Commentary on the Gospel of Luke (part 2 of 2)

Cyril of Alexandria (c. AD 376–444)

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SERMON CI.

14:1-6. And it came to pass, when He had gone into the house of one of the chief Pharisees on the sabbath day to eat bread, that they watched Him. And behold there was a certain man before Him who had the dropsy. And Jesus answered and spoke unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying; Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day or no? And they were silent. And He took him, and healed him, and sent him away. And He answered them, saying; Which of you shall have a son or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the sabbath day? And they could not return Him an answer to these things. AGAIN the Lord works miracles, and exercising a divine and supreme power, performs His accustomed acts, and manifests His glory. He benefits then in more ways than one the intractable and contentious Pharisee. For just as maladies of more than usual violence will not yield to the skill of physicians, but require the main force of persons of blunter feelings: so also the human mind, that has turned aside to wickedness, rejects all that could benefit it, directly that it has once become the victim of an uncontrollable tendency to disobedience, being brought into this state by unreproved departures from the right path.

And that this is undeniably true, any one may see who will give his attention to the lessons here set before us. For a Pharisee, of higher rank than usual, invited Jesus to a banquet: and He, although He knew their malice, went with him, and dined in their company. And He submitted to this act of condescension, not to honour His inviter, but rather to benefit those in whose company He was, by such words and miraculous deeds as might lead them to the acknowledgment of the true service, even that which is taught us by the gospel. For He know that even against their will He would make them eyewitnesses both of His power, and of His more than human glory, if perchance even so they might believe that He is God and the Son of God, Who assumed indeed our likeness, but continued unchanged, nor ceased to be that which He had been.

He became the guest then of His inviters, to fulfil, as I said, a necessary duty: ”but they, it says, watched Him. And for what reason did they watch Him, and on what account? To see forsooth whether He would disregard the honour due to the law,

and so do something or other forbidden on the sabbath day. But, O senseless Jew, understand that the law was a shadow and type, waiting for the truth: and the truth was Christ, and His commandments. Why then do you arm the typo against the truth? why do you set the shadow in array against the spiritual interpretation? Keep your sabbath rationally: but if you will not consent so to do, then art you cut off from that sabbath keeping which is well pleasing to God, and know not the true rest, which He requires of us Who of old spoke the law of Moses. Let us cease from our sins; let us rest from our offences; let us wash away our stains; let us abandon the impure love of the flesh; let us flee far from covetousness and extortion; and from disgraceful gains, and the love of lucre. Let us first gather provisions for our souls for the way, the meat that will suffice us in the world to come: and let us apply ourselves to holy works, thereby keeping the sabbath rationally. Those whose office it was to minister among you according to the law used to offer unto God the appointed sacrifices, even upon the sabbath:

they slew the victims in the temple, and performed those acts of service which were laid upon them: and no man rebuked them, and the law itself was silent. It did not therefore forbid men ministering upon the sabbath. This then was a type for us: for, as I said, it is our duty, keeping the sabbath in a rational manner, to please God by a sweet spiritual savour. And, as I have already before said, we render this when ceasing from sins, we offer unto God as a sacred oblation a life holy and worthy of admiration, steadily advancing unto all virtue. For this is the spiritual sacrifice well pleasing unto God.

But if, having nought of this in your mind, you cleave solely to the grossness of the legal Scripture, abandoning the truth as something you can not attain to, listen unto God, Who tells you by the voice of the prophet Isaiah; ”The heart of this people is waxed gross, their eyes they have closed, and made their ears heavy, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.” For how were not they heavy and without understanding, and of a mind past helping, who when they might have perceived that He was the Christ by His teaching being superior to the law, and by the wonderful works that He wrought, were obdurate, and regarded only their own preconceived idea of what was right: or rather that only which brought them down to the pit of destruction?

