

him who has learned to know the attraction of the good, in him who has tasted the supreme joys of disinterested love. Is this the Gospel? Then let us say aloud that there is nothing in it; let us say that there is nothing in it but its opposite; and that the Son of God shed His blood upon the cross only to create mercenaries!

But if, passing beyond this thought, some one should oppose every idea of reward, of future reparation, under the pretext that such views debase and degrade conscience, then we protest. We protest, and wherefor? Is it by calculation? May God preserve us! Calculation—we hate it! But we protest, in the name of the Gospel, in the name of conscience and of the human heart—in the name of the Gospel, which, if it condemn the mercenary spirit, causes the idea of the future life, of judgment, and of supreme reparation to intervene; in the name of conscience, which affirms that happiness should be eternally united with the good; in the name of the heart, which thirsts for love. But some one will say, "Put an end to these dreams! Man ought to love the good for its own sake. The approval of his conscience is sufficient." And I respond: No! to say that is to falsify human nature. What! the approval of our conscience is to suffice? But are we the proper judges? Are we in ourselves our own aim and end? To affirm this is to make egotism the rule of the moral world; it is to make each one to be his own god. Poor god! whom each person could serve after his own manner, and who would not demand this from the great majority of mankind, I assure you. Poor god! whom each one could bribe at pleasure, and who would offer as a recompense to those who respect him, the immense satisfaction of a monstrous pride. No; I cannot be my own end and aim, because I am not my own cause. My Judge is above me, and this Judge is the God who has created me for His service.

On the other hand, to believe that happiness is eternally united with holiness; that God causes recompense to

succeed sacrifice—is this obedience to the mercenary spirit? But it is justice which demands this; indeed it is the law which you obey every hour, every moment of your life. Is it violated? You protest. Is it realized? Your soul throbs with a profound feeling. The martyr who dies, his heart inflamed with love, does he calculate? Does he dream of his recompense? No, I tell you. He dies to serve justice. But if you could make him believe that the truth for which he sacrificed himself is not eternal, that in the eyes of God it is a matter of indifference, and that a like oblivion awaits those who love and those who hate, tell me, would there be any martyrs at such a price? Conscience believes in reparation, and he who says reparation says eternal life. Extinguish this hope, and conscience commits suicide.

And do you believe that the heart can accommodate itself to your glacial doctrine, and always love without hope of return? Doubtless it does not calculate; but it believes that its enthusiasm is not lost in emptiness. What is more disinterested than the love of a mother? Does she love her child in order to be rewarded? Ah! when she is informed that she will die before that child is able to respond to her affection, and to recompense her with a word, will she love it less, or will she employ for its sake less of all that remains to her of the ardor and the love of life? And is not this the case every day and in every class of these martyrs of maternal love? Yet will you accuse a mother of loving less, because, in turning to the future, she dreams with a trembling joy of the day when the affection of her child will respond to her own affection, when its heart will understand it, and when she will find in it the power and recompense of her love? Her recompense, did I say? Well, then, be consistent! Call it mercenary, accuse her of devotion to her task, because of self-interest. Lead her to the tribunal of the human conscience; and if she return thence condemned, you will have led thither the Christian who seeks in the