. We are reconciled with God, to have brotherhood together. Now this is done through the preaching of the

Gospel. And so, we who protest having received the doctrine by which we are appointed with God, we must also converse among men that there may be peace and concord. That if this is ordered to all, much more to those who are in charge. Moreover, because time would not allow this to be deduced further: now, because the brother who is here present, having already previously served in one place in the ministry of this church, has been accepted by the magistrates, and ordained to serve from now on in this city: that whenever there is a minister to receive, we know for what purpose it is, and what benefit we must receive from the labor of those who are called to this office is to know that we are enemies of God, we are called of him, and that we are warned of him: as in fact he does not wait for us to come and seek him: but when he sees that we are lost in perdition, he seeks us, and calls us to himself. And how? This is because he forgives us all our faults, so that we can learn to forgive our neighbors. For he wants to be pitiful to us, so that we may also be pitiful to others. Let us therefore look carefully at the end and use of the preaching of the Gospel, and let us know the good that God presents to us by his doctrine, "which is proposed to us in his name, and that this incites us to arrange ourselves, both large and small, to do our duty. And moreover, since we cannot be reputed to be children of God, unless we are peaceful, let us profit more and more in the doctrine which is given to us. preached. For the devil will always find something to incite us to provoke us into contentions, into mischief, into wars, into troubles and emotions. And so we must strive: when we want to keep peace and harmony among ourselves, we must fight against our nature, but this will be done by virtue of the doctrine, when we are given to it, and we apply our study to it, as it belongs.

And moreover, as much as with peace we must have zeal and righteousness, it is also necessary that the truth of God be recommended to us in everything, and that we be so accustomed to the doctrine which will be perfectly preached to us from our Lord Jesus Christ, that we boldly despise everyone. But we are so cold in this place, that we could say what Isaiah said in his time, that we look through the streets, there is no one who maintains justice: and there is no one who maintains truth. And who is the cause? This is because firstly we do not know how righteousness and equity is pleasing to God: and then, we do not know how much his truth is recommended to him. Contempt therefore for one's word and taking advantage of it is the cause that everyone shrinks from righteousness and equity, even though one faces enough protest. For every one will complain, and say, What time is it in? and what confusion do we see? And

yet there is no one who is not partly guilty of it, because we have no zeal. And yet, let this word of justice always ring in our ears, knowing that we must hold fast for this: and above all, when it is a question that the name of God be glorified, and the testimony that we must give to our Lord Jesus Christ be engraved in our hearts, never to depart from it. All the more therefore we must think carefully about all these things, so that from now on we show that we are better advanced than before, that is to say, that we know how our Lord Jesus Christ wants to govern his church, namely, by the preaching of his word, and that it is in such reverence to us as it should: and that it is not only to pretend to humiliate us under it: but that in all our life we know that we have truly aspired to this incomprehensible treasure, leaving behind all our affections, which otherwise keep us too wrapped up.

Now let us bow before the majesty of our good God, etc.

CHAPTER 5

PERSECUTION REPROACH AND THE WORLDS PRAISE

Matthew 5:11-12. Blessed are you when they reproach and persecute you, and falsely speak every kind of evil against you for my sake. 12. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven; for so they persecuted the prophets who came before you.

Luke 6:22-26. Blessed are you when men hate you, exclude you, reproach you, and reject your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. 23. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; their fathers did the same to the prophets. 24. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. 25. Woe to you who are full, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. 26. Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers did the same to the false prophets.

