



THREE GREAT FRIDAY SERMONS and other Theological Discourses

by Apostolos Makrakis



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AND OTHER THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSES

By Apostolos Makrakis

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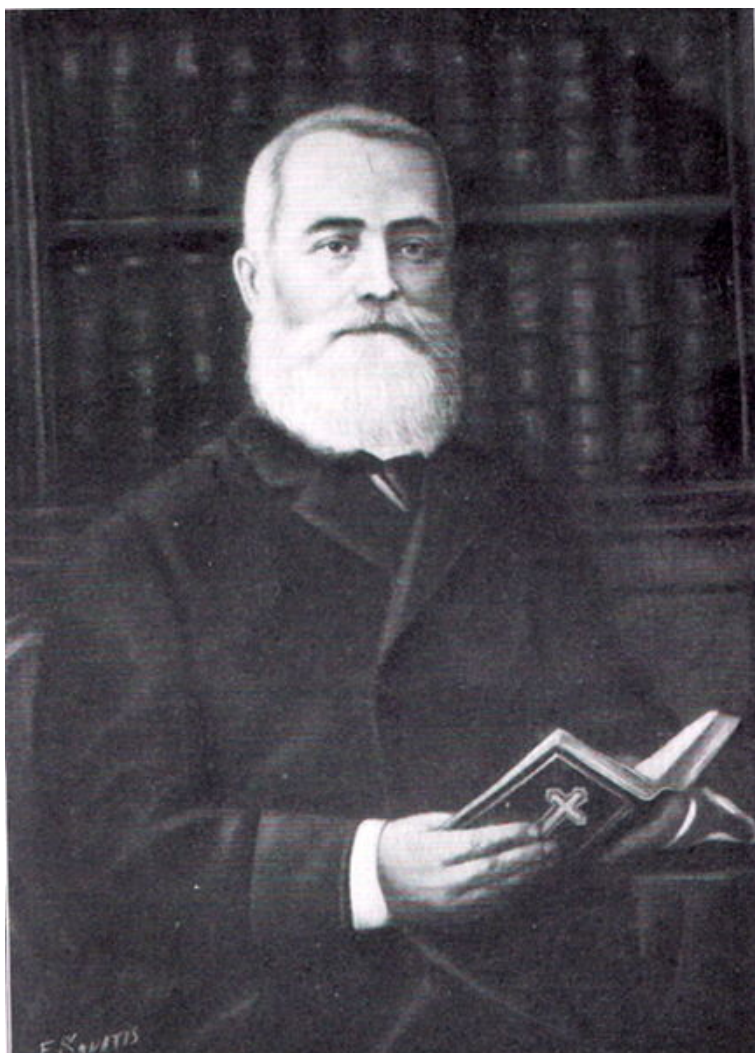
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Apostolos Makrakis

CHAPTER 1

Three Great Friday Sermons

I. A Sermon On The Holy Passion of the Savior Christ

Delivered in the temple of the new philosophical and educational College of the Logos in Athens, Greece, on April 16th, 1899.

"For it behooved him, for whom all things and through whom all things have been made, upon conducting many sons to glory, to finish the pilot of their salvation by sufferings." (**Hebrews 2:10**)

Why did it behoove the pilot of our salvation to finish His holy life by these sufferings which we are piously and gratefully recalling to memory today? Because the whole human race then existing on the earth was suffering miserably, being terribly tyrannized by the man-hating Devil, being led astray from knowledge of the true God, being corrupted, and being put to death amid many hardships and afflictions, amid many groans, and amid many pangs of anguish. The cause, however, of all that great unhappiness and misery was the sin of the first human beings, who disbelieved the true words of God and believed the false words of the Devil, and who, after acting in accordance with his wicked will, became enslaved to him, both they and all their descendants. So the sufferings of the human race due to the primogenitorial, or so-called "original", sin demanded, so to speak, as a remedy these sufferings of Christ, and it was not possible for them to be remedied otherwise than through these alone. The sufferings of the sinful human race had to be treated with these sufferings of the sinless man. The sinless Son of God had to be put to death unjustly, in order that the Devil, the cause of sin and of death, might be put to death

justly, in order that man, who had become guilty of sin, might be spared the fate of being condemned to death, and might with justice receive the right to everlasting life, which he lost when he sinned and was condemned to death. Here, behold, you have the reason why the pilot of our salvation ought to have finished His holy life by these sufferings which are receiving mention today. Because these sufferings were the sole remedy for the terrible sufferings which the whole human race was enduring as the result of being tyrannized and corrupted by the Devil on account of the primogenitorial sin. And it was for this reason that the pilot of our salvation, who came to save us from these evils, patiently endured them voluntarily and meekly and spitelessly, being conscious that by undergoing these sufferings unjustly He was creating, as God the Creator, remedies for the treatment of the sufferings and evils of the whole human race, just as Isaiah, the great prophet among prophets, had prophesied about them in uttering the following words:

