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THE  
CONFESSION OF A SINNER,  
TRANSLATED  
FROM THE SPANISH OF  
DR. CONSTANTINO PONCE DE LA FUENTE,  
A REFORMER OF THE XVI CENTURY.

BY  
JOHN T. BETTS.

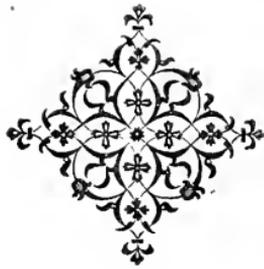
WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH  
BY  
BENJAMIN B. WIFFEN.



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THE CONFESSION OF A SINNER,  
BY DR. CONSTANTINO PONCE DE LA FUENTE,  
A SPANISH REFORMER OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY

JOHN T. BETTS.





## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

**I**T was through association with my lamented friend, Benjamin Barron Wiffen, that I was led to interest myself in the lives and works of the ancient Spanish Reformers, and I had translated Juan de Valdés' "CX Divine Considerations" before I visited Spain in 1864. It was in conjunction with Benjamin Wiffen that I published that work, for he wrote the notice of Valdés' life and writings, prefixed to it, before I left England, and he corrected the press of the whole whilst I was in Spain.

Much as I needed a greater knowledge of the language, literature, people, and associations





THE CONFESSION OF A SINNER  
UNTO JESUS CHRIST,

THE REDEEMER AND JUDGE OF MANKIND,

*Which will serve to exhort any other sinner unto true repentance, and to instruct him, by varied considerations, in self-knowledge, in his duty to God, and of the mode in which he has to invoke divine mercy, ever following the illumination and precepts given us in the Holy Scriptures with reference to every one of these things.*

**A**PPEAR before the tribunal of Thy mercy, Thou only begotten Son of God, delivered by the Eternal Father, to be the ransom and redemption,—to be the sacrifice and Judge of mankind.

I come, O Lord, that Thou shouldest hear me tell, not of my righteousness, but of my sins; not of my good deeds, but of my faults, and of the heinous offences which I have committed, not only against mankind, but against the majesty, the goodness, and the mercy of Thy Father.

On the one hand, dragged and constrained by the pains and torments of hell, inwardly suggested by my misdeeds, whilst, on the other hand, called by Thy mercy, to know, although too late, what Thou hast been to me, and what I have been to Thee.

I come accused by my own conscience, condemned by it, constrained by the torments of self-knowledge, to tell and to confess before men, before angels, in the presence of earth and in the presence of heaven, before the tribunal of Thy Majesty and of divine justice, that I justly deserve to be condemned to perpetual banishment from the joys of heaven, and to perpetual misery in slavish association with Satan.

My Redeemer and my Lord, my suit were ended, were Thy judgment one but to sentence

and to condemn sinners. Woe were me! if angels had to judge me, if I had to judge myself my lot were wretched and disastrous; if in confessing my transgressions and shortcomings my creditor had at once proceeded to execution; if, upon the knowledge of my guilt, no respite had been granted me; if, when unable to reply, my adversary's accusation had then been pronounced as just; if, when unable to pay, I had then been cast into prison, at my enemy's discretion. It has pleased Thee, that this should be earthly justice, in order that we should by it be exposed to lose only earthly things.

But, as by the other, O Lord, we risked to lose heaven, and we risked to lose Thee; to meet this state of things Thy goodness ordained new laws of justice, drawn from the greatness of Thy mercy, in which Thy ways should be as distinct from those of the world, as is heaven from earth.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, and may they ever praise Thee, who learn to know Thee, that such is Thy judgment seat; that Thou camest into this world not to condemn sinners, but to

save them; that being just, Thou art the Judge and Advocate of the guilty, and the adversary of his accuser; that Thou didst undergo such trials, and wert tempted in such various ways, that we might have greater pledges of Thy mercy; that Thou art holiness for the sinner, righteousness for the guilty, payment and satisfaction for the poverty-stricken one, wisdom for the deceived one, and the respondent for him that knew not how to reply.

That I know this of Thee, my Redeemer, draws me to Thee. This, my knowing Thee to be such, has prevailed more with me than that knowledge of myself which would have led me not to dare to present myself before Thee.

Where, Lord, shall I begin to enumerate my sins; what course shall I follow, that the miseries of my life may be the better set forth? Well do I see, O my Redeemer, that Thou knowest my career thoroughly, but I had to know myself in order the better to know Thee. Well I know that the sum of my sins is innumerable, for they exceed in number the hairs

of my head, or that of the sand on the sea-shore. But at least I would dwell awhile upon some of my wretched doings, in order that just as I at one time made a sport of my sins, so now my eyes and heart may weep when contemplating the mode in which I squandered away in dissipation the blessings of Thy providence.

Give me, O Lord, eyes that I may see myself, and strength that I may hold up under self-scrutiny. For my sins are so numerous and so aggravated that I myself am ashamed to recognise them as mine, and am tempted to relieve myself by another sin, that of disowning and denying myself, as though I could discover another self less guilty. But with all this, Lord, I see Thy mercy is such, that whilst I close my eyes when confronted by my sins, Thou keep'st Thine open and fixed upon them all; for it is clear, O Redeemer of the World, that Thou lookest upon wounds in order to heal them, since however hideous they may be, they do not disgust Thee, and Thou condescendest to infuse from Thy hands cleansing into them. Guide me, O my Lord, and draw me to Thy-

self, for alone I shall not attain to know myself, Thy presence shall give me strength to bear up under self-scrutiny. Hold me, that I flee not from myself. Sustain me, that I yield not to despair. Impose silence upon Satan, until Thou answer for me.

