

# THE GOSPEL IN PARIS:

## *SERMONS*

BY THE

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OF L'ÉGLISE DE L'ÉTOILE, PARIS.

*WITH PERSONAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR*

BY THE

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### III.

#### *HUMILITY.*

“The meek will He teach His way.”—Ps. xxv. 9.

WHEN we read the heathen moralists we find in their writings a blank which cannot fail to strike every attentive observer. They have many admirable pages which are well calculated to astonish us; they often express on the human life and its duties the noblest and most elevated sentiments; they eloquently describe all the human virtues—uprightness, purity, firmness of soul, mansuetude, and even charity. But there is one which is always forgotten, and that is humility. Vainly will you seek throughout all antiquity, in all the works of the greatest philosophers, a single exhortation to humility. The word itself existed not for them, because the term humility, before Christianity, always denoted in their language whatever was low, contemptible, and vile; it was always taken in the worst sense. Christianity transformed the word by giving us the thing itself, and that which till then had been a virtue only in the Bible, found its way as a new virtue in universal morals.

How account for this strange omission? If we reflect upon it, we shall understand its real cause. Humility can only be the result of the knowledge of oneself, and man has truly obtained this knowledge only when he has studied himself in the light of the holy God. So long as man compares himself with man, so long as he has no other standard of comparison than himself, he may entertain on his moral value the most simple and complete illusions, and, whilst confessing certain failings inseparable, he thinks, from human nature, he may be so perfectly satisfied with himself that humility will appear to him a meaningless word. But place before him the image of the holy God. Let him examine himself in that pure light, and then he will see the brightness of his boasted qualities dying away, then he will perceive, at the root of what he called his virtues, a profound misery, traces of pride and vanity which, up to this time, he had totally ignored. The brighter becomes the light, the paler grows that natural goodness in which he had believed, the more clearly he discovers, beneath the superficial gloss of worldly morality, those secret lusts, those shameful feelings of envy, hatred, and selfishness, which lie concealed in every soul of man. Henceforth delusion becomes an impossibility; he has seen himself such as he is, he understands that, in the presence of God, the only attitude which beseems him is that of humility. Therefore the Jews of the old covenant who knew the true God, could already know and practise this virtue; nevertheless, it was only with Jesus Christ that it made its full appearance into the world.

In fact, Jesus Christ has not merely revealed to us the character of God, He has also taught us what man should be. "Behold the man!" said Pilate to the Jews; but he knew not the profound, the eternally true significance which these words of cowardly desertion were destined to have in the future. Yes, that is the man, such as He must be, such as it has pleased God that He should be. That is the man greater than the prophets had hoped, greater than in their proudest dreams the nations had imagined He could be; that is the man, pure and undefiled, faithful to truth in word and deed; that is the man, surrounded with the halo of an immaculate holiness, submissive to God, working His will, placing obedience where the first Adam had placed revolt, reflecting clearly and vividly the very image of the Father; that is the man, loving as God loves, loving always, loving to the end. That is the man! I appeal to human conscience, which bows in presence of this figure, awed by a majesty which surpasses it and imposes itself to all. Bring together all the splendours of earth, all the human virtues, place them before Him, and the Divine head of the Crucified will rise, in the brightness of its majesty, above all that men admire. . . . That is the man! and when we compare ourselves with Him we see what we are, and in the same glance we measure the depth of the abyss into which sin has plunged us.

That is how we can explain that humility came into the world only with Jesus Christ. At the feet of the Saviour, at the feet of Him whom St. John called the Light, all worldly virtues pale and vanish, just as the lustre of the most skilfully imitated jewels grows dim beside the unequalled brilliancy of the pure diamond. That is an experimental truth. There are in this assembly persons who, before they had fully resolved on becoming Christians, lived the purest and most honourable life in the eyes of the world. They enjoyed unbroken peace of mind, they delighted in the esteem and consideration by which they were surrounded. And when by accident they opened some religious book, in which they read the confessions of a humbled and repentant soul, or the cries of anguish of a troubled sinner, they unhesitatingly set these down as pious exaggerations in which it seemed to them impossible to join. What then has occurred that their ideas should be so totally different today? They have drawn near to Jesus Christ, they have studied themselves in His light. Henceforth, how many discoveries in their past and present life! How many forgotten sins which the light of day has brought into evidence! How much misery and shame of which they had lost the very memory! How many temptations indulged and which they would certainly have realised hard but a favourable opportunity presented itself! How much lukewarmness and indifference for good; how much selfishness, and how much cowardly compliance with the world! But now, let worldly flatteries be addressed to them, they will reject them with energy. But now, bid them hearken to the artful discourses of a complaisant preacher who

will extol their qualities, skilfully veil their faults, and seek to inspire them with a carnal security—they will refuse to listen. What they now want is truth, for it is truth that saves. They know too much to accept a religion which lowers God while it exalts man. What they now want is a teaching both frank and firm, a teaching which will trouble and humble them, but to which their conscience will be forced to yield a full assent.