We saw last Sunday that it is very difficult for the faithful man to live here peacefully when he wants to fulfill his duty towards God and towards his neighbors. For the malice of men is so great that we must often enter into combat to maintain the good and innocent people who are afflicted: and to take charge of good and just causes. For God requires this of us: and it is not enough for each to abstain from evil and violence, but we must procure good, as far as we are. Now (as I said) on all sides we are surrounded by many evil ones, and the devil not without cause is called prince of the world. Not only will it be difficult for us to serve God, and to be in peace and at rest: but we must reckon upon this, that when we maintain the good, we will have many attacks and alarms, and that the wicked will be against us. And above all, this is practiced in doctrine: for the truth of God is hidden from men, until they are fully changed, because he who does evil does not ask for clarity, but hates it, as our Lord Jesus Christ says, and so it is that all men are evil, and if they do not show it, the filth is

hidden therein. and God by his word discovers everything, he probes the secret thoughts, and the most hidden affections. This is why the truth of God will not be received by men, and they will reject it and resist it as much as possible.

In short, we are admonished to often remember what is here remonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ: namely, that when we are unjustly afflicted, provided that our consciences answer us before God that it is not our fault, we must not therefore lose courage, as if our condition were worse than that of the unbelievers. And why? Especially since we have to look for our happiness up there. Here let us prepare to fight, and when we are told of our rest, of our victory, and of our glory which will be achieved, let us raise our eyes and our senses above the world. Moreover, we are not only admonished to suffer patiently the harm and molestation that will be done to us, but also the reproaches, defamation, and false accusations. Now this is still the hardest, because a person of courageous spirit would more easily bear wounds, and even death, than to be in reproach and ignominy. Let us look at the heathen philosophers who have had some appearance of virtue, it is certain that whoever has been magnanimous has not had death in such horror, as shame and infamy before men. So, we must be armed with more than human constancy, to patiently endure every insult and reproaches, and the slanders that will be falsely imposed on us by the wicked. Now if we have to come to this, as Paul remonstrates, because we hope in the living God (he says) we must be tormented, even suffer shamefully, be pointed at with scorn, and spit in our faces. Since God wants us to experience this far, we need to prepare ourselves for it, and to shield ourselves from this doctrine which is put forward to us here by our Lord Jesus Christ. And moreover, he warns us that these slanders will not only come from those who openly deny the Gospel, and who declare that they want nothing to do with true and pure religion: but that those who claim to belong to the church, and who have great reputation, the very ones (I say) will be the first to degrade us, and bring all infamy before men.

And this is why in particular he says that his disciples will be rejected, that they will be driven out, and that their name will be as if cursed. According also that our Lord Jesus Christ speaks of it in John, that those who will do great pleasure and sacrifice to God, will torment the faithful and Ministers of the Gospel: and this itself was anciently under the Law, as it is said in Isaiah in the eighth chapter that the disciples of God not only were annoying to the world, and to those who made a great profession of being defenders of the Catholic faith, as we speak: but that they were as hideous, and as monsters. For Isaiah uses

this very word, These (he says) are the children that the Lord has given me: it was necessary that they be as if to frighten people, and to be like frightening things, and which are loathsome by nature. We therefore see how both Isaiah and those who were joined to him to serve purely God were rejected. And from whom? he does not speak of the Egyptians, and of their fellows who were idolaters by profession, but of the two houses of Israel, of both these kingdoms which were consecrated in the name of God. For although the ten Lineages in separating themselves from the house of David had made a revolt, as if to renounce God, still if there was still some reserve, knowing that God wanted to be honored there. And in fact, the anointing was in no way in that Kingdom, as in Judea. He therefore says that both these nations, that is to say all those who at that time were renowned the holy church and the holy lineage of Abraham, abhorred the true prophets and true disciples of God. When then Jesus Christ appeared, according as the celestial doctrine was then declared in greatest perfection, it was also necessary may the rage of the devil and all the wicked be is sharp, there has been a fire lit, and exerted a more than furious rage against the children of God: and not only for the torment and afflict them in their bodies, but for them blaming, even and under the very shadow of order which God had established in his church.

For excommunication was a sacred thing, because God willed that at all times the church be purged of all filth, and that those who committed scandals and dissolutions there were cut off, as is quite right: for the heathen philosophers themselves have always had excommunication recommended. They were ashamed that the wicked and those who were defiled should mix among their sacrifices. It was a profanation that they could not tolerate. If the blind poor observed such a policy, it was necessary that in the church of God there was such an order. Now Jesus Christ declares that his disciples will have to come to this battle, and that they will be dismissed from the synagogue, that they will be held as reprobate people, and as filthy and stinking.