But what was the miracle of which they were spectators? There was a certain man before Him who had the dropsy: the Lord therefore asks the lawyers and Pharisees, whether it is lawful to heal on the sabbath day or not? ”But they, it says, were silent. But why, O lawyer, were you silent? Quote something from the scriptures; show that the law of Moses ever blamed the doing good on the sabbath: prove to us that it wishes us to be hardhearted and unmerciful, because of the rest for our bodies;---that it forbids kindness, in order that we may honour the sabbath. But this you can

not prove from any part of it. And as they were silent from malice, Christ refutes their immitigable shamelessness by the convincing arguments which He uses. For ”whose son of yours,” He says, ”or whose ox shall fall into a pit, and he will not immediately draw him out on the sabbath day? If the law forbids the showing mercy on the sabbath, why do you yourself take compassion on that which has fallen into the pit? Trouble not yourself about your son’s danger upon the sabbath; rebuke the sting of natural affection, which incites you to feel a father’s love. Commit your child with joy to the grave, that you may honour the Giver of the law, as knowing that He is harsh and unmerciful. Let your friend be in danger, but pay not you the slightest heed thereto:

nay though you hear a young child weeping, and asking for help, say to it, Die: such is the will of the law. But you will not assent to such reasonings; you will stretch out your hand to one who is distressed, esteeming him of more account than the honour due to the law, or rather than a senseless rest, even if you will not as yet acknowledge that the sabbath ought to be kept in a spiritual manner. The God of all ceases not to be kind: He is good and loving unto men: He instituted not the law of Moses as the mediator of harshness, nor appointed it as a teacher of cruelty, but rather to lead you on to the love of your neighbour. How you was it fitting that a commandment thus venerable and worthy of admiration should by the will of God lose its force upon the sabbath day? Why therefore were you silent, O lawyer? Confessedly because you had nothing to say. For the force of truth is something great, and invincible, able to confound the envious mind, and to muzzle the faultfinding tongue.

Paying then no further heed to the envyings of the Jews, He delivers from his malady the man afflicted with the dropsy, and tyrannized over by an incurable disease. You have seen O Jew, the miracle: extol then the Worker of it. Understand His might, and the gloriousness of His dominion: acknowledge that He is God: offer Him your faith: be not obdurate; but as the prophet Jeremiah says, ”Rend your hearts, and not your garments.” Expand your mind: open the eye of yours heart: understand that the acts which He works are those of Deity, even though in appearance He be a man like unto us. Recognize therefore Him Who for our sakes bore our likeness, but even so was far above us: or rather far above all creation by His ineffable generation from God the Father. For He is the Son of Him Who transcends all, but though He was Lord He took the form of the slave, that He might make the slave like unto Himself: yet He did not cease to be God, but remains the Same, Whom angels worship, and principalities, and thrones, and lordships. The Seraphim praise Him: and let us also serve Him in faith, mounting upward by His aid to the lot of the saints; by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CII.

14:7-11. And He spoke a parable unto them which were bidden preventing how they chose the foremost seats: saying unto them, When you are bidden of any one, seat not yourself at the head of the seat, lest a more honourable man than you be bidden of him; and when he that bade you and him comes, he say to you, Give this man place; and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are bidden, go seat yourself in the lowest place, that when he that bade you comes, he may say unto you Friend, go up higher; then shall you have honour before all who sit with you at meat. For whosoever exalts himself shall be abased, and He that humbles himself shall be exalted. NEVER does the Saviour cease from doing some act or other replete with benefit, guiding by admonitions and counsels all who draw near unto Him into propriety of conduct, and teaching them that sobriety which becomes saints, that as Paul says, ”the man of God may be perfect, complete unto every good work.” Seizing therefore every opportunity, however slight, for His words, He wove for us admonitions well worthy of our attention, therein resembling an active husbandman; for whatsoever is liable to blame and reprehension, and covers with utter infamy those who are guilty of it, this He cuts away from our minds, and plants, so to speak, every fruit of virtue: for ”we, as Scripture says, are God’s husbandry.”

What benefit then He has here too discovered for us, we learn from the passage now read. For He was dining on the sabbath day with one of the Pharisees, at his special request. And his purpose in so doing, and motive we explained unto you when last we met together. But inasmuch as He saw certain of those who were invited foolishly seizing the uppermost seats as a thing of importance, and worth the taking, and that they were eager after vainglory, for the benefit both of them and us He utters an urgent warning, saying; ”When you are bidden of any one, seat not yourself at the head of the seat, lest a more honourable man than you be bidden of him, and when he that bade you and him comes, he say unto you, Give this man place; and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place.”