Time was, when I, Lord, had no existence ; by Thy fiat spoken into being, what time Thou mouldedst me in my mother's womb, there Thou didst invest me with Thine image and likeness, and didst endue me with capacity to enjoy Thy blessings. There was nothing so minute, or so imperfect in my frame, but that it was directed by Thy wisdom and by Thy handiwork, until brought to perfection. It was no small marvel, when, aided by Thy hand, I entered upon life's scene, where I was entertained by and delighted with the bounties of Thy providence.

I found myself naked, and Thou clothedst me ; powerless, and Thou sustainedst me ; and in every way Thou hast given me to understand (know) that Thy mercy was the only thing upon which from my birth I might rely, and that this never would fail me.

Before that I was conscious of my ruin, I was lost; I contracted guilt in my mother's womb, and this was incident to my being born of Adam's race. My ancestral inheritance is nakedness and sin. In every way the arms of Thy mercy embraced me; Thou hast succoured me, Lord, in my poverty, and hast delivered me from my peculiar ills. Thou hast given me riches and beauty, and hast removed my deformity of soul; Thou hast cleansed me with water filtered to brightness by the purification of Thy blood.

Thou hast conferred upon me the graces I most needed, which most made me Thine, which most delivered me from my adversary, which most intimidated him, and which were the surest pledges of my bliss. Looking upon myself in the light in which I now do, I should, were it not for my knowledge of Thy wisdom and for the trust and confidence I have in Thee, say: O, that they had but borne me thence to the grave. For if on the one hand it might be said that existence was to me a blessing, yet, on the other, I should, both as to my faults and sins, be as one who had never existed!

But I would not sit in judgment upon Thy glory, since I have so little striven to promote it, nor upon Thy will, since it is righteousness itself. Thou, Lord, hast deigned to take me into Thy service; but I remained in it only so long as I was unable to desist therefrom. Thy gifts were, when imparted to me, perfect; but they were distorted and perverted as soon as I had the ability to do so. My innocence ceased when my eyes opened to malice.

I may say, that whilst I slept I was Thine; but that when I awoke, to recognise Thee, O Lord, I would not see Thee. When most called upon to follow Thee, then it was that I fled most hurriedly from Thee. Ruin charmed me, I rushed to perdition, surrendering Thy blessings to be squandered and dissipated as though I impersonated ruin, and ruin impersonated me. I leagued with all Thy enemies, as though Thy blessings were conferred upon me on the condition of reiterated apostacy from Thee. I shut my eyes, I closed my ears, and I obstructed my senses, to the perception that I was in Thy temple; that the heaven that lighted me was Thine, and Thine the earth by

which I lived ; that, disavowing and acting treacherously to Thy goodness, I stole all that I enjoyed, shamelessly repudiating Thy mercy and insolently defying Thy justice. And thus I slept as securely as though I had been intent upon Thy service, and had applied everything to the end for which Thou hadst given them me.

*First Commandment.*

[“ THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BUT ME.”]

Being drawn by such Thy benefits, to love Thee with all my heart, to have my will absorbed in Thy service, and to have all my faculties quickened in the practice of those works wherein Thou willest that they be characterised who are made in Thy likeness, I turned a deaf ear to them all. I opened the door of my heart to Thine enemies and mine ; the temple consecrated to Thy abode was, with my consent, made to harbour those who insulted and outraged Thy Majesty. Where I ought to have received blessing from Thy hand, I received a curse and the darkness of Satan.

Such, Lord, were the quarters and such the reception given to Thy grace by my sins. Thus was the image, which Thou didst stamp upon me, guarded by me. It was as though I were prepared to spend my life, or indeed a thousand lives, in so disguising myself, that when Thou, Lord, soughtest me, Thou shouldest not know me. Thou alone having created me, Thou alone having redeemed me, Thou alone having sought me in my miseries, in order to deliver me from them ; solely dependent upon Thy goodness, eternity, and infinity, of such importance to me, I nevertheless have made my heart as many idols as were the interests of my iniquities.

*Spiritual Idolatry.*

Wert Thou, O my God, to ask me who I am, I could not reply that I am an Israelite, of the stock of Abraham, chosen to be Thine. O Lord, my ancestors were Canaanites, my father was an Amorite, my mother a Hittite. I am of those who have defaced Thy works ; of those who have greatly provoked Thy wrath ; of those who forgetful of Thy blessings, have

sought by them to exalt themselves ; without loving Thy grace, or fearing Thy wrath ; of those who have adored their own pleasures, pride, and shame ; of those who have followed devils, and have sold their souls to them, and have prayed to them to attain their desires. I know no other men to whom I may be compared, save such as these whom Thou hast denounced, and whose works I know I have followed ; for the obedience and reverence which are due to Thee alone, I have paid to my appetites, to my sinful lusts, and to their favoured objects. To other idols, the creations of my sins and of my lusts, and the objects of their reverence, my heart truly paid devotion ; to Thee, who alone art the true God, and who alone art my God, my devotion was a falsehood and a lie. I did indeed invoke them, whilst my invocation of Thee was but mockery. On them my hope was fixed, but I distrusted Thee. I called on Thee, but I fled from Thee. I said, Thou wert my God, and I lied. I asked pardon for my treasons perpetrated against Thee. I asked Thee to show grace, disbelieving Thou wert gracious. So that I invoked Thee to such ends and aims, as

were suggested by the shamelessness and blasphemy of my heart, which would fain have Thee to be like myself.

[It is needful for the reader to consider that Dr. Constantino used the Decalogue authorised by his Church, and not as it stands in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, in which the commandment known as the *second*, "Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image," &c., is omitted, and our *third*, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," is substituted as the second, and thus successively. The mode in which the number of the commandments is still made up is by dividing the *tenth* commandment into two, thus:—

"9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.