Nevertheless, to produce humility there is something more efficacious still than the sight of the perfection of Jesus Christ—it is the sight of His love. When a sinner who has learned to know himself, to perceive his defilement and misery, understands that he is the object of the love of God, and of a love such as that which is described in the Gospel, it is impossible that the sense of this mercy should not overpower him. Show him a God who is ready to crush and terrify, he will bow the head in the feeling that he deserves it all; but show him a God who comes to him, who loves and pardons him—oh! then, all the pride of his heart is broken. True, he was humbled, the prodigal son, when, seized with remorse, he rose to return to his father with the confession—“Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” But what must have been his feelings when he saw himself pressed upon that heart which his errors had caused to bleed, when he felt his father’s tears falling upon his guilty head? True, they were humbled, the publicans and Zacchæus and Mary Magdalene, when they beheld Christ, and when the sight of the holiness spread in His countenance, in His looks, in His discourses, all the more clearly set forth their own misery; but what must they have felt when Jesus entered their dwellings, when they understood that they were the objects of His love and of His tender solicitude? And we who have seen His cross; we who believe that we are not destined to remain strangers to this wondrous story; we who believe in redeeming love; we who know that for us also the Saviour came—shall we not feel overwhelmed by the greatness of that mercy? shall we still hesitate to bring to God the sacrifice of a broken heart? I have often heard unbelief exclaiming against that pride of Christians which leads them to believe that the heavens have been shaken for their salvation, and that it was necessary that the Son of God Himself should suffer in their stead. But you who believe in that sacrifice, tell us if what the cross teaches and inspires is not precisely humility? Ah! at the foot of the cross humility was born; from the earth watered by the blood of Christ, sprang that Divine flower which, till then, had been unknown to the world. That is its native soil. Transplanted on any other it can but wither away and die.

We can now understand why, outside of Christianity, humility has ever been ignored. Alas! it does not follow from this that all Christians know

this virtue. We shall be forced to acknowledge this as we retrace the features by which it is distinguished.

Christian humility should penetrate the whole of our being. Since all the parts of our being have participated in the revolt of sin, they must all be brought to bow the head before God. In the first place, our intellect must be humble. That is what we are in danger of forgetting in this age of criticism and discussion, we Protestant Christians especially; for by our position we are called to watch over the interests of personal investigation in respect to the traditional faith of the Church. It is not that I would have the intellect forget its mission, which it has truly received from God; but what I ask is that all its research be stamped with humility, that, in the handling of religious questions, it may never profane them as did, with regard to the vessels of the sanctuary, the Levites whom the Lord chastened. What I ask is that raillery or disdain may never mingle with the discussions it enters upon. What, in fine, I ask is that we may ever remember that, if we seek religious truth, we seek it that we may the better adore and obey. I admit that, ere we acknowledge it, we should examine it seriously; but from the day when we fully possess it, our duty is to bow before it. It is written that truth makes us free. Yes, but it is on condition that we shall become its willing slaves; if we break through all human formulas, it is that we may the better obey God. A noble Christian woman once said: "I prefer shadow on the side of God, to light on the side of men." Well, it is good for the soul to sit beneath this shadow; to breathe the air of the mysteries which humble and sanctify us. There is a reasoning piety which always, and under every possible form, aims simply at instruction. Is that the piety which does most good? Is that the piety which exercises the most communicative and sympathetic influence? I think not; and, for my own part, I know of nothing more truly grand than a noble mind which humbles itself, and adores before God.