Now such things may seem perchance to some to be but trifling matters, and not worthy of much attention. But when any one fixes upon them the eye of his mind,

he will then learn, from what blame they deliver a man, and how great orderliness they produce in him. For in the first place to hurry inconsiderately after honours neither suitable„ nor due to us, shows us to be foolish, rude, and arrogant, seizing what is not fitting for us, but for others rather, who are greater than and superior to ourselves. Whoever he is that thus acts, is hated, and often too becomes an object of ridicule, when he has to restore to others, and that often against his will, the honour which in no respect belongs unto him. ”For when, He says, a more honourable man than you comes, he that bade you and him will say, Give this man place.” O! what great ignominy is there in having so to do! It is like a theft, so to speak, and the restitution of the stolen goods. He must restore what he has seized; for he had no right to take it. But the modest and praiseworthy man, who might without fear of blame have claimed the dignity of sitting among the foremost, seeks it not, but yields to others what might be called his own, that he may not even seem to be overcome by vainglory; and such an one shall receive honour as his due: for he shall hear, He says, him who bade him say, ”Come up hither.”

A modest mind therefore is a great and surpassing good: for it delivers those who possess it from blame and contempt, and from the charge of vaingloriousness. ’But yes! says the lover of vainglory, I wish to be illustrious and renowned, and not despised and neglected, and numbered among the unknown.’ If however you desire this transitory and human glory, you are wandering away from the right path, by which you might become truly illustrious, and attain to such praise as is worthy of emulation. For it is written, ”All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.” And the prophet David also blames those who love temporal honours; for he also thus spoke of them, ”Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withers before it is plucked up.” For just as the grass that springs up upon the housetops has no deep fixed root, and for this reason is easily parched up; so he who values worldly honour, after he has been for a short time conspicuous, and, so to speak, in flower, sinks at last into nothingness.

If then any one wish to be set above others, let him win it by the decree of heaven, and be crowned by those honours which God bestows. Let him surpass the many by having the testimony of glorious virtues; but the rule of virtue is a lowly mind that loves not boasting: yes! it is humility. And this the blessed Paul also counted worthy of all esteem: for he writes to such as are eagerly desirous of saintly pursuits, ”Love humility.” And’ the disciple of Christ praises it, thus writing; ”Let the poor brother glory in his exaltation: and the rich in his humiliation, because as the flower of the grass he passes away.” For the moderate and bridled mind is exalted with God: for ”God, it says, will not despise the contrite and abased heart.”

But whosoever thinks great things of himself, and is supercilious, and elate in mind, and prides himself on an empty loftiness, is rejected and accursed. He follows a course the contrary of Christ’s, Who said; ”Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in

heart. ”For the Lord, it says, resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. The wise Solomon also shows in many places the safety of the humble mind; at one time saying, ”Exalt not yourself, that you fall not: and at another time, he figuratively declares the same thing; ”He that makes his house high, seeks an overthrow. Such a one is hated of God, and very justly, as having mistaken himself, and senselessly aimed above the limits of his nature. For upon what ground, I pray, does man upon earth think great things of himself? For certainly his mind is weak, and easily led into base pleasures: his body is tyrannized over by corruption and death: and the duration of his life is short and limited. Nor is this all, for naked were we born, and therefore riches, and wealth, and worldly honour come to us from without, and are not really ours: for they belong not to the properties of our nature. For what reason therefore is the mind of man puffed up? What is there to exalt it to superciliousness and boasting? Were any one but to regard his state with understanding eyes, he would then become like Abraham, who mistook not his nature, and called himself ”dust and ashes.

And like another also who says; ”Quit man who is rottenness, and the son of man who is a worm. But he who is a worm and rottenness; this dust and ashes: this very nothingness becomes great and admirable and honourable before God, by knowing himself; for so he is crowned by God with honour and praise: for the Saviour of all and Lord gives grace to the humble: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CIII.

14:12-14. Then said He also to him that bade Him, When you make a dinner or a supper, call not your friends, nor your brethren, neither your kinsmen, nor your rich neighbours; lest they also bid you again, and a recompense be made you. But when you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind. And you shall be blessed, because they cannot recompense you: for you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