We now see in short what we have to remember from this passage, it is according to what we have alleged from Paul, that not only do we have to be patient when we are afflicted in our persons, when we are outraged, even to the point of life: that not only do we have to be equipped with constancy in this case, but also that when we are blamed, when we are torn to pieces by slander, when we are charged, false crimes, we must still bow our heads, and wait with peaceful courage for God to shine upon our integrity, like the dawn of the day, as is spoken of in the other passage, and follow Jeremiah, who, when he calls

God for his guardian, and knows that he approves of his cause, does not care much about everything that men can put before him. So when we are in this world, let it be enough for us that God recognizes us as his servants, and that we walk so far before him, that the reproaches of the world will not be able to turn us aside, and cause us to decline from the right path. Now this doctrine is very necessary for us today, not only because the practice of it is very rare, but also because we would not otherwise be able to discern that it is to serve to God. Because we will see a lot of people, and although their number is great, if it is that we will see some who will live virtuously, and not can we accuse them of neither avarice nor plunder, neither lewdness nor intemperance. Thus then a life which will be approved: but nevertheless which is it what holds them in such a bridle? It's that they want to be in reputation and honor. Here, in short, is where all the virtue and nobility of this world is to have some integrity in appearance:

but there is only smoke in their case, especially let them look at men. And so, already they received their reward, as we will see here after. For when we have tried to live without reproach, and when we have given no opportunity to anyone to speak ill of us, nor to be a detractor, and yet it is necessary that we are degraded, that we are mocked, bitten, and flayed by slander (so to speak) that we accuse one of being a hypocrite, the other that he did not carry out his work faithfully, that (in short) we are burdened with all slander, if notwithstanding we still continue our way, then we will know the truth that we serve God. And why? We despise all the glory of the world: here then is a good examination, to discover that there is a good will in us, and that we are inflamed with a zeal for the service of God, when we can come with heads held high, to protest that we have not acted with a divided heart, and that the vanities of this world have not transported us, so that we have not always followed the path which he showed us, because he commanded and approved it.

Now all the more we must carefully observe what is being shown to us here, namely,, that if we are blamed for the wicked, we nevertheless do not fail to always follow the path that God proposes to us, and that we constantly persist until God declares himself to be our guarantor, and that he, in the face of shining our innocence, as we have already alleged the promise given to us in the Psalm. Now concerning the excommunication of which it is here spoken, today we see what our Lord Jesus Christ declares. Because the Pope with all his sequel, and the whole corrupt body of the clergy, will hold us like dogs: and we see the thunderbolts of their excommunications which they level against us: well, it is

true that already they are so exposed that all their authority is almost lost in several places. And in fact, there is not a single Papist in the world today, who honors either these mitred prelates, or the corruption of the priesthood, which we call: there is (say) no Papist who honors them out of good devotion:

but we know that all their inventions are forged by men: and yet, that they must be left there as they are. However, whatever may be, they still retain this name of Prelates and Bishops. However, therefore, they will release their excommunications against us. Well? If we were not equipped with this doctrine, what would it be? we would find it strange. Is it possible (shall we say) that for the truth of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, who is the salvation of the world, we are thus cast out, that we are held as execrable, and that it seems that the earth must no longer support us? But we see what happened to all the prophets, we see what the Apostles experienced, and those who followed in their path. But we are not privileged above them, so let us walk where. God calls us, and may it be enough for us when we are absolved by him, even though everyone condemns us, and let us boldly treat all the excommunications with contempt of the Pope, and its followers, knowing that we are all the more approved of God, when we are rejected by such beasts: and that being separated from all their stinking, we come so much closer to our Lord Jesus Christ, to be participants in his purity. And even in this regard we see what happened to him to whom our Lord Jesus Christ had restored his sight. For when he confessed that he who had healed him could not be wicked, because God would not have heard him, that it was therefore necessary that he was sent from God, because he had testimony of being a holy Prophet. When this poor man (I say) has made such a confession, he is excommunicated, he is dismissed, it seems that he is not worthy to walk on earth: he is driven out of this rabble, who nevertheless call themselves Priests of the Law, and Prelates of the church: and here is Jesus Christ who meets him. And so let us not doubt that we will be gathered from the Son of God, whenever we are rejected by men, and by the servants of the devil, who only ask to bring such confusion to the world, that we can no longer discern between God and idols, and that all true religion be abolished.