"10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods."]

*Second Commandment.*

["THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN; FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTY THAT TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN."]

My inmost soul being such, my mode of

speech could not be better. As in my heart I called Thee Lord, so did I likewise with my mouth. In the one I was false to Thee; in the other both to Thee and to man. I took advantage of [I bore] Thy Name to appear to be Thine, and to promote my own interests. Habit led me to take Thy Name upon my lips, whilst my heart was so far from Thee. Destitute of true faith I have invoked Thee; without true hope I asked Thy aid; as a light thing and on light occasions I have taken Thy sacred Name in vain; my prayers have been fruitless; Thee have I invoked and the winds have borne away my sacrifice, for I kept neither faith nor word with Thee, though expecting Thee to keep word with me. Thy Holy Name being the memorial which I had to bear, owning whom Thou wert, whom it was my duty to recollect, wherever I might hear it; since it was my duty to recollect and teach others the fear and reverence which all owe Thee, I took Thy Name in vain, insulting Thy Majesty and Greatness by irreverence, thereby giving occasion to many others to do the same as I did, as though my sins fell short of my heart's desire.

*Third Commandment.*

[“REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY. SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOUR, AND DO ALL THY WORK ; BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS THE SABBATH OF THE LORD THY GOD ; IN IT THOU SHALT NOT DO ANY WORK, THOU, NOR THY SON, NOR THY DAUGHTER, THY MANSERVANT, NOR THY MAIDSERVANT, NOR THY CATTLE, NOR THY STRANGER THAT IS WITHIN THY GATES : FOR IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IN THEM IS, AND RESTED THE SEVENTH DAY ; WHEREFORE THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY, AND HALLOWED IT.”]

Thou hast appointed me days, in which I should show myself to be Thine ; that at such seasons I should bear my testimony to the service which I was wont to pay Thee ; in which I might learn Thy Commandments, and Thy righteous precepts ; in which I should ponder in my heart the greatness of Thy power, of Thy goodness, and of Thy mercy ; the way in which I was lost, and that which Thou hast revealed for my recovery, in descending from heaven to die that I might live ; to suffer per-

secution and worldly dishonour, in order that I might be honoured of Thy Father.

In a thousand ways hast Thou declared to me that Thou hast neither made nor enriched me for my own sake only, but that I shall distribute Thy superabundant gifts to all around me. That taught by Thee, I should teach others ; that called, I should call them ; should warn them by my words ; should stimulate them by my example ; that I should run after and highly prize the society of Thy people, and pride myself upon being one of them. Thy mercy has not left me without remedy in any respect, but it has left me without excuse in all. Thou hast provided me with all that is needed in this short and miserable life, in order so to pass it that the exercise which the body needs should not disturb the enjoyments of the soul ; that I might find seasons in which, forgetting everything else, I should only recollect Thee ; in order that I might have ample leisure to know Thee, and ample time, O Lord, to invoke Thee ; that I might inwardly feel the day to be holy, and experience the repose of Thy works ; to lay up stores of faith, love, hope,

and charity, wherewith to sustain and defend myself in my perils and labours; that in the crosses of this most weary life I might solace and rejoice myself in Thee. What shall I say, Lord, here? What account shall I give of this my duty? Thou knowest my grave faults and shortcomings, the which I cannot know in their aggravation and number.

The holy days which ought to have been dedicated only to Thy Name and service, have been dedicated to my vanity. The sacred days have been devoted to the gratification of my folly, which ought to have been consecrated to Thy worship and to the knowledge of Thee. Instead of acquiring light, I increased in darkness; instead of calling upon Thee, I stood aloof from Thee; instead of inviting others, I obstructed their path both by my words and by my works. I avoided Thy people, and the holy day was spent by me with Thine enemies. And the instruction I derived from Thy schooling in providence was as though it had been calculated to teach me to abhor Thee. I, as Thy enemy, laid a cross, wrought by my sins, upon Thy shoulders, on

the very day upon which Thou hadst invited me to feast with Thee.

*Fourth Commandment.*

[“HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER; THAT THY DAYS MAY BE LONG UPON THE LAND WHICH THE LORD THY GOD GIVETH THEE.”]

Of him, who disowned and disparaged Thee, O Lord, who art infinitely more worthy of esteem and art greater than every other, it will readily be judged, that he would do the same to his parents, whom Thou hast put in Thy place.

Thou, who jointly with Thy Father, hast for my sake formed both earth and heaven; who hast spoken me into existence by a word, and hast brought me forth into the light; who hast been my Father by creation; my sacrifice, by redemption; who hast begotten me again at the cost of Thy blood; who art a light to guide me, an advocate to answer for me; whose benefits and mercies, in order to free me from perdition, can neither be reckoned up nor exaggerated. Thou hast been so disowned and disavowed by my heart, so disrespectfully

spoken of by my lips, and so irreverently treated by me in my actions, how should it have been otherwise with my parents, who were but ministers to furnish me a body and to bring me forth in this short life? From what parents would not he run away, who fled so far from Thee? From whose jurisdiction would he not escape, who sought to escape from Thine? Whom would he not contemn who contemned Thee? What would he fear, who did not fear Thy judgment? What benefits would excite his gratitude, who did not feel thankful for Thine? By what should he be moved to reverence others, who, with such benefits, was never moved to reverence Thee?

I have lived as though I had been my own Creator; as though I had never received any favours from others, without law and without superior; proud and ungrateful to all; self-constituted judge of those by whom I had to be judged. Needing some one to show me favour, who should rule and govern me, who should bridle and chastise my great licentiousness; I sought to emancipate myself from all law.