REMARKABLE indeed is the beauty of the mind of man: and it shows itself in various ways, and is conspicuous in a diversity of manners. For just as those who are skilled in delineating forms in pictures cannot by one colour attain to perfect beauty in their painting, but rather use various and many kinds of hues; so also the God of all, Who is the Giver and Teacher of spiritual beauty, adorns our souls with that manifold virtue which consists in all saintlike excellence of living, in order to complete in us His likeness. For in His rational creatures the best and most excellent beauty is the likeness of God, which is wrought in us by the exact vision of God, and by virtue perfected by active exertion. Consider therefore how our Lord Jesus Christ makes our souls beautiful by every spiritual adornment. For here He had commanded the Pharisees and lawyers, or rather, the Scribes, to think lowly of themselves, and to cultivate a mind free from the love of vainglory, bidding them not to seize upon the foremost seats. For He was dining with them, that being in their company He might benefit them even against their will. And after them He next addressed him who had invited them, and assembled them to the entertainment, saying, ”When you make a dinner or a supper, call not your friends, nor your brethren, neither your kinsmen nor your rich neighbours: but rather the lame, and the blind, and the maimed.”

Would He then produce in us a morose state of mind? Is it His will that we be unsociable, and unloving, so as not even to deem our friends and relatives worthy of that affection which especially is fitting and due to them? Are we to pay no regard to those who are near us in affection and love? Does He forbid the rights of hospitality? But how is it not absurd and ignorant to imagine that He contradicts His own laws? What then does He wish to teach? Something perhaps like what

follows; Those who possess great store of wealth make much account, so to speak, of a constant display and ostentation. For oftentimes they bring men to banquet with them, and make entertainments at vast cost, with curiously prepared viands, and such as do not escape the blame of prodigality. And this it is their custom to do, in order to gain the praises and applause of their guests. And in receiving the praises of their flatterers, as the wages, so to speak, of their extravagance, they rejoice greatly, as though they had gained something of value. For it is the habit of flatterers to praise oven those things which deserve blame.

For what good is there in such prodigal abundance beyond what necessity requires? For as Christ Himself somewhere said, ”Few things are needful, or one,” for the necessary appeasing of the wants of the body. That we may escape therefore the danger of losing the reward of our outlay, by expending our wealth in such pursuits as will bear good fruit, He has commanded us to invite the poor, and the maimed, and the blind, and those who are suffering under other bodily maladies; that by our liberality in so doing, we may attain to the hope that comes from above from God. The lesson therefore which He teaches us is love unto the poor, which is a thing precious in the sight of God. Do you feel pleasure in being praised when you have any friends of relatives feasting with you? I tell you of something far better: angels shall praise your bounty, and the rational powers above, and holy men as well: and He too shall accept it Who transcends all, and Who loves mercy and is kind. Lend unto Him fearing nothing, and you shall receive with usury whatever you gave: ”for he, it says, who has pity on the poor lends unto God.” He acknowledged the loan, and promises repayment. ”For when the Son of man, He says, shall come in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels, and shall sit upon the throne of His glory, He shall set the sheep upon His right hand, and the goats upon His left.

And He shall say to them on His right hand, Come you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me meat: I was thirsty and you gave Me drink: I was naked and you covered Me: sick and you visited Me: in prison, and you came unto Me. And to this He added, Verily I say unto you, that whatsoever you have done to one of these little ones, you have done unto Me.” The outlay therefore is not unfruitful: rather shall compassion upon the poor make your wealth breathe forth a sweet savour. Purchase the grace that comes from God; buy for your friend the Lord of heaven and earth: for verily we oftentimes purchase men’s friendship with large sums of gold, and if those of high rank are reconciled unto us, we feel great joy in offering them presents even beyond what we can afford, because of the honour which accrues to us from them. And yet these things are but transitory, and quickly fade away, and are like the phantasies of dreams.

But to be members of God’s household, must we not count that as a thing worth the gaining; and esteem it as of the highest importance? For certainly after the resur-

rection from the dead we must stand in Christ's presence; and there a recompense shall of necessity be made to the compassionate and merciful: but a condemnation commensurate with their deeds shall be the lot of those who were harsh and without mutual love; for it is written, "that there is judgment without mercy for those who have showed no mercy." And if so, how is it not the proof and perfection of a sound mind, that before we descend to the pit of torment we should take forethought for our life? For come, and let us discuss this among ourselves. Suppose that for some cause or other which the law condemned they had dragged us before the judges, and so a sentence such as our offences deserved had been passed upon us after our conviction; should we not with pleasure offer up our wealth to escape from all torment and punishment? And how can there be any doubt of this? For oneself is better than possessions, and life than wealth. Now we are guilty of many sins, and must give an account to the Judge of whatsoever we have done; and why then do we not deliver ourselves from judgment and the everlasting fire while time permits? And the way in which to deliver ourselves is to live in virtue;----to comfort the brethren who are grieved with poverty, and open our hand wide to all who are in need, and to sympathize with the sick.