"This man," meaning the sinless Son of God, "beareth our sins and is anguished about us He hath been wounded for our sins, and hath been bruised for our iniquities; ... and with his bruises and his wounds we have been healed" (**Isa. 53 :4-5**).

Oh, what a wonderful paradox! With the wounds and the bruises and the pangs of anguish and the death of a single sinless man God treats and heals the wounds, the pangs, and the death of all sinful men. "*This man beareth our sins and is anguished about us. He hath been wounded for our sins, and hath been bruised for our iniquities; and with his bruises and his wounds we have been healed.*" Blessed be our God, because just as He gave remedies and medical art for the treatment of the diseases of our bodies, so did He give also remedies and medical science for the treatment of the diseases of our souls, namely, the sufferings of Christ, since it is with His bruises that we are healed. And blessed be Christ, the beloved Son of God who voluntarily and meekly and spitelessly endured these sufferings in order that we might have remedies with which to treat the diseases and ailments of our souls and by which we are saved from evils and pangs everlasting, since it is with His bruises and His wounds and all His sufferings that we are healed. Yea, we are healed but provided that we make the right use of these remedies which have been given us as free gifts. For just as remedies intended for the body cannot cure the diseases of our bodies unless we use them in accordance with the prescriptions of the physicians, who know the power of the remedies and the benefit to be derived from the right use of them, so and in like manner the sufferings of Christ, conceived as remedies for our souls, cannot cure any persons except those who know their power and make the right use of them. Those, on the other hand, who are

ignorant of them and cannot use them remain permanently incurable and die in their own sins. In fact, those who make a wrong use of them as a result of their lack of learning and lack of science, are merely aggravating the disease instead of succeeding in curing it; accordingly, they may be said to be worse off than those who are ignorant of them and make no use of them - for in everything an abuse or misuse is a greater evil than non-use. Since, therefore, the sufferings of Christ, conceived as a remedy for our souls, afford no benefit to those ignorant of them, but greatly harm those who abuse or misuse them as a result of their lack of learning and lack of science, for this reason today's sermon concerning them is going first to point out their great healing power, and secondly to indicate the correct and beneficial use of them, by which alone the effect of a cure will result to one who wishes to be healed by means of them and to be saved for all time to come, since they are the means by which we can acquire health of soul and body, and life everlasting. Accordingly, let us first seek to learn what the healing power is which inheres naturally in the sufferings of Christ and by means of which the diseases and ailments first of our souls, and afterwards those of our bodies, may be completely cured.

Every remedy that can cure a disease admittedly contains a power within itself that is inimical and hostile, so to speak, to the power of the disease, which, when victorious, it chases out of the diseased body. But this power is invisible, and only the effects of its action can be seen. But these visible effects prove its invisible existence. Thus, too, the sufferings of Christ, which serve as remedies for the diseases of our souls, contain within them an invisible power which acts in opposition to the power of the disease, which they remove and eliminate from the soul, when the right use is made of them. This invisible power becomes, so to speak, visible from the visible effects of its operation, but none the less also from the cause to which it is due. For this reason, in seeking knowledge of the remedial power of Christ's sufferings, we ought in advance thereof to seek the cause to which it is due, and afterwards the effects of its operation.