It has been my desire that no one should obstruct the indulgence of my appetites; I have abhorred all righteous rule, and I have sought to render my will absolute in everything.

*Fifth Commandment.*

[“THOU SHALT NOT KILL.”]

As I sought that my perverse and naturally treacherous heart should stand in fear of no one, out of respect to whom it should feel shame, I acquiesced in its transgression of all just and reasonable bounds, in contempt and abhorrence of my neighbours, disregarding that they were the work of Thy hands as was I myself; created for the same end, redeemed by Thy blood, preserved by Thy mercy, endowed and privileged by Thy great favours; who rendered Thee service and were useful to society; I vilified them and I disparaged them; I avenged myself upon them for trifles that did not concur with my silly conceits. Not bearing in mind how much Thou didst pardon and forbear in them, nor how much Thou didst forgive and forbear in myself. The wrongs

I wrought against others were weighed as light by me, whilst a straw that to my mind moved awry was intolerable. So great is the tyranny that has entered into this most wretched and most miserable heart.

*Sixth Commandment.*

[“THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.”]

Embodying in Thyself the perfections upon which my soul and thoughts should revolve, whilst there is that order in the world, that harmony amongst Thy creatures, which reveal Thee to so great an extent, and with such certainty, I abandoned my eyes to revel in vain sensual pleasures ; I walked with the greatest heedlessness, leaving my heart's avenues open. Unconscious, I never reflected that my passion made that hideous which Thou createdst beautiful, that my thoughts defiled that which Thou hadst created to be pure. I burnt myself, without feeling it, I longed for that, which it was my duty to flee ; I drank mortal poisons wrapped up and disguised in false honey, and knew that they were so when I drank them. I lost myself in licentiousness, and when I

sought recovery, I disregarded the nature of my medicines ; the cure having to be effected by blisters, I tried emollients. I continued to walk in the way wherein I had lost myself, the prospect of ruin gave me no concern ; I threatened my enemies, and their persecution never roused me to effort. That I should have fallen into such varied follies was but reasonable, seeing that I had departed from Thee so widely and so variously. Thou didst will that I should be wholly clean, I sought to be wholly filthy ; I thought to be clean, without avoiding filth, my madness did not stop here, for it sought to free itself from all prohibitory restraint and it fain would act the tyrant in everything.

*Seventh Commandment.*

[“THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.”]

Thou, O Lord, so just and so bountiful, hast distributed the world and all its good things amongst men, as having no need of such riches Thyself, for that Thy Power and Wisdom are boundless to multiply them at Thy will. I felt dissatisfied with the share of them assigned me.

I who was such a person, that had I been dealt with according to my works, I should have retained in my hands nothing of all that Thou hast created. Had it been looked to how I had employed that which Thou hast given me, I was in everything a thief and a spendthrift. Relation being had to the limits and to the brevity of this miserable life, the least portion was sufficient for me, whilst all beyond was but a deposit committed to my charge for the relief of the necessities of others. Labour and exile were entailed upon me by my sins, but the labour of my hands sufficiently supplied my needs, and was in itself an exceedingly great boon. From Thy kindness, Thy munificence and Thy wisdom, I ought to have understood that Thou didst give me what was suitable for me, and that whatever was derived from other sources could never prosper. But inflated in my imagination, I desired all that the world possessed, and in my cravings clutched at it. I kept my hands from stealing other men's property and dignities, but it never occurred to me that I left the door open to my pride which would have held a thousand worlds but

as insignificant. I consented to walk blindfold, and did walk so, heedlessly, in order that my eyes should not see who I was, and that the most retired corner of the earth was more than was required for my habitation; as likewise, with what equity Thou hadst supplied others, and how well they were entitled to what they possessed. I knew not how to distinguish between that which is obtained through Thy will, and that which is so, through worldly craft; I heartily assented to the indulgence of all my vanities and blindness. I was satisfied to do that which was just, as between man and man, without reflecting and without seeing that Thou knewest me to be a thief.

*Eighth Commandment.*

[“THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST  
THY NEIGHBOUR.”]

I not only exalted and aggrandised self in one class of interests, but my folly found opportunity to employ all that the world offers of both good and bad. Like a cheat and a liar, I dealt with false measures. For self, I grasped after much; to others, I gave

but little. It was my practice to lie, both with reference to my own feelings, and to the virtues of others. It being my duty to endeavour to conceal my neighbour's disgrace and to prevent its being discovered, I did nothing whereby to remedy the discovery when made. I was unjustly and excessively lenient to my own failings, and unjustly and excessively severe to the failings of others. I tried to heap up fortune for myself, thinking, like a vain man, that loss incurred by others was profit to me. My own illusions gained with me greater credit than did truth from the lips of others.

*Ninth and Tenth Commandments (sic.)*

[“THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE, THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE, NOR HIS MANSERVANT, NOR HIS MAIDSERVANT, NOR HIS OX, NOR HIS ASS, NOR ANYTHING THAT IS THY NEIGHBOUR'S.”]

The objects, which Thy Righteousness placed in the hands of others, and bestowed upon those who held them to be *their* own, how frequently did the evil principle of my heart contemplate these objects as *its* own! How often did it,

with malignant heedlessness, allow itself to dream that Thy Providence had erred, since it had placed in other hands that which seemed desirable for myself, and had not constituted me the sole proprietor of every thing. I found myself alert to all that was wrong, and torpid as to all that was right. I never found in myself more than a feeble germ of principle in reference to that which is good, and consequently I flagged in its performance. Besides, right suggestions, because they emanated from Thee, were ever but ill entertained by me. I have been stubborn in the wrong, and when I did not carry it out, I yielded to and trifled with it, in order that my raving fancies might dally with it. Whilst my happiness depended upon nothing else but upon the observance of Laws and Commandments, dictated by Thy Goodness and Wisdom, which should serve as a lamp to my feet and a light to my path, and wherein I might feel assured that I did render Thee service; I, moved by pride, sought to be exempted from them all; not choosing to consider, that what I took for liberty was the slavery and captivity of ignorance and a wretchedness imposed on me by Satan.