For tell me what is harder than poverty, that implacable beast of prey, that bane which no admonition can charm away, that worst of maladies, or rather more cruel than any malady? We therefore must give a helping hand to those who are suffering under it: we must open wide to them our heart, and not pass by their lamentation. For suppose a savage beast of prey had sprung upon some wayfarer, would not any one who witnessed the occurrence seize up any thing that came to hand, a stone for instance, or stick, and drive away the beast that was mercilessly rending and tearing the man fallen beneath its blow? Who is so hardhearted and full of hatred to mankind as to pass by one thus miserably perishing? And must not you own, that poverty, as I said, is more cruel than any beast of prey? Aid therefore those who are fallen under it: incline yours ear to the poor, and listen to him, as it is written, "For he, it says, who stops his ears that he may not hear the feeble, he also shall cry, and there shall be none to listen." Give that you may receive: hear that you may be heard: sow your little that you may reap much. And besides, the pleasure of the body is short and temporary, and ends in rottenness: but almsgiving and charity to the poor crown those who practise them with glory from God, and lead them to that incorruptible happiness which Christ bestows on those who love Him: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CIV.

14: 15-24. And when one of them that reclined at table with Him heard these things, he said unto Him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. But He said unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many. And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for lo! all things are ready. And they at once began all of them to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go to see it: I pray you permit me to be excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them: I pray you permit me to be excused. And another said, I have taken a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And when the servant returned, he told his lord these things. Then the master of the house was angry, and said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and marketplaces of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the blind, and the lame. And the servant said, Lord, what you command is done, and yet there is room. And the lord said to his servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper.

AGAIN, the purport of the lessons laid before us obliges me to say, that the fruit of good works is praiseworthy. For not unrewarded is the toil of the saints, as they strenuously labour to lead that life which is truly worthy of admiration both with God and men. For the wise Paul writes, ”For God is not unrighteous to forget your labour and your love, which you have showed unto His Name.” And again in another place he uses similar words, ”For the lightness, he says, of our present affliction works for us abundantly and in a higher degree an eternal greatness of glory, when we look not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen; for the things which are seen are those of time, but the things which are not seen are for eternity.” For the things of time are those of earth; and these we say are what are here called ”the things which are seen:” but those which are to come, and which at present are not seen, but consist in those hopes which, are with God, are stored up for us in mansions that cannot be shaken.

And who they are for whom these things are prepared, and unto whom they will be given, the Saviour has here shown, portraying as in a picture by the parable set before us, the nature and efficacy of the dispensation. It is necessary however for me first to say what was the occasion which led to this discourse.

Our Lord then was feasting at a certain Pharisee's, in company with many others assembled there, the friends of him who had bidden them to the entertainment, and the sharers of his sentiments. There again the Saviour of all, to benefit those who were gathered there,----for He loves mercy rather, and not honour and vainglory;----perfected him that invited them, by not permitting him to make lavish expense, or aim at what was beyond his means, to gain the praise of men. For He said, "When you make a dinner or a supper, call not your friends, nor your brethren, nor further, any others who are rich and your neighbours: but rather the poor, and the maimed, and the blind. For those, He said, who so act shall be blessed at the resurrection of the just." Upon which one of those who were reclining with them at meat, on hearing words thus excellent, said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Probably however this man was not as yet spiritual, but rather animal, nor fitted to understand correctly what was spoken by Christ: for he was not one of those who believed, nor had he as yet been baptized. For he supposed that the rewards of the saints, for their mutual labours of love, would be in things pertaining to the body. Because then they were too dull in heart to comprehend a precise idea, Christ frames for them a parable which with sufficient appositeness sets forth the nature of the dispensation about to be instituted for their sakes: and says, "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many. And he sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for lo! all things are ready."