The sufferings of sufferers naturally arouse sympathy and antipathy in non-sufferers who are mere onlookers. Thus, sympathy may be aroused in the hearts of the sufferer's friends, or antipathy in the hearts of his enemies. In accordance with this natural law the sufferings of suffering Christ too have those who sympathize and suffer along with Him, and others who antipathize. Those who sympathize and suffer along with Christ are first of all His heavenly Father, who called down out of heaven and said: "*...This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*" (Matt. 3:17 & Matt.17:5). Is it not obvious, therefore, that when the beloved Son is today suffering such ill-treatment at the hands of the enemies who are imbued with an antipathy to Him, that God His Father must sympathize and

CHAPTER 2

THREE OTHER SERMONS delivered in church by Apostolos Makrakis

A. THE CROSS OF CHRIST AND THE TWO CONTRADICTORY JUDGMENTS CONCERNING IT

The Cross of Christ is emblematic and representative of God's wisdom, goodness, and power. This truth, which we are now about to prove, was regarded by the Greeks as a stupidity, says St. Paul, that great preacher of the truth; and they jeered the preaching of St. Paul about the Cross as stupid and illogical. But St. Paul, who saw otherwise than as did those who looked upon the preaching about the Cross as so much stupidity, perceived in the Cross of Christ God's great wisdom and irresistible power.

"But we," he said, "are preaching Christ crucified, unto Jews a scandal, and unto Greeks a stupidity; yet unto those themselves who have been called, including both Jews and Greeks, we are preaching Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (**I Cor. 1:23-24**).

This opposition of views which existed as between St. Paul on the one hand and the Greeks and Jews on the other, to whom the Cross of Christ appeared to be a stupidity and a scandal, respectively, is worthy of careful attention and meditative study. Both parties had the same object under

observation, namely, the Cross of Christ. Yet their observation resulted in diametrically opposite views; one controverts the other; and both views are mutually contradictory. But two contradictory judgments cannot both be true, nor can both be false; on the contrary, one of them must be true, and the other one must necessarily be false, according to the invariable law of logic relating to contradiction.

To a superficial observation the Cross of Christ seems to be a work of stupidity and of weakness, seems to be a most absurd and most illogical work. But this superficial impression results in denial of the divine work for the salvation of men, results in denial of the fact that the one who died upon the Cross was a God-man, results in denial of the miracles in the Gospel; and it is followed by every illogical and absurd reflection that results from such a false and erroneous impression. But let no one be at a loss to account for how it happens that: 1) such a superficial impression concerning the Cross inveigles the mind; 2) that such or such consequences of illogicality result from such an impression concerning the Cross of Christ. For we can see this truth verified in actual experience. In the physical world there have been and are many instances of physical works. By studying and examining these anyone, in proportion to his state of mental development, can arrive at some conception of them, but not all men will form the same or an equal idea concerning them. For one man by making a more thorough and deeper investigation and taking a keener interest will arrive at a profounder idea of the object observed, whereas another man, taking less interest, or making a more imperfect investigation, will form in his mind a shallower and more imperfect, or even a false, idea concerning the things observed. The astronomers in the time of Ptolemy in examining superficially the questions pertaining to planets and fixed stars, supposed the earth, which is a planet, to be the center of the solar system, round which, according to them, the sun moved, though, as a matter of fact, it is not a planet, but is fixed in place like the stars. Copernicus and Galileo, however, by examining assiduously the questions pertaining to planets and fixed stars, observed the contrary of what the Ptolemaic astronomers had been seeing - the fact, that is to say, that the earth moves round the sun, that the small body moves round the great body in accordance with the law of universal gravitation. This observation of Copernicus and Galileo in the beginning was considered by most men, including even those who were learned in things pertaining to nature and nature's ways, to be a stupidity, to be a brain storm, to be a fantasy not uncommon among those erring and being deceived in the world. But how greatly those men were deceived who presumed Copernicus to be in error is now well attested by the facts and by the accurate calculations of science respecting the motions of heavenly bodies. The

CHAPTER 3

The Ascension of Christ Into Heaven

From His Resurrection and until His Ascension into heaven, our Lord, for forty days, conducted Himself with His disciples, and spoke to them concerning the Kingdom of God. He further charged them that, after His Ascension, they should not depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, concerning which His disciples have heard of Him, at another time, saying unto them,

"But the Comforter, Which is the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you"
(John 14:26; 15:26)

"For John truly baptized with water; but ye", He further said unto them, "shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence. (...) And after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. But while He yet spoke these words unto His disciples He was taken up from them; and a cloud received Him out of their sight, while they were beholding Him as He went up towards heaven. And, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; and said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, Which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven. Then they returned unto Jerusalem from the mount

called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey" (**Acts 1:5, 8-12**).