Intellectual humility thus understood is closely allied with meekness of heart. In reality they should be inseparable, but this is not always the case. Men may profess to submit their minds wholly to God; they may offer to Him the sacrifice of their reason; they may make a boast of their blind faith, and yet shelter in their hearts a world of pride. Again, men may believe by the intellect that salvation is a free gift, and yet be anything but humble before God. Nay, more than this, men may take merit to themselves for not believing in merit; they may rely upon argument for their salvation, and preserve in their hearts the leaven of pharisaism. Which, think you, is the greater Pharisee of the man who trusts in his good works, or the man who trusts in his intellectual orthodoxy? Is it not obvious that between such dispositions as those, and the humble dependence of the sinner, whose hope is in Divine mercy alone, there is an immeasurable distance—the same dis-

tance, alas! which separates the heart from the brain, intellectual faith from saving faith? Therefore, so long as humility fails to reach and subdue our hearts, it remains a mere theory, an additional word in the vocabulary of our Christianity, and it is to be feared that we have not understood the Gospel.

But this meekness of heart must pass into our life; it must be recognised by the very manner in which we accept the will of God. The Lord warns us by events as well as by His word; it is this double voice we must hear and obey. What would it avail us to bring a broken heart at the foot of the cross, to offer ourselves there as a living sacrifice, and then to arise anxious to accomplish our own purposes and our own will, in a word, full of the pride of life? No, no; humility must manifest itself day by day, hour after hour, in the ordinary course of existence; it lies in that docility of the heart which accepts the lessons which each of the events of life is destined to teach; it lies in that respectful attitude of the believer who awaits the signs of the Divine will, fearing lest his own should be found opposed to God's; it lies in the fulfilment of the obscure and unpretending duties which it chooses in preference to all others; it lies in the uncomplaining acceptance of trials, of painful dispensations. It has sometimes been seen adorning with a sublime beauty the close of the most eminent careers. It happens in the Church that men, on whom God had bestowed the noblest gifts, grow in humility as they advance in years and experience. Like those branches which bend towards the earth in proportion as they are loaded with fruit, they also, the more they abound in good works, the lower they bow before God; in them we find nought of the bitter censure, nought of the gloomy morosity which betray spiritual pride. We see them making themselves smaller and smaller, if I may so speak, as they advance; turning their looks away from themselves, and saying with the Forerunner, "I must decrease, and He must increase."

What a grand lesson is this progress in sacrifice! There is in it a secret charm which attracts and subdues us. Like those lofty summits of the Alps which appear less beautiful in the dazzling light of noonday than when the setting sun clothes them with a delicate and mysterious hue, those Christian lives are less attractive to us in the day of their most powerful activity than when, at the close of the conflict, God crowns them with humility.

Such, brethren, is Christian meekness. Such, at least, are some of its features, for to picture it fully is impossible. It is felt rather than seen. We have still to consider the promise which God, in my text, makes to it: "The meek will He teach His way."

*The way of the Lord!* I like this expression, for it unites earth to heaven. There is, then, here below a way which leads to God, a way in which we walk with God; amongst all those paths which cross each other in all directions and which finally lead to vanity, there is one, however, which leads to

no precipice, and which victoriously runs through the valley of the shadow of death. It ends on the shores of eternity. It leads us to the land of rest, light, and justice, where those who have followed it before have already arrived and await us. Happy is he who knoweth this way, for it is the way of salvation; but how is it to be found? The Divine Word answers that the Lord teacheth it to the humble.

Allow me to apply these words to you who have displayed all the powers of your intellect in seeking that way, but who have not yet found it. Can you, within the whole range of history, show us one man who, by the mere force of his reason, has succeeded in finding the way that leads to God? God has allowed the ancient world to go on discussing this question during forty centuries. "What is the path of truth?" has been asked in every clime. With what ardour have men endeavoured to solve this problem! What studies! what deep intellectual research! what wonderful investigations! Will the ancient philosophers ever be surpassed in this respect? Will more patient or penetrating minds than theirs ever be seen? And yet, if in the golden age of ancient thought you had entered one of the schools to ask to be taught the way that leads to God, what answer would you have received? what light could you have obtained from so many contradictory opinions? But if, at the same period, in the land of Judea, you had questioned that son of Jesse, that shepherd of Bethlehem, who called himself David, he would have spoken to you of God in the most simple and sublime language man has ever uttered; he would have pointed out to you that way which ancient wisdom was seeking in vain, and which we ourselves have entered upon thirty centuries after him. The Lord teacheth His way to the humble.