And here let us first of all inquire, what was the reason why it is rather to a supper than a dinner that the guests were invited; or rather, even before this, who is to be understood by the man who sent one to invite to the supper; and who also is the inviter, and who in fine they are who were invited, but despised the summons. By the man therefore is to be understood God the Father. For similitudes are formed to represent the truth, and are by no means the truth themselves. He therefore, the Creator of the universe, and the Father of glory, made a great supper, that is, a festival for the whole world, in honour of Christ. In the last times then of the world, and. so to speak, at this our world's setting, the Son arose for us: at which time also He suffered death for our sakes, and gave us His flesh to eat, as being the bread from heaven, Which gives life to the world. Towards evening also, and by the light of torches, the lamb was sacrificed, according to the law of Moses. And therefore with good reason the invitation that is by Christ is called a supper.

And next, who is he that was sent, and who it also says was a slave? Perchance Christ Himself: for though God the Word is by nature God, and the very Son of

God the Father, from Whom He was manifested, yet He emptied Himself, to take the form of a slave. As being therefore God of God He is Lord of all; but one may justly apply the appellation of a slave to the limits of His humanity. Yet though He had taken, as I said, the form of a slave, He was even so Lord as being God. And when was He sent? At supper time, it says. For it was not at the commencement of this world that the only-begotten Word of the Father descended from heaven, and was in form like unto us; but rather when the Omnipotent Himself willed it, even in these latter times, as also we have already said.

And what was the nature of the invitation? ”Come: for lo! all things are ready.” For God the Father has prepared in Christ for the inhabitants of earth those gifts which are bestowed upon the world through Him, even the forgiveness of sins, the cleansing away of all defilement, the communion of the Holy Spirit, the glorious adoption as sons, and the kingdom of heaven. Unto these blessings Christ invited by the commandments of the gospel Israel before all others. For somewhere He has even said by the voice of the Psalmist; ”But I have been set as a king by Him; that is, by God the Father; upon Zion His holy mount, to preach the commandment of the Lord.” And again, ”I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

And their determination then, was it for their own good? Did they regard with admiration the gentleness of Him Who bade them, and the office of Him Who ministered the call? Not so: for ”they began, it says, all of them at once to make excuse:” that is, as with one purpose, without any delay, they made excuse. ”For the first said, I have bought a field, and I must needs go to see it: I pray you, permit me to be excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them: I pray you, permit me to be excused. And another said, I have taken a wife, and therefore I cannot come.” You perceive that by senselessly giving themselves up to these earthly matters, they cannot see things spiritual; for being overcome by the love of the flesh, they are far from holiness, and are covetous and greedy after wealth. They seek those things which are below, but make no account, no not in the slightest degree, of those hopes which are stored up with God. Far better would it have been instead of earthly fields to gain the joys of paradise: and instead of transitory tillage, for this was the object of the yokes of oxen, to gather the fruits of righteousness. For it is written, ”Sow for yourselves righteousness; gather as vintage the fruit of life.” Was it not their duty rather, instead of the carnal procreation of children, to have chosen spiritual fruitfulness? For the one is subject unto death and corruption: the other is an eternal and abiding; affluence for the saints.

When then the householder heard their refusal, he was angry, it says; and commanded that from the streets and marketplaces of the city there should be gathered the poor, and the maimed, and the blind, and the lame. And who then are to be understood by those who for the sake, as I said, of lands, and tillage, and the carnal

procreation of children, refused to come? Certainly it must be those, who stood at the head of the Jewish synagogue; men with wealthy purses, the slaves of covetousness, with their mind set on lucre, on which they lavished all their earnestness. For so to speak throughout the whole of inspired Scripture, one may see them blamed for this very thing. Those then who were superior in station to the mass of the common people did not submit themselves to Christ, when, saying unto them, "Take My yoke upon you:" they rejected the invitation: they did not accept the faith; they remained away from the feast; and scorned the great supper by their hardened disobedience. For that the scribes and Pharisees did not believe in Christ, is manifest by what He says unto them, "You have taken away the key of knowledge: you enter not in yourselves: and those that are entering you have hindered." In their stead therefore those were called who were in the streets and market-places, who belonged, that is, to the Jewish common people, whose mind was sickly, and infirm, and dark, and halting: for such one may consider to be blind and lame. But they became strong and whole in Christ: they learnt to walk uprightly, and received the divine light into their mind. And that a multitude of the Jews not easy to number believed, one may learn from the Acts of the Apostles.

When then those, it says, who were in the streets had been called, he whose office it was to bid them to the supper said to the householder, "Still there is room. And the lord said to his servant. Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that no one of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper."