The Ascension of Christ is a historical event, as is also His Resurrection, and he that believes in Christ the Resurrected, believes also in Christ the Ascended, according to the paradoxical and divine manner of His rising from earth to heaven. Struck with amazement, over the miracle of the Resurrection, are the apostles; equally so, are they struck with amazement, over the miracle of the Ascension. They are standing and looking at the paradoxical and unusual, from earth to heaven, rising of their own Master, and angels proclaiming unto them His last advent in the same manner as His Ascension. Within the tomb are the women also seeking the living among the dead; but the angel said unto them, "*Why seek ye the living among the dead?*" (Luke 24.5). The angelic world is under God's command. There are angels standing by at the cave of Bethlehem, at the tombstone of the Resurrection, at the mount of the Ascension. The Saviour's Ascension into the heavens is His remarkable rising to the God and Father - by means of which Christ is inobservable and invisible in the eyes of the people. Christ was ascended and perceptibly concealed from the eyes of the people, not being separated from us spiritually, but He will come again in the same manner in which the apostles beheld Him coming from up into the heaven. His work is finished upon the earth, having revealed the will of God by word and deed. The Gospel is His words, and His life and miracles, which He performed, are the works which He has left us behind. Having, therefore, completed His own work, He sent the Holy Spirit into the world, Which proceeds from the Father, for the instruction and renewing and strengthening of His Church, which He has established with His precious blood, towards the fruit-bearing of the Gospel. He has established us in the law and gave us the power to fulfill the things that He had legislated.

The legislation and the power towards the fulfillment of the divine law issue forth from Christ. We don't know ourselves, concerning what we are indebted to do and what not to do, that we may be well-pleasing to God, and obtain of the desired salvation. We do not, therefore, possess the fulfillment of the divine law, even after that we have received knowledge of it. Wherefore, we have need of the law and of the ethical strength towards its fulfillment by the Possessor of both the law and its strength towards its fulfillment. Christ not only established us in the law, through the Gospel, but even proved unto us, throughout the course of His life, the mode of following after the adaption and fulfillment of the divine law; He gave us power towards its fulfillment and its achievement. We are under obligation to possess of ourselves one advantage: the preference of the abstract good, the faith in Christ, and the readiness of

CHAPTER 5

Interpretation of all the Parables of the Gospel

THE SENTIENT AND RATIONAL COGNITIVE FACULTY OF CHRIST AS SEEN IN HIS PARABLES

Having been appointed professor and teacher of all men, Christ taught the multitudes in parables, and revealed to His own disciples the hidden mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, that the saying of the prophet might be fulfilled: *"I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."* In these parables we can see the sentient and rational cognitive faculty of Christ, the one perceiving what is going on in the sensible world, the other ascending through sensible things to supersensible things in accordance with the law of analogy. In other words, through the parables Christ trains the sentient cognitive faculty of our souls to observe soundly what is going on in the world, and trains our rational cognitive faculty to ascend from sensible to supersensible things, from what is plain to what is recondite, by virtue of right reason and reflection in accordance with it in terms of analogy. The parables are taken from the three so-called kingdoms of nature - that is, from the **vegetable kingdom**, from the **mineral kingdom**, and from the **animal kingdom**; and in addition, from the life of men - from all things, that is to say, that fall within range of the sensation and observation of the sentient cognitive faculty. According to these sources we distinguish and classify all the parables in the Gospels so as to enable an easier

study to be made of them, to the advantage of our sentient cognitive faculty and rational cognitive faculty. We shall begin first with the parables drawn from the kingdom of plants, on the ground that Christ, too, began his parabolic teaching with them, with the parable of the sower.

PARABLES FROM THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM

The first parable, taken from the kingdom of plants, is that of the sower, which we quote from the Gospel of Matthew, and which reads as follows:

Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came arid devoured them; some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth, and forthwith they sprang up because they had not much depth of earth, but when the sun was up, they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away; and some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them; but others fell into good soil, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear (**Mat. 13:3-9**).