Has it not been so in every age? Have not the humble always been the witnesses of God upon earth? Were they not humble, those who for the first time came to worship the Saviour in the night of Bethlehem? Were they not humble, those who listened to the teaching of Jesus Christ whilst the great and the wise shunned or despised Him? Were they not humble, those who, in the day of His modest triumph at the gates of Jerusalem, first struck up those hallelujahs which henceforth will never cease, but will be re-echoed from world to world throughout all eternity? Were they not humble, those who first confessed Him whom we all confess today? Have not the meek always been the instruments God has used to conquer the strong? Where then is the page of the Gospel or of history in which we do not find a commentary of these words: "The meek shall He teach His way?"

In our day, human intelligence has acquired a haughty and unlimited confidence in itself; it has faith in its own powers, it believes that it will arrive at a solution of all problems, that it will surmount all obstacles. And, in fact, how many impossible paths has it not opened! It has traced, in the depths of the earth, the roads which lead to inexhaustible riches; it has cast

over our globe that iron network which is covering it more and more, and, outreaching the earth, it has followed, through the immensity of the skies, the paths of the stars, it has calculated most accurately their volume and their density. Truly, man is the king of nature. But amidst all those gigantic discoveries, has he found the way that leads to God? He thinks he might discover it by the power of his genius. We are continually being told that some new enthusiast has caught a glimpse of it, and our minds sometimes delight in following up these systems; but when, oppressed by doubt and suffering, terrified at our darkness and weary of our wanderings, we seek that way, to whom do we go? We go to the school of those meek ones of earth who heard the Saviour in Galilee; we ponder over their words, and they alone give us satisfaction and peace. Contrast with their few pages all your systems, the newest as well as the most ancient, and find, if you can, one which is capable of replacing the Gospel? Ah! when men speak of the insufficiency of Christianity, I ask where is the new way which will more surely or more directly lead to God; and I feel utterly unconcerned, for each system which crumbles is a proof of the insufficiency of human wisdom, and, at the same time, a further demonstration of the truth that “the meek will God teach His way.”

Shall men reproach us here with exalting ignorance, intellectual mediocrity, or with lowering reason? Far from us be such a thought. Do we not know that neither ignorance nor intellectual mediocrity give humility? On the contrary, we have often seen them produce pride. Let the intellect grow and its powers increase; let it widen the sphere of its free research, and we shall rejoice; what we ask of it is to acknowledge with simplicity what it ignores, and never to forget its dependence upon God. It is impossible not to observe once more how closely intelligence is allied with the moral condition in religious matters. In Saul, the persecutor of the Church, and in Paul, the apostle, the intellectual vigour is the same. How then are we to account for the vast distance which separates those two men? By the fact that the heart of Saul has been humbled. Therefore, point out to me a man who deeply feels both his dependence upon God and his natural misery, I will fear nothing for him, for, had his reason the eagle-flight of Bossuet, Newton, or Pascal, I feel that it will willingly submit to be taught of God.

That is the Divine plan, and God will not alter it today. Would you learn the way that leads to Him? Be humble. If you seek religious truth only as a critic or amateur, if you acknowledge it only to dissert upon it, to make of it a pedestal for your penetrating spirit, think not it will ever be given you. But if you seek it with the earnest desire to yield your heart and life to it, in the name of the living God I declare unto you that you will find it, for to seek it thus is to have already found it in part. We read that a great and pious preacher of the middle ages one day met a young man who had just

completed his studies, and who, to display his penetration of mind, began a subtle dissertation upon God. The old man listened for some time in silence, then, placing his hand on the youth's shoulder, said: "Lift thine eyes, friend, and look at the sun." The young man raised his eyes, but, blinded by that dazzling light, he was forced to bow his head. "Thou fool," said the aged man, "thou canst not gaze upon the visible sun, and thou pretendest to penetrate God who is the sun of souls!" He spoke true. Pride would see God face to face, and His splendour dazzles it. Humility bows before Him, and its path is flooded by His light. The Lord teacheth His way to the humble.

I have spoken of the doubts of the intellect. But they can never be the portion of the multitude, for there are but few who reason their unbelief. If I should ask of the great majority of men whether they know what the Bible calls the way of the Lord, they would answer that they have never seen it, and that it is impossible it should exist in the labyrinth of life. The spectacle of life and of the world, such as sin has made them, is the most frequent cause of unbelief. How believe in the way of the Lord when everything seems to be the effect of chance, when the just is chastened with the unjust, when death pitilessly strikes to the right and to the left, when prayers remain unanswered, when events cross each other in a bewildering disorder? This temptation besets the Christian especially when he is passing through trial. Then it is that God must teach him His way, and is it not evident that if he could clearly discern that Divine way, if he could see it shining in the midst of his darkness, if he could feel that he is advancing in it, and that each trial is an incentive to greater and more rapid progress, is it not evident, I ask, that he would derive immense consolation from this thought?