## ARTICLES OF FAITH. (CREED.)

I made my boast of the Faith and of the doctrine preached by Thee when upon earth : and I never inwardly examined myself to ascertain what difference there was between that which I outwardly heard and confessed with my lips, and that which I ought to inwardly feel in my heart.

I affirmed that Thy Eternal Father, in conjunction with Thee and the Holy Spirit, created heaven and earth : manifesting by this so stupendous work, that Thy power is infinite, and calling upon men to recognize it to be so ; that Thy mercy is boundless ; Thy goodness and Thy Beauty transcending wish and thought ; Thy Wisdom equal to Thy Power ; Thy Providence ever watchful and never failing ; Thy protecting Power as sure and as certain, as enduring and as firm, as the very earth, the very heaven itself, which Thou framedst for this purpose.

All this was evident to me, and so it needed to be, in order to convince me, and to bring me to obedience to Thy Word, and to reliance upon

Thy Promises. But lost fool that I was, I harboured treason in my soul without being aware of it!

I doubted whether Thou wouldst keep faith with me; and I set about to discover by my wits, remedy and security with reference to that concerning which I distrusted Thee. I thought by hunting far and near to find that which I felt disinclined to seek in Thee alone. I did not look upon myself as rich and privileged in the treasures which I held deposited with Thee; my satisfaction was awakened by the driblet of which I thought to rob Thee, my heart being puffed up therewith, not knowing that it was Thine and that my reserves in Thee, to be had for the asking, were much greater. Thy greatness persuaded me to ask and Thy mighty power terrified me, if I refused to do so: but I could never be brought to understand how powerful was Thy goodness to bless me and Thy wrath to chastise me.

Who, Lord, could adequately bewail the repose, the tranquillity, and the security which I lost, because I did not commit myself to Thy hands; because I did not follow in the steps

traced by Thy wisdom ; because I did not bear myself as the son of a Father so rich and so powerful ; and above all, in having exchanged peace of mind for such great disquietude of heart ! for the heart was left to vagabondise in the misery of this wretched life ; seeking security when there was none ; favour of enemies ; assurance, where all is false ; truth, where there is nothing but deceit ; liberty, where all is in subjection and captivity.

Being Creator and Upholder of the world, with Thy Father, in the unity of one essence, and of one God ; knowing how abused by me Thy first gift, committed to my hands, had been, Thou, Lord, hast assumed a new office, in relation to myself, that of being my Saviour and my King ; to deliver me from all the dangers and disasters to which I had exposed myself, and to be ever henceforth my Captain and my Defender, in order that I might not relapse into them. I, like a simpleton, ignoring my own sins and ignoring Thy mercy, have neither looked upon myself as lost in the fall, nor have I acknowledged Thy gracious favours, I have neither gained experience from my first fall,

nor have I taken precautions against future falls.

I invoked Thee by name as my Saviour, and yet in ruin itself I kept my hands folded. I called Thee my King and my Defender, whilst at that very time scorning Thy laws, transgressing Thy ordinances, and disowning Thy banner. So befooled was I by the deceitfulness of sin, that whilst I confessed that Thou wert my King, Thou alone my Saviour, why, my very conscience might admonish me that my confession was false; but I tranquillised my fears with a thousand vain reliances very distinct from, and very alien to, the character which Thou hadst given me of Thyself, and from what Thou art.

The pride of man having been such that he sought to be like to God, Thou didst so commiserate his fall, that Thou didst not only humble Thyself to be like man, but truly to become man; not merely man, but the most abject of men; taking upon Thee the form of a servant, in order to give me liberty. In order that by means of Thy clemency and wisdom man might obtain much more than he, in pride

and ignorance, had striven for without being able to attain it; whilst he, by that very act, delivered himself up into the hands of the devil, that he should be his master, whilst he should remain his captive; banished from Thy presence, sentenced by Thy wrath, the slave of his deceiver, man then took counsel of the devil how he should disobey and dishonour Thy Father's majesty and justice. Thou hast brought it to pass that that which man knew not how to accomplish has been realised; for we may truthfully say that man is indeed God, since Thou art indeed man; that all men have now faculty and license to be like God, since they are Thy brethren by lineal descent, and Thy Father calls upon them, and Thou callest upon them, to walk in Thy steps: that they should be like Thee, that they should imitate Thy obedience, and Thy righteousness, and Thy goodness; so that it may truly be said, They are the Sons of God and born of God. Wretched is the man who seeks to attain his happiness from other hands since what Thy mercy gives him is much more than his pride ever aspired to.

How I have appreciated these favours, what grateful sense I have had of them, Lord, *Thou* knowest well ; would to God that *I* had known ! for in fleeing from self I had come to Thee. For above and beyond all my wickedness and misery, what I realize and feel as to the enormity of my sins, is the very least that I have of them.

Thou, Lord, didst, ages ago, make Thyself man, for my sake, humbling Thyself so greatly to raise me ! Whilst I ever proudly aiming to be like God,—not in the way in which Thou hast taught me, but in that very same in which I lost myself,—by obeying Thy enemy, and by putting myself forward as Thy rival ; for what other was that which my pride of heart undertook but this, when I sought to rule myself by my own knowledge ; to rehabilitate myself by my own devices, and to indulge and gratify my inward perverseness and disobedience to Thee.