In short, this is what we have to remember, which is that our lives are not precious to us, when it is a question of us being afflicted in order to bear witness to the truth, in which our salvation, our happiness, and all our glory consists. And then, when we are degraded by the world, may our honor not be in such a recommendation to us that we do not bear the slanders that will be brought against us, or even provided that we always walk as before God, and that we have

testimony of him, and that our conscience responds to us in good, as Peter speaks of it: following also what is said by Paul in the other passage, that we be ready to hear evil, that is to say to be blamed, but that we do not fail to continue to do good: and yet, if men charge us, and we are like trampled, let us always go further, so as not to be an occasion of scandal, to procure the good: nevertheless let us always be ready to suffer such calumnies, to be condemned and repudiated. to remember. Now our Lord Jesus Christ offers us the prophets, he proposed them to his disciples: and now we have both the ones and the others. For if the persecutions had been new, and it would have been a thing previously unknown, to be blasphemed and dismissed for having purely served God: it is certain that this would have greatly shaken, even almost crushed, the most firm. let us know that it was nothing new or strange.

And this is why our Lord Jesus Christ highlights the prophets here: as if he were saying to his disciples, You are not better than the men who were so excellent, who were gifted with such great virtues, that God had raised them up like angels in this world. For the prophets represented the person of God: he had imprinted on them the mark of his majesty, so that we were forced to admire them. And yet how were they treated? They endured many outrages not only in their own person, but they were charged with blasphemy and insults, they were accused and held as mutineers and enemies of the church. As we read of Jeremiah, he was reproached that he only wanted to sow trouble and dissension among the people, that he was a traitor, and had intelligence with the enemies. On this he is put in prison, and the greatest outrages in the world are done to him. Here is also Isaiah who is put to death, in such a cruel way that nothing more. Some are whipped, others are like torn to pieces. Well, the prophets suffered this, because God had strengthened them. And why would you now seek a better condition? Now this example here (as I said) was very useful to the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that they would not give in when it was necessary to be exercised in such battles, when it was a question of undert to hold assaults so harsh, that they always push past them. As also we see that Peter does the same with regard to doctrine. For we are exhorted by him to persist, even if there comes a diversity of opinions, and contradictory disputes arise, that the heretics deceive us, that they try to overturn everything, and confuse: well, then many are unsettled who are as if lost. But what? said Peter, Have you not heard of the ancient Testament of the church, that there have always been false prophets, who nevertheless claimed the name of God, and this title so sacred and honorable? and yet have the faithful therefore left the true religion? No. For

they knew that it was necessary for the truth to be victorious: and that even though it was assailed on all sides, it was nevertheless necessary for them to see it without declining in any way.