Now, that God may teach you this way through which He leads you, do you know what, perhaps, is lacking in you? Humility. Humility which accepts whatever God sends and which does not argue with Him. Oh, we sometimes imagine that revolt must always be haughty and threatening, but it is clever at disguising itself, it takes refuge in apparently broken hearts, it hides under a gloomy resignation, it lurks under many a mourning garment. There are hearts which refuse to be comforted of God and which will not forgive Him for having overthrown their plans, destroyed their happiness, broken their affections. Brethren, beware! Men will not confess that they are resisting God, but in reality they are braving and defying Him. And do you know what happens? The more they resist, the less they understand the purposes of God; the blinder they become, the deeper their darkness grows, the more inextricable the chaos of life appears. What then is required that the way of the Lord may be traced out in this labyrinth, and that the light of heaven may illumine it? For this men must humble themselves, fall on their knees and no longer ask to understand.

We speak of the benefits of affliction. Yes, when it is accepted with meekness of heart. Otherwise it may harden, and alas! harden for ever. But when it is accompanied with humility, it is indeed a blessed messenger. It leads us, it brings us back to God, it teaches us to say with David: "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." And when trial is accepted in this spirit, it is almost always followed by light. The more humble a Christian becomes, the more fully God enlightens him. He gets to understand those strange and singular dispensations by which God leads him. He learns to say, not theoretically, but from experience, that all things work together for good to them that love God. The more he advances, the brighter is the light that shines from heaven upon his way, and he feels that this beautiful promise is being realised for him: "The path of the just" (why should we not say of the humble?) "is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

It is, therefore, true that the Lord teacheth the meek His way. To them He reveals His truth, to them He gives comfort in the hour of trial; but that is not enough for us. The Christian is not satisfied with being enlightened and comforted by God. He wants more than this. He wishes to work for God, to be His witness, His representative upon earth. Well, to the man who is inflamed with this noble desire, to the man who asks God to show him the best means to be used for the advancement of His reign, the Divine Word again says: "The meek will He teach His way."

It is a marvellous fact that the God of Christianity has never selected the strong for His service, but that He has always chosen the humble, that it might appear that it was His power indeed which was made manifest in their weakness. Bring up before your memory's eye all those who have served His purposes, all those by whom He has instructed and saved men, and you will see that all have been trained in the school of humility. In none of them will you find that factitious grandeur which is the fruit of pride and enthusiasm, that studied attitude of the heroes of this world, who seek to dazzle us by their majesty. No; all the heroes of the Bible confess their agitations, their failings, their falls, they all tell us that it has pleased God to crush their strength. Here is Moses, whom the Bible calls the meekest among the sons of men, Moses, who trembles in presence of his mission; here is David, who goes down to the brook to gather stones for his sling in presence of an army in battle array, David, the humblest of all those whom God has ever invested with the responsibility of a crown; here is Peter, bearing everywhere with him the humiliating remembrance of his threefold denial; here is Paul, who is exposed to the meanest humiliations, and who continually mourns beneath the weight of his mysterious affliction. Here they are, such as God has prepared them for the conflict, armed with their weakness; and yet, to them the Lord has taught the way of success.

You then who are anxious to labour for the Lord, lay hold of this thought, for it alone will be capable of preserving you against inevitable discouragement. So long as you will rely upon your own strength and resources for success, God will destroy your confidence by repeated failures, and then you will, perhaps, be tempted to believe that He has forsaken you, while, on the contrary, He is training and preparing you to become a willing instrument in His hands. For the performance of some excellent work you had trusted on the wealth which was yours. He will show you one, in poverty, accomplishing with his limited resources works far greater than yours. You had trusted in your talents, in your eloquence, in the penetration of your mind; it seemed to you that to these noble gifts, employed in the service of God, nothing could resist. He will show you uncultured men, men of very commonplace capacities and talents, enlightening more minds, saving more souls, gathering in a richer harvest than you. You had trusted in the power and energy of your will; He will show you characters infinitely weaker than yours, men who would be incapable of conceiving any grand design, yet by their daily fidelity attaining results which are denied you, and, by all these successive trials, He will say to you, my brother: "Thou hadst thought that my purposes could not be worked out without thy aid, and thou didst not know that I have no need of thee." But when, by this mysterious education, He will have crushed, and well-nigh annihilated you, He will raise you up again in His mercy, and those gifts which He had bestowed on you, after having all been adorned with humility, will be employed by Him to His glory.

