

«shall seek,» i. e., they will not seek now when the door is open, but they will seek to no purpose when the door shall have been shut. And who are those many that shall seek to enter but will find the door of heaven shut against them? Not the heathen and the godless and the openly wicked, for they do not even take the trouble to seek; but some of His habitual followers and listeners, some who profess to believe in Him and to honor Him. Those Christians fail in one thing, and that the most important: they do not obey His teaching; they do not change their evil life; they do not give up their favorite sins. They try to atone for their indulging their bad passions by their zeal for religion; they hope to throw a cloak over their sins by practices of piety, so that God would not notice them or punish them. There have always been many such. It was to such that St Paul addressed the warning: «Be not deceived, God is not mocked.» Those men thought that because they sat at the same table with Our Lord, or gathered in groups round Him when He taught in their streets, all must be right with them. They were quite conscious that they did not obey Our Lord's holy precepts; but they persuaded themselves that He could not punish such sins in His friends as severely as He would in His enemies. They thought of Him as we think of human leaders, who are seldom indifferent to flattery or to external honor, and who easily connive at the shortcomings of their partisans. Now, do we never treat Our Lord in this same way? Well, to such He says that they are mocking Him and deceiving themselves. If with these protestations and professions of the service of God we still continue in some known and grievous sin, injustice, or hatred, or impurity, or intemperance, then instead of being welcomed into heaven we shall hear from His lips: «Depart from me ye workers of iniquity; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.»

Secondly, *it does concern us much to know whether we are taking effectual means to be saved.* — I never thought for a moment of asserting that the keeping of the commandments is easy of itself, or that they can be kept without the help of grace. I admit, and I insist, that it requires a great effort to keep the commandments; but that effort is an effort of love,