Therefore, as we see that the disciples of God persisted, even though the church was subjected to these troubles, let us also know that when there are still false teachers around today, it is then that we must hold on: and must not say like these fickle people: And in whom shall we believe? So let us look to God, remember ancient facts, and consider how he has always led his church: and then for our part let us walk in righteousness and humility: and it is certain that in doing so God will not allow us to be deceived. So we must do: and when we see that the world will be envenomed against the Gospel, let us nevertheless hold fast, and let us know that it is to follow the prophets, and then to follow the Apostles and disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. So today we have more confirmation that the disciples did not have: because they had to look only at the prophets. Now we have the Apostles, and the disciples, and all the order that continued. We therefore have today a much greater help to strengthen us, and to not be lost when we are unjustly afflicted, even by those who falsely claim the name of God, and who want to be reputed as supporters of the church. Now in this doctrine there was still some regret, if Jesus Christ had not acknowledged what we read in Luke. For even if the faithful are taught that they must be prepared to suffer persecution, to be rejected by the world, and even vituperated, and put in reproach and infamy, as evildoers, if they are not insensitive however when they come and then later to make comparison: Yes, but here are the despisers of God who are held to be good people, everyone will applaud them, everyone favors them.

And yet we are held like the filth of the world, that everyone revels and despises us, that we are even hated? and yet here are the wicked who have abandoned themselves completely in contempt of God, to lead a dissolute life, as if they wanted to overthrow all order, these nevertheless are maintained and favored, they are welcomed everywhere. And when they are living in luxury, and we consider that their life appears supremely happy, we must meanwhile mourn and weep, be hungry and thirsty, while they feast. This then could still cause regret to the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, as in the Psalm which was sung we see this speech well expressed: for David confesses that his foot was as if on ice, and that it was hardly necessary that he was not fallen at all, when he saw the wicked enjoying such prosperity, that they were exempt from the ordinary miseries of life: and even as when they afflicted others no one dared look at

them, and everyone trembled under them. When he saw this, he protested that it was almost to make him fall away, had God not restrained him: but even then it was not that he succeeded at the first attempt. For he confesses that he was like a beast, that he was like a donkey, or like a calf, which would be so lost that it could not be held.

So our Lord Jesus Christ has provided for all these perplexities which could arise in our imagination. For this reason he said Woe, woe to all those who laugh today: Woe to all those who are very drunk: Woe to all those who are loved by the world: and it is so that we learn to wait for the outcome, and not judge things by present appearances. For the happiness that we judge to be in all wicked people is only a dream, like the present life, for what else is the present life? But still, it is necessary that the wicked, even if God would give them all their eases and delights, would sometimes feel very great bitterness in this world, because God already warns them that the good times will not last them forever. And he does this also to make them inexcusable, so that they recognize themselves, and that they prepare to give an account: and when they have such warnings, let it be to aggravate their condemnation so much more. So whatever may be, all the delights, the pomp, the sensual pleasures, the honors, the riches, and all the goods of the despisers of God, and profane people are only a dream which soon vanishes. But at first glance we do not estimate it. And this is what causes us to feel displeasure and sadness when we see them prosper.

For we envy them, and conclude from what we see today with the eye: and cannot let's not elevate our senses to look further. Our Lord Jesus Christ therefore to remedy to this perverse judgment to which we are left too inclined, tells us that if we consider blessed those who laugh, those who are drunk, and who are rich, it is all the more so that we do not consider the outcome, that we are too light, as if to rush, and that with this haste so great, we cannot form a settled judgment. So this is how he holds us in check, as here before he said, Do not think that your condition is unhappy when you cry, when you are hungry and thirsty, even when you are hunted and persecuted: do not think that God has abandoned you yet, as if you were there miserable creatures. And why? For you must go beyond this world, and seek your reward in heaven, and think that it is to be children of God, when he declares himself to be your Father, and you claim him as such. When you have this (I say) your state is much more desirable than anything that men desire here on earth. Also now on the opposite side, you will see the wicked prosper and flourish, you will see them having all their sensual pleasures and delights, and living amid abundance. This is what you will

see today: but have patience. For if their joy is converted into gnashing of teeth, if their wealth returns to them in poverty, because they are cursed by God, if the honor they have is to put them into confusion before God and before his angels, if all this is, must you envy them? In short, we see how our Lord Jesus Christ wants to elevate us above all these earthly things, and rise above this transitory life, and show us that if we do not have our reward here, this should not make us lose courage, because it is in heaven. Now in saying that our reward is in heaven, he does not mean a reward earned by our merit: as the Papists misuse these words, whenever this reward comes forward. For immediately they say, it follows then that our works are meritorious to eternal life, and that when we have failed, we have the satisfactions by which to acquit ourselves: and although the grace of God assists us, if there is any dignity in us, when we work on our side. And although this dignity is not equal to this infinite good of eternal life, if it is nevertheless that there is some dignity and propriety: for God would be unjust, if not he rewarded those who served him.