To others I was but a worm, for all knew my insignificance and vileness ; to myself alone, to my thoughts and to my judgment, I worshipped self as my God ; to such an extent

had I forgotten what Thou wert to me, and the degree to which Thou hadst humbled Thyself for my sake.

Thou hast descended to become man, and a new man, of the same lineage as Adam, but without Adam's sin ; for so it comported with Thy greatness, and so it comported with our justification. Thou hast taken humanity, and hast been born of a Virgin Mother, in order that Thou mightest favour us in every thing, and mightest be in every thing such a man as reason required that Thou shouldest be, who being man wast God. Thou hast called us to be new men, in order that by the privilege and favour which Thy association gave us, we should eradicate our Fathers' original sin, and should take a new origin with a new inheritance in Thee ; that as we had borne the image of the old man, and of the guilty one, we should afterwards bear and represent that of the new and of the innocent one. I, sympathising with my old nature, and satisfied with my old sins, as though they had made me happy, was content that Thou shouldest be innocent, and that I should continue to be guilty, without consider-

ing that I not only lost myself and became thereby the sufferer, but that I greatly dishonoured Thy goodness, in having come to seek me, by rejecting it and neglecting it.

The whole earth has been filled by Thy Spirit, and by the new nature which Thou hast brought into the world; very many have left slavery and the old garb to clothe themselves with the new righteousness, which Thou hast given to man. I remained in my evil course hardened, and became daily worse, more forgetful of Thee, and of what I might have been, had I but responded to the voice with which Thou hadst called me, and to the favours which Thou hadst shown me.

In order that the Devil should have no claim against me, nor slander against my righteousness, in order that the wrong and irreverence perpetrated against Thy Father's Majesty and His law might be wholly pardoned; in order that I might have greater pledges of what Thou hadst done for me, and of what Thou art to me; in order that weight of obligation might lead me, O Lord, to serve Thee; might give wings to my soul to seek Thee:

Thou hast been pleased to die for me, an infamous and cruel death, delivered up to unjust judges to be tortured and dishonoured, in the sight of the world ; all in discharge of my obligation : all to make it to be understood, how much Thou hadst my restoration at heart, by the price which it cost Thee, and which Thou didst so willingly offer for it. The Devil had no longer any ground or just pretension to accuse me ; nor the world to captivate me ; nor the flesh to enslave me ; for Thou hast conquered every thing ; Thou, in order that I might find them vanquished. The sacrifice of Thy blood made me free ; Thy Spirit and Thy grace dwelt in me, in order that the treason, which cleaved to me, through the remains of my old sins, might be unable to deceive and master me ; provided that I did not desire to deceive myself, and to allow myself to be overpowered.

My enemies having been slain by Thy death, I brought them to life again myself, that they might kill me once more. I furnished them with the sword and weapons, which Thou hadst already taken from them ; proving in every possible way that perdition was preferred by me to

the redemption which Thou hadst wrought out for me.

Forgetful of the injuries and insults borne by Thee for my sake, of the treatment which Thou didst receive at the hands of the world, of the injustice done Thee by it, of my poverty when Thou soughtest me, of the patience with which Thou didst bear it, of the clemency with which Thou didst pardon Thine enemies ; I wished so to sever myself from Thee that I might wrong every other, whilst none should injure me ; that in the denial of Thy truth, my falsehood should prevail and should be honoured ; and that my guilt should in everything be more favoured by the world, than were Thy holiness, Thy goodness, and Thy innocency.

Thou Lord didst rise again from the dead for Thy glory and for mine. Thy power has raised again Thy honour and Thy justice, and together with Thyself, those blessings have risen again, which Thou hadst brought with Thine own hands for me.

Enchanted with my profound sleep, I preferred death rather than resurrection with Thee ; to remain here, amid my enemies, rather

than to appear in Thy triumph before Thy Father.

Seated at Thy Father's right hand, a position to which Thou art entitled by Thine obedience and by the services Thou hast rendered Him, there Thou dost not forget me, there Thou art my Intercessor and Advocate to plead for me, and carest as much for me as Thou didst when on the Cross Thou didst die for my redemption. To this perception blind, to this faithfulness deaf and stupid, for these Thy favours ungrateful, I never really ceased to do evil, nor did I ever really begin to do right; I never resolved to keep my eyes fixed upon this hope, nor upon my obligation to serve Thee and to die for Thee, above all being so well assured of the recompense which Thou givest all those who seek to be Thine.

I associated myself with Thy Church; I assumed Thy name, I usurped Thy gifts as if I were truly Thine, ignoring that the body of which Thou art the head, and which has been sanctified by Thy blood, does not admit such persons as myself to its real benefits, and that by how much the more I deceived it, by so much

the more did I deceive myself. So thoroughly hardened was I, that I neither acknowledged my obligation for benefits, nor was I terrified by the chastisements and threats with which Thy justice corrects us. True fear of Thy justice never entered my heart, because I would not fathom the depths of my guilt.

Had I, Lord, but known how little need Thou hadst of my endowments ; how little the dignity of Thy household was affected by the presence or absence in it of a cipher like myself ; had I on the other hand considered my daring offences against Thy Majesty, how prejudicial I was to Thy people ; and how obstructive to the glory which they rendered Thee, I might have feared Thy judgment and have placed some limit to my sins. But I was as blind to the one as to the other. Self ignorance prevented me from knowing Thee. It was from my not knowing how to appreciate the greatness of Thy mercy that arose my inability to appreciate that of Thy judgment and of Thy justice. Hence proceeded my folly and my ruin. For when Thou soughtest me in the gracious dispensations of Thy provi-

dence, I but swelled with greater pride, and considered still less from what hand they proceeded. When Thou calledst me by chastisements, then, like a bad rebellious servant, I became still more hardened.