Before I conclude I will observe how opposed to the present current of thought are the truths I have brought before you. I have said that ancient wisdom has never known humility; that is one of the teachings of Christianity which has always been folly in its sight. In our day, in contemporary unbelief, I meet an exactly similar opinion. The watchword of our epoch is this: "Rely on thyself alone, believe in thyself alone." Whilst the boldest unbelief tells us that heaven is empty, and that there is no other god than man, the mass of those whose minds reach not to those extreme consequences, nevertheless proclaims, in practice, that the man who wishes to succeed must rely upon himself alone. What then will they think of Christian humility, of that strange doctrine which teaches man to sacrifice himself, to lower himself in his own eyes? They can only regard it as folly, if even they do not see in it an instrument of authority for evil, a means of maintaining man in a perpetual state of servitude and infancy.

Folly! Well, be it so. But men must know that this folly has been the source of all that is grandest and most lasting upon earth. It is right that this proud age, whose confidence is all in man, should remember that the great-

est moral victories the world has ever witnessed have been won by the meek, and that to these also the final triumph has been promised.

When, eighteen centuries ago, mankind had reached the lowest stage of abjection and misery, when servitude was the universal watchword, when the civilised world had fallen so low as to bow in adoration before the image of a crowned monster, who raised humanity, who saved it, by restoring to it the dignity of the soul, the moral independence from which was to spring modern liberty? Those philosophers who exalted man, those proud stoics who believed in nought but human will and energy? No; those meek and humble believers in the Gospel, who, while bowing their humbled heads before God, had learned to raise them in presence of universal thralldom and degradation. And, in the sixteenth century, when the whole of the Christian world bent beneath the yoke of Julius II. or Alexander VI., who delivered human conscience? Those sceptics and atheists, who then, as now, affirmed that heaven is empty and that man must depend upon himself alone for will and action? No; these mocked in private, but in public they bowed their heads low. Those who enfranchised the human soul then, were those humble Christians, who in their theology referred all to God, all to His grace, and after having humbled themselves before Him, learned to free themselves from the bondage of men, and to shake off all authority which was not Divine.

And here before our mind's eye passes that immortal scene of Worms which was as the dawn of the Reformation. Three centuries ago, at a diet held in Germany, a young emperor sat surrounded by all the splendour and glory of the realm; his were power and wealth, the homage of earth and the blessings of heaven. He held beneath his sceptre a great part of Europe, and almost the whole of the New World. The sun never set upon his states, and his flatterers beguiled him with dreams of universal dominion. When Charles V., intoxicated with his unparalleled greatness, saw a pale and haggard monk called Martin Luther enter the hall, we are told that he was unable to repress a motion of surprise and contempt. He knew not that, in this solemn day, a great struggle was about to begin, and that this unknown monk would be the victor; he knew not that, after the lapse of three centuries, the cause for which this monk was struggling would have on its side more than half of the Christian nations, while nought would be left of that earthly grandeur which dazzled even himself. Now, whence came this wondrous power which enabled Luther, alone before that assembly, alone before the whole of Europe, to affirm his faith unflinchingly, and to win that triumph to which we are indebted for our own enfranchisement? His adversaries have answered: "Monkish pride!" Ah! if ever he was proud, it was surely not in that eventful hour. No; he had gathered his strength in that long and fervent prayer which, on the eve of that memorable day, he had

uttered with tears, and in which he pronounced these simple and touching words: “Thou knowest, O my God, that I too would prefer my rest and peace. Who am I that I should resist so many great lords? but it is Thy cause, not mine.” Luther on his knees, Luther crushed by his solemn mission, Luther broken down before God, that is the explanation of his courage and triumph, for the Lord teacheth His way to the meek.

Let us then seek our strength where the Reformer found his; let us go to work, in meekness and self-abasement, and to Him who alone can give the victory, to Him from whom all things proceed, and to whom all things return, to Him be glory for ever and for ever. Amen.