Since the cognitive faculty is distinguished as sentient and rational, the ears, too, may be distinguished as sentient ears by which the sentient cognitive faculty hears, and rational ears by which the rational cognitive faculty hears. The ears of the sentient cognitive faculty hear about the occupation of the farmer, who sows the seed not only in good soil, but also in poor soil and along the wayside and among the thorns; and the eyes of the sentient cognitive faculty can see the physical effects of such sowing. But the ears of the rational cognitive faculty, through hearing about things of a sensible nature, ascend to cognition of a like and analogous function or work that produces like and analogous effects or results. He who has only the ears of the sentient cognitive faculty hears what is said concerning the sower and can understand nothing beyond what he hears; but he who has also the ears of the rational cognitive faculty can ascend from the sensible things he hears about the supersensible things they enable him to cognize, and in accordance with the law of analogy he infers effects in the supersensible things similar and analogous to the appearances in the sensible things. Christ, however, courts from His listeners the rational ears of hearing, that they may understand what is said concerning the sower and the seed. But none of His listeners had them, for none of those who heard His words could understand what the parable meant. Wherefore, when His disciples approached, they said to Him:

CHAPTER 6

The Truth In Christianity

The one true doctrine and the many false ones

The truth is one. Consequently, the true doctrine concerning it is also one, explaining it faithfully and interpreting it as it is, and enouncing it clearly. Every other doctrine, distorting the truth, and enouncing it in a garbled form, is false. Accordingly, there are many systems of false doctrine; for falsehood varies in accordance with the varying distortion of the truth: but there is only one system that sets forth the true doctrine; for the truth is one and simple, and the right and true conception of it is but one also.

The first principle, eternal, everlasting, infinite, is God - a principle that is cognitive and volitive, all-wise, all-powerful, all-good creative and formative of the universe and preservative thereof. Therefrom are all beings, living beings, thinking beings, the world and man, temporal things, finite things. These things are works and products of its all-wiseness and all-powerfulness and all-goodness, of its infinite perfectness God is the creator of the world, and the molder of man, the everlasting cause of time, the eternal cause of whatever occurs, the infinite cause of space and of extension, the invisible cause of the existence of both visible and invisible beings, the eternally existing cause of occurrences by reason of His wisdom, love, and might. This is the divine truth, everlasting, interminable, immutable.

We see the sensible world by means of perception and the senses, and we believe in its existence unhesitatingly: the world of beings, of realities,

of bodies, the multipartite world, the complex world, we say, exists, because we perceive it encompassing and surrounding us, because we can feel its colors, its figures, its odors, its gustables, its solidity and renitence; and we infer that it would have been impossible for it to exist in such a state of organization, in such orderly arrangement and harmony and variety of beings and purposefulness, had there not been some cause that is absolute, infinite, cognitive and volitive, all-powerful, all-wise, and all-good, an eternal, unalterable, everlasting cause - had there not been in existence a God as a source of wisdom and of power and of goodness. So it may be affirmed that the everlasting and eternal One actually exists that God actually does exist and is the efficient and final cause of the universe; and His existence is infinite, and absolute, whereas the existence of the world is finite and relative, because the nature of the fact (i.e., of the phenomenal world) is such by nature. Whatever is a fact is therefore finite and relative; because it became a fact and is such in time and space; because it is related to an efficient will that exists absolutely and causes it. So, inasmuch as we can conceive the necessary and absolute existence of God, we believe in it without any hesitation, being unable to form a rational conception in our minds of the contrary. So we may assert that God exists, the absolute Mind, who has produced by absolute Reason and Spirit the beings out of nothing, the Cause of creation, of the order, or orderliness, of the purposefulness, of the cohesion, or connectedness, of the harmonious arrangement observable therein.

But I, who perceive the world by whatever senses I possess, and who conceive the necessary existence of God, I who believe in the existence of the world, and in that of God, I am conscious as concerning myself that I exist, that I am an existence distinct from God and the world, a finite and relative existence; and that I co-exist together with other beings, as a being that thinks, wills, and feels, as a cognitive and volitive essence that is the cause of my actions, and motions, and decisions, an existence that searches, seeks, discovers, that yearns to know everything, and is learning and investigating, and, in short, an existence that aims at the infinite. Such I conceive by existence to be. But I who am conscious of my existence and unhesitatingly believe that I exist, am therefore led to conceive that it would not have been possible for me to exist, had there not eternally existed a creative, cognitive, volitive, all-wise, all-good, and all-powerful cause which gave me not only my beinghood, but also my livelihood, my immediate awareness, my volition, my ability to do things, and predestined me to ascent to perfect cognition, and perfect knowledge, and enjoyment thereof attained through love and intelligence. So I am a product of the absolute action of God, a work of God's all-wiseness, all-powerfulness, and goodness, a finite and relative work; accordingly, I conceive the