

**AN EXPOSITION OF
THE PSALM
MISERERE MEI DEUS**

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An Exposition of the Psalm Miserere Mei Deus by Girolamo Savonarola

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GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA

**AN EXPOSITION OF
THE PSALM
MISERERE MEI DEUS**

AN EXPOSITION

—OF—

THE PSALM, MISERERE, MEI DEUS,

—BY—

FRA GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA.

Written during the imprisonment which preceded his martyrdom, in the year of Our Lord, 1498.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN BY

THE REV. F. C. COWPER, B. D.

"Fecit me sicut unum de infantibus et lactatibus tuis: ut semper panderem ab uberibus sapientie tue."

MILWAUKEE, WIS.:
THE YOUNG CHURCHMAN CO.,
1889.

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Pres. C. W. Eliot

Copyright, 1887.
By Rev. F. G. COWPER.

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115

PREFACE.

By the Translator.

In recent years, the reading public has taken a decided interest in the history of Florence, and in those worthies who, individually, did their part in making a name and a glory for that deservedly famous city.

The general interest is, however, mostly centered in the group of men who lived in Florence at about the end of the fifteenth century, an epoch marked by the revival of letters, which Lorenzo, the Magnificent, did so much to foster and encourage.

For myself, I freely confess, that among the men who lived, suffered, and died in that stirring period, not one has attracted my own heart and mind with such a constraint, as the famous monk and reformer, FRA GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA, who entered into an unequal contest with a wicked Pope, and who perished in the cause of pure religion.

Grimm, in his "Life of Michael Angelo," George Eliot, in "Romola," Mrs. Oliphant, in "Makers of Florence," and the Century Magazine, issue of August, 1880, gave to the world faithful sketches of the great and good priest of Florence. It is no part of my present purpose to

PREFACE.

add anything to the story of his life, nor to repeat what has been said by others.

I long desired to obtain a copy of SAVONAROLA'S "Triumph of the Cross." In my quest I was happy enough to secure, through the indefatigable efforts of a brother, who chanced to be in London, a very ancient copy of SAVONAROLA'S Latin works in one volume. This book bears several dates, the earliest 1511, A. D.; the last, 1523, A. D. It was issued from a Parisian press. This edition, I fancy, is unknown to history, since the only mention I can discover of any addition of SAVONAROLA'S works is referred to the first half of the seventeenth century.

Moreover, no translation of our author's works, nor of any part of them, has ever been made into English. Consequently, I am persuaded, that to publish any literary work of considerable merit, from the pen of the Florentine monk, will be not inopportune at this time—nay, that many admirers of his will hail the same with pleasure.

To such, therefore, and to those who love the perusal of pages which express the deeper yearnings of the devout religious soul, I send forth this little volume as a kind of first fruits of the larger task which I have set before me, the translation and publication of the "*Triumphus Crucis*."

FRED. C. COWPER.

AN EXPOSITION OF PSALM LI.,

WRITTEN DURING HIS IMPRISONMENT, BY THE REVEREND
FATHER, BROTHER HIEROME SAVONAROLA, OF
FERRARA, OF THE ORDER OF PREACHERS.

Woe is me, who am destitute of all aid ! Who have offended both heaven and earth ! Whither shall I go ? Whither shall I turn ? To whom shall I flee for refuge ? Who will take pity on me ?

To heaven I dare not lift mine eyes, for I have grievously sinned against it. On earth I cannot find a refuge, for I have been a by-word unto it.

What then shall I do ? Shall I yield to despair ? Away with the thought ! God is merciful. Righteous is my Saviour. Therefore God alone is my refuge.

He will not despise the work of His own hand. He will not cast from Him the image of Himself. To Thee, therefore, most righteous God, disconsolate and full of woe, I come, since Thou alone

art my hope, Thou alone art my refuge. But how shall I open my mouth before Thee, when I dare not lift up mine eyes? Shall I pour forth words of lamentation? I will implore Thy mercy. I will say:—

I.

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy great mercy.”

O God! Who dwellest in the inaccessible light! O God! Who hidest Thyself, Who canst not be seen with the carnal eye, nor comprehended by the mind of the creature, nor described in the language of men (or of angels); O, my God! Thee, the incomprehensible, I seek; Thee, the unspeakable, I invoke, whatever Thou art, Who art in every place.

I know, indeed, that Thou art the Supreme Being. If, then, Thou art Being Itself, and not exclusively the cause of all being, and yet withal the Cause—somewhere I shall find the Name by which I seek to address Thy unspeakable Majesty.

Thou art God, say I, Who art whatsoever is in Thee. For Thou art Thy wisdom itself, Thine Excellency, Thy Power, Thy Supreme Felicity.

Since, then, Thou art merciful, what art Thou but Mercy itself? And what am I but Misery itself?

Behold, therefore, O Mercy, O God! behold Misery standing before Thy face. What wilt