Thus therefore as if under the shadow of this word of Rent, the Papists will not only seek to diminish the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, but also to annihilate it if it were possible. Now for our part, let us know that our Lord Jesus Christ did not come here to fill us with pride and presumption, that he did not want us to be the authors of our salvation, having this false persuasion, that if we commit faults, we have the means to reward them. For he shows us enough in many other passages, that it is in him alone that we must seek all this, and that it is in the gratuitous goodness of God his Father that even our works find acceptance: and that God finds them good (for they are defective in themselves and deserve rejection) is from his pure grace and liberality, and from the paternal love which he bears to us. So our Lord Jesus Christ did not want to put us here in dispute about the cause of our salvation, to know what value there is in all the services that we will do to God his Father: but he wanted to show us that if it seems that it is wasted time to employ ourselves in doing good, seeing that all the more we will seek to conform to the will of God his Father, we will be hated by the world, we will be rejected, and even persecuted: these temptations should not prevent us from continuing our course. And why? For although we will live here on earth, we must serve God through many battles. And where is our victory? In heaven, let's look there. And so let us think, not to merit, but only to persevere in the service of God: for we have the reward which was acquired for us by our Lord Jesus Christ, and which we obtain by the merit of his death and passion, which cannot fail us. And let us boldly despise all these

scoundrels of the Papacy, who will talk enough about merits, but it is while mocking God: because by disgorging their merits, it seems that they are ready to do wonders: and to hear them, one would say that there is only fire and zeal in them, yet there is no one who would lift a finger to suffer anything. As for patience, there is none, but on the contrary the greatest preachers of the merits of these beasts, and of these hypocrites who make the air resound, they will be vile rascals, some dissolute and profane, others drunken and indulge in all debauchery: in short, there will only be all villainy and enormity. Thus therefore the beautiful preachers of the merits of the Papacy, and yet in all their life there will be only contempt for God. But on the contrary, let us know that when we have done more than a hundred times that we are commanded (if possible) that we must not therefore consider that we have done anything more: but recognize that we owe everything to God. And since we are indebted to him in everything, in what way can he be obliged to us? Can he owe us anything from his side? Furthermore, let us know that when we still strive for good, it will always be stumbling, instead of running: there will be many imperfections and weaknesses: and there is no one who does not know this in themselves, provided that they judge themselves without hypocrisy. Above all, we know that all our works would be nothing but a curse before God, unless he accepted them by his infinite goodness, even more so that we are disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that we have all our rest in him.

This then is how we must make the most of this doctrine. For when we are here drawn to heaven, it is so that it does not cost us much to walk among the thorns, to jump over the pits, and even to climb over the rocks and mountains when necessary: and so that nothing distracts us, that we do not tend and aspire to our goal. Now we could here ask, if it is not lawful for the children of God, to be rich, and to use the goods which God has entrusted to them, and to rely on them. For it is said, Woe to you who laugh: Woe to you who are rich: and even, Woe to you when people speak well of you. And how? It will therefore not be lawful to live well and virtuously, so that people speak well of us: and in fact, we must procure good before men (as Paul says) and we must ensure that even the wicked have their mouths closed (as it is said in the other passage) and that they are forced to glorify God, when they see that we walk in fear of him. This then could be found harsh and strange, that the rich of this world are cursed, and those who have some rest, and who are idle: but Jesus Christ here looked at the affection of those who forget the heavenly kingdom, when they are well in this world, and who are entirely dazed and stupid there. To better understand this,

let's look at how the faithful are comfortable. It is true that if God sends them prosperity and rest, they will bring everything to his praise: for they will use what is given to them soberly, even to such an end that they will always try to live well. Well, they will not want these goods to be lost: but they recognize them as blessings from God. Afterwards, if a man hates some excellent gift of the Spirit of God, he will not say that he is entirely empty of it: otherwise he would be a hypocrite. If they are rich, if they have bodily health, and even (as I said) if they are endowed with some excellent gifts of the Holy Spirit, they will recognize the graces of God in all this, and will devote themselves to it, and will give Him praise.