With such great intellectual darkness, with such great ignorance of Thee and of myself, with such great forgetfulness of Thy mercies, and such contempt for Thy punishments, my repentances could not but be very hollow; gilded with false gold; got up to be carried away by the first wind, and by the first exposure to temptation, whether suggested by the devil or my heart's lusts. Had I built upon Thee, who art a solid rock; upon the knowledge, of whom Thou art, of Thy mercy and of Thy justice, all the tempests of the world would not have been able to carry me away, for Thou wouldest have defended me. But as I built upon the sand, a handsome edifice in appearance, but without foundation, my fall was certain; for it was certain that I should be assailed. I gained no experience from my repeated falls, nor was I put more on my guard to lay better foundation for my amendment and my repent-

ance. Blessed be Thou, O Lord, and blessed be the Father who sent Thee; who hast prevented the accomplishment of my ruin, by seeking me on all the numerous and devious paths by which I, a silly sheep, have erred and wandered from Thy fold. Since Thou hast been so long suffering with me, it is clear that Thou soughtest me. Since my enemy has not carried me off, though he has seen me so frequently in his toils, it is certain that Thou Lord didst bind his hands. He already had his prey, and I was but respited. Thou art He that hast watched over me that I should not lose myself.

Here I come to Thy judgment seat, and until Thou speak to my heart, and tell it, that Thou art its Saviour and Redeemer, I shall never be able to divest myself of the dreadful fears which proceed from my consciousness of guilt. My efforts are vain; the greatness of the peril has brought the hollowness of my hopes to light; the conviction that my sins are both numerous and aggravated, necessarily leads me to fear the rigour of Thy judgment: my follies are convicted; the shortness of my life inspires my soul with great dread, because it knows

how lavishly the years have been spent, during which Thou didst bear with me that I should acknowledge and love Thee. The greater number of them, how have they passed away like smoke! Woe is me, if I do not turn to profit the few that yet remain to me.

On the one hand, I look upon Thy goodness, and on the other, upon my sins. I learn from Thy word how greatly Thou hatest iniquity. I know, by experience, the punishment inflicted by Thy justice upon the world in token of the abhorrence in which Thou holdest sin. I contemplate hell, a dungeon prepared for the devil, and for those who imitate his deeds. As I recognise myself to be one of them, there is no peace to my flesh, nor light to my eyes, for I hourly expect death to bear me away to Thy tribunal. Notwithstanding all this so powerful is Thy mercy that it draws me to Thee. For although the demonstrations of Thy wrath against the wickedness of sin have been great, yet the demonstrations of Thy clemency to liberate men from guilt have been much greater. For Thee to chastise the world because of its offences against Thee, needs but Thy fiat; but

to save it from ruin cost Thee, O Lord, Thy blood shed upon the cross by the very hands of those for whom Thou didst offer it and shed it. To show the rigour of Thy justice Thou wroughtest works both mighty and Godlike; to show the greatness of Thy mercy, Thou madest Thyself man; Thou tookest our weakness upon Thee; Thou didst suffer both death and dishonour to give us pledges of our pardon.

Since it is Thy will, O Lord, that I be not lost, though my ruin be self-wrought, I come to Thee; I come like the prodigal son, to seek the hospitality of Thy house, having learned by bitter experience in losses and injuries, that all those who moved me to leave Thy service are my enemies. How much soever consciousness of guilt accuses me, whatever evil I may know of myself, however much in fear I may stand of Thy judgment, I cannot cease to cherish hope that Thou purposest to pardon me; that Thou purposest to manifest Thyself graciously unto me, so that I may never again depart from Thee. Hast Thou, O Lord, not said and sworn that Thou wilt not the death of a

sinner? and that Thou hast no pleasure in man's ruin? Dost Thou not say that thou hast not come to call the righteous but sinners? not the whole, but the sick? Hast Thou not borne the chastisement of the sins of others? Hast Thou not given satisfaction for that which Thou hast not done? Is not Thy blood a sacrifice for the pardon of all the sins of the human race? Is it not true that the treasures of Thy grace avail more for my welfare, than all Adam's sin and misery for my ruin? Hast Thou not wept on my account, asking pardon for me, and Thy Father, has He not heard Thee? Who then can remove from my heart its confidence in such promises.

Had I, Lord, been the only person born into the world; or, had *I* only been a sinner, and all others righteous, Thou wouldest not have borne to die for *me*, since Thou didst not need either them or me. And such am I, and such have been my works, that they have, as it were, constrained Thy mercy, not only to die for me, but that Thou shouldest die the very same death, with all the same incidents with which Thou hast died for all, in order to magnify the

more Thy mercy and to render my pledges greater. I reckon, O Lord, and will do so truthfully, that I alone need the benefits which Thou hast distributed amongst all. Since all the sins are mine, Thy death is wholly mine. Since I have committed the sins of all, I shall boldly confide in Thee, that Thy sacrifice and Thy pardon are wholly mine, although wrought on behalf of all.