This is how the faithful will use all the goods of the present life. But however today they are at ease, they are prepared to suffer tomorrow, when it pleases God to call them to it: and if it pleases him to strip them of the goods he has given them, they are also ready to resign them to him, and place them in his hands, knowing well that it was on this condition that they possessed them, to leave them when it pleases him. The faithful man will therefore know, Well, today rich, tomorrow poor. When it pleases God to make such a change in me, that instead of being at ease I have to suffer a lot: and instead of laughing, that I have to cry, it is enough for me that nevertheless I will not stop being one of his children: and for his part, he has promised me that he will always confess me as such, I will therefore be happy to do so. This, I say, is how the faithful will do it, and then they will always maintain sobriety: they will restrain their appetites. And will hold back, and will think, Even though I can rise in ambition and loftiness, although I can place my confidence entirely in pleasures, if it is necessary that I think higher, and that I know that all the goods that God distributes to me in this world, it is to make the way for me to tend to him, and to be like a ladder to take us up, and not to be like a sepulchre to bury me down here. This is how the faithful will not rejoice like brute beasts, and will not stop at the obsolete happiness which is given to them: and then they will not also become intoxicated when the world applauds them, as if they had their rent here on earth, and as if they were already rewarded for the good life they have led: but they will be ready to walk faithfully through good report and bad. This is the measure and the means that the faithful hold, knowing that when they are at ease, if they will not fall asleep there: and get drunk there, even less: and then they will always be ready to leave everything, when it pleases God. But on the contrary, unbelievers immediately become intoxicated with their ease, they are completely exhausted, and are so stupid that there is no question of thinking

about God or the spiritual life. And then they harden themselves, and if any adversity happens to them, it is to gnash their teeth, and to blaspheme before God.

We therefore see how and in what sense our Lord Jesus Christ here curses the rich, and those who are drunk, those who laugh, and those whom the world praises. Job said in the midst of his afflictions, If we have received good things from the hand of God, why do we not receive evils as well? What Job said then, it is certain that he had meditated for a long time, and had kept this treasure to produce it in time and place. So what is needed? Although God spares us, and gives us ease, however much we think about it, only if it does us good; we must also be ready to receive evil from his hand: and not with regret or by force, but with a docile and good spirit, to conform to his will in everything and in everything. For he must govern us, not according to our appetite, but according to what he knows to be proper and expedient for us. And in this we have reason to be concerned, that he will turn everything to our salvation. This then is what we have to remember from this passage, when our Lord Jesus Christ curses, and the rich, and those who are merry, and those who are drunk. So that we learn to use so much of the goods that we have in hand, that it is not to get drunk in this world, that is to say to be like idiots there. That if we have something, let us know that we must not nevertheless be buried, neither in gold, nor in silver, nor in fields, nor in meadows, like those who think that it is their last goal to have everything they want. It is certain that such are already like those who have passed away: for they bury themselves in these perishing goods, so much so that they cannot look up to heaven. Let us therefore think of ourselves, and let us be careful not to be cursed from the mouth of the Son of God, but let us expect from him all blessing and all our life, so as not to come to this misfortune which is here pronounced. And that we learn by this, to pass through this world, so that we are there as strangers: and that he who possesses (as Paul says) is as if he had nothing, It is true that those who have enough to spend a lot, also have greater temptations, to which they could succumb: and yet let them learn to have recourse to God, and that all that he gives them is to attract them more and more to him: to inflame them in his love, and to incite them to obey him: and that they have no such desire for the goods which are given to them, that they are wholly given to the world.

So in the midst of all our abundance we must not get drunk, so much as to strangle us, and let this curse be upon us, Woe to you who are drunk: but let us know that we must be satisfied in another way: namely, by contemplating the

face of God, as it is said in the Psalm 16. So let goods be our help, until we enjoy the sight of the face of our God, where all our happiness and joy lies. And also that we learn to laugh, so that we may prepare ourselves to cry when it pleases God, and that our own joy be mixed with sadness, also that we have compassion on those who endure: that each one does not withdraw separately, but that we learn to rejoice when the name of God is glorified. Let us then (god) rejoice, even though we have occasion to groan and weep. And on the contrary, when we are at our ease, and there is no question other than of rejoicing, if we see some desolation in the church, and that the name of God is blasphemed, that it is exposed to reproach and mockery, may this sadden us more than all the blessings of the world could make us sad: and may our joy for earthly prosperity then be tempered, and that we put water in our wine, as they say in the proverb. So much for this word.

Moreover, as a conclusion, when our Lord Jesus Christ says, Be careful when men speak ill of you: he does not mean this of all men, but of the common: as Paul says, that when he would serve men, and please them, he would have to renounce God. For men who are carnal by nature only ask to be flattered and pleased in everything. So to be praised in the manner of the world, we would have to close our eyes to all vices, and make ourselves prosecutors and advocates of them, and maintain them, and call evil virtue. This is, in short, how it happens that all those who desire the favor of men corrupt the doctrine of God, and wickedly corrupt it, and by this means leave the service of their Master. But there is another way of pleasing: it is to know that we do not try to feed the vices of men, but according as they themselves delight in evil, that we try to please them according to God. In short, this sentence of Paul tends to this goal, that the men whom we try to please must also be enemies of their greed and evil appetites, and of their wicked affections. When they are such, it is certain that the doctrine of God will please them: and therefore us who carry it. But if men remain in their nature, they will want everything covered and a veil drawn against all iniquity. So when it is spoken here of men, it is certain that Jesus Christ hears it of all those who make this compact: Now it is that you are prized by us, and that you also spare us.

For this is how profane people and enemies of the truth, all hypocrites, and all those who do not have a true and living root of fear of God, have their plots which they make with the false prophets: Well, you will be honored, we will serve you everything as you ask, but however also be careful not to annoy us by your speech: that you be at your ease, and that you also leave us there. woe on

such a plot, when the prophets and teachers of the church, those who are responsible for teaching, that these (I say) are like hired singers who perform a sweet and pleasant song, and which tickles the ears of the listeners without any profit. And yet those who delight in such flattery will say, Oh, what a good teacher, the good man. And what better could we want? So when some want to be so flattered, and others will also speak as they please, here is our Lord Jesus Christ who comes thundering against all this, Woe to you (he says) when men will say well of you, because in the end you will have to experience how you were abused when the false prophets applauded you: for there will be only a curse on your heads, and on both, when the world has said well of you.

Therefore, let us note that this last point here is expressed in particular, to warn those who have the responsibility of carrying the word of God, that if they are hated, if they are blamed, if they are detracted from, even if they try to do well and fulfill their duty, they must continue faithfully in their course: and this is a doctrine common to all, that is to say of which the benefit extends to all members of the church: namely, we learn not to praise and magnify those to whom we applaud from all sides, because they only ask to flatter in order to acquire favor. Let us therefore remember not to prize such people, if we do not want to be condemned by God by approving evil: but let us learn to praise those who do not seek to gain reputation and influence by flattery, but who reject everything which could prevent them from duly fulfilling their duty. When we have this, we will fulfill what is said in the Psalm, to bless those who come in the name of God: until he gathers us into his eternal Kingdom, where we will enjoy all the good things which are now promised to us, and which we await.

Now let us bow before the majesty of our good God, etc.