This is the day, O Lord, upon which Thou wilt more fully show Thyself to be what Thou art. This is the work in which Thou wilt glory before Thy Father and before all heaven, as being the work of Thy hands. Since Thou art a physician, and what a physician! here are wounds, such as Thou only canst heal. Here is all the destruction and all the ills that Thine enemies and mine have been able to do me. Since Thou art health, and such health as proceeds from Thy Father's hand, who gave it Thee, here are disorders given up, by all the faculty of medicine, as incurable. Since Thou art the Saviour, here is such ruin, that if Thou redcem man from it, both Thy enemies and Thy friends shall clearly know

who Thou art ; since Thou art the Wisdom which came down from heaven to earth, here, Lord, Thou mayest exercise it, where there is no higher wisdom than for a man to know himself lost, when severed from Thee. Since Thou art Redemption, here is a captive subject to a thousand tyrants, who have stripped him of great riches, who keep him in a thousand torments, whilst they prepare other greater ones for him. Since Thou art Sanctification and Beauty, here is the turpitude and the hideousness of the works of the devil ; remove them Lord, and it will be manifest who Thou art. Since Thou art Mercy, where can it better present itself than where there is such misery ? Since Thou art the Judge to judge the world, whom canst Thou better condemn than the Devil, who persecutes me, and the accusation which he lays to my charge ; and the treachery with which he deceives me ?

Such am I that I need that Thou shouldest be all that Thou art ; and such art Thou, O Lord, and such fulness hast Thou of everything, that with only a drop of each of them I shall have perfect relief. Were I to pause to think with

whom, of those that have offended against Thee, I might properly compare myself, I know that I should find myself to be the guiltiest and most ungrateful of sinners. Thine own people have denied Thee, but their denial was brief, whilst their confession was long; their treason was momentary, whilst their loyalty was steadily permanent. I am one of those, who, from the outset, have denied Thee; and who persecuted Thee until Thou wert nailed on the Cross; may Thy clemency not permit me to be one of those who blasphemed and derided Thee when on it, and who have never ceased to blaspheme Thee since. Let it suffice that I sold Thee, as did Judas, for a price alike petty and paltry. Let it suffice that being one of Thy household, I stole Thy property, and that my acknowledgment of mercies infinite was shewn by treachery to Thee, similar to his, but without proceeding so far further, as to lead me to eternal ruin by making me despair of Thy mercy; this latter crime, that of not confiding in Thee, being very much worse than the former, that of having sold Thee. May Thy blood, since it was shed by Thee for me, forbid

that my sins should run on; for this would be the lowest stage of ruin to me.

My sins have shown irreverence to Thy justice; they have set at nought Thy works; they have smitten Thy sacred cheek: They have crowned Thee with thorns; they have sneered derisively at Thy kingdom: they have hooted Thee through the streets; they have nailed Thee to the cross; and to Thee, when dying, did they present, as the last refreshing drink, gall and vinegar. My Redeemer, how can I deny this? What have I to expect, who am constrained to confess this by the torments of my chastisements? for the torments of my guilt and of my conscience more than suffice to constrain me to make this confession.

I used to be affected with astonishment when contemplating the malignity of those who crucified Thee, what time I was so blind that I did not view myself associated with them in that very work; and when I never considered my heart's treachery, my sinfully pernicious example, my absence of dread of Thy judgment, my contempt of Thy commandments, and my want of appreciation of Thy mercy. For had I then

known myself I should have seen the crown of thorns for Thy head, the nails to fasten Thee to the cross, and the drink which was given Thee, in my own hands, the bitterness of that cup being my indifference to the suffering which Thou didst endure for my sake. To transcend this, were to get beyond the pale of redemption. But terror of Thy judgment, Thy Father's wrath against those who despise Thee, may stop my course and constrain me to say, Thou art indeed the Son of God. Enough to be a thief and a malefactor until brought near to Thee, then indeed it is time to ask relief.

“Lord remember me, since Thou art in Thy kingdom.” I have nought to plead for my justification beyond the acknowledgment of my great guilt. I have nothing wherewith to move Thee, but the sight of my intense misery. I have no claim upon help from Thy hand, unless it spring from the fact that there is none elsewhere. On my part there is no other sacrifice, but a contrite spirit and broken heart. And I should not even have this, if Thou hadst not awakened me to the sense of my great danger.

The sacrifice which I need is that of Thy

Blood and of Thy Righteousness ; and Thou Lord wilt give it me, in order that I may offer it.

Create in me a new heart ; inwardly renew in me the spirit of true knowledge, strength to serve Thee, to conquer my enemies, to despise all my losses ; since whilst engaged in Thy service I can lose no good thing.

Convert me, O Lord, and I shall indeed be converted ; for then my repentance will be sincere ; when Thou shalt chastise me with Thy hand, Thou wilt make me stand in awe of Thy judgment, Thou wilt discover my ruin to me. Then shall I remain sincerely opposed to sin, when Thou wilt remain with me, to guard me. I have in my flesh an enemy, both puissant and real, of which I cannot rid myself. The more that I cleave to Thee, the more will the devil tempt me. The world teems with devices to enslave me. Grant me, Lord, a spirit, adequately resolute and powerful, to truly mortify the rebellion and contradiction of my flesh ; that it may indeed still dictate, but not be obeyed ; that it may assault, but not conquer. Leave such a savour of Thyself in my soul, that prime baits may appear to it as bitter, as they are.

Well do I know, my Redeemer and my Lord, that Thou hast heard me. Thou knowest my necessities much better than I understand them. My misery is more deeply felt by Thee than by me. My perils are too great for me to exaggerate, they exceed my fears. I have no reason to distrust Thee, or the mercy Thou hast promised those who allow themselves to be found of Thee. My fears and doubts are as to myself; but I trust in Thee. From Thy nature, O Lord, from what Thou dost for my salvation, I confidently believe that Thou wilt not desert me; and that Thou wilt not suffer that to be lost, through me, which is so well assured through Thee.

Grant me the joy which Thou art wont to give to those who sincerely return to Thee. Make my heart to feel the workings of Thy Mercy, the ointment with which thou art wont to anoint the wounds of Those whom Thou healest; that I may feel how sweet it is to walk bearing Thy Cross, how bitter it has been to walk in that path wherein I lost myself.

THE END.