Here observe, I pray, the calling of the Gentiles after that the Israelites had entered by faith.. For in old time the Gentiles were boorish in mind, and uncultivated in understanding, and so to say, outside the city, as living in lawlessness, and more like cattle than men, and with little use of reason. And on this account he who invites to the supper is sent unto the highways, outside the city, and to the hedges in the fields: moreover he is commanded by him who seat him not merely to invite, and offer them exhortation only, but even to compel them. And yet in all men faith is a voluntary act, and by attaining unto it of their own free will, men are acceptable unto God, and largely endowed with His gifts. How then are men compelled? Yes, this also was said advisedly. For it was necessary, absolutely necessary for the Gentiles, as being fettered by an intolerable tyranny, and fallen under the yoke of the devil, and caught, so to speak, in the indissoluble meshes of their sins, and utterly ignorant of Him Who by nature and verily is God, that their calling should be very urgent, resembling the use of force, that they might be able to look up unto God, and taste the sacred doctrines, and leave off their former error, and spring away as it were from the hand of Satan. For Christ also said, "No man can come unto Me except My Father Who sent Me drag him.

But dragging implies that the calling is an act of power such as God only can exercise. And the blessed David is also found addressing God in similar terms respecting them, ”With bridle and bit shall You restrain the jaws of those that draw not near unto You. You see how the God of all as with a bridle turns unto Himself those who fiercely have departed from Him: for He is good and loving unto mankind, and wills that all men should be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth.

The chiefs therefore of the Israelitish populace remained aloof from the supper, as being obdurate and proud and disobedient, and scorned so surpassing an invitation, because they had turned aside to earthly things, and fixed their mind upon the vain distractions of this world. But the vulgar multitude was called in, and after them immediately and without delay the Gentiles. For when our Lord Jesus Christ arose from the dead, He cried out unto the holy apostles saying, ” All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth: go make disciples of all nations, baptizing you them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: and teaching you them to observe all those things that I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you every day even unto the end of the world.”

SERMON CV.

14:25-35. And great multitudes went with Him: and He turned and said unto them; Whosoever cometh unto Me, and hates not his father and his mother, and his wife, and his children, and his brethren, and his sisters: yes, and his own self also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple. For which of you, that wishes to build a tower, sits not down first, and counts the cost, to see whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest when he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king going to make war with another king, sits not down first and consider, whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that comes against him with twenty thousand? And if he be not, while the other is yet afar off, he sends ambasssadors, and asks conditions of peace. So therefore every one of you that forsakes not all his possessions, cannot be My disciple. Halt therefore is good: but if the salt have no savour, with what shall it be seasoned? It is useful neither for the land, nor yet for the dunghill: they cast it out. He that has ears to hear, let him hear.

THOSE who command warlike armies, and have won for themselves martial glory, whenever the time for battle has arrived, instruct the troops under their orders in what way, arraying themselves manfully against the phalanxes of the enemy, they will gain a triumphant victory. And the Saviour of all, imitating the skilfulness of those here mentioned, very clearly shows unto all who would follow Him, the pathway of spiritual manfulness: that advancing with unrestrainable impetuosity unto every triumph of piety, and exerting a stern and irresistible earnestness, they may win by a just decree the right of being with Him, and following Him. This lesson then clearly teaches us, what sort of persons He would have us to be. ”For whosoever comes unto Me, He says, and hates not his father and his mother, and his wife and his children, and his brethren, and his sisters, yes, and his own self also, cannot be My disciple.” ’What then, O Lord, some perchance may say, do You despise the laws of natural affection? Do You command us to hate one another, and to disregard the love that is due to fathers from their sons, to wives from their husbands, to brethren from their brethren? Shall we make those enemies who are members of the same household; and those, whom it is our duty rather to love,

must we count as foes, in order that we may be with you, and be able to follow you?'

This is not what the Saviour means. Away with so vain a a thought. For He Who commands even those who are violent enemies to be gentle, and forgiving to all who would do them wrong: for, "Love, He says, your enemies: and pray for them that spoil you:" how could He wish us to hate those who are born of the same family, and to disregard the honour due to parents, and think nothing of despising our brethren; yes! and our own children also, and even our own self? For He, Who has pronounced condemnation even upon those who disregard the law of mutual love, could not wish His friends to cherish a savage, and so to speak, a desperate state of minds. What however He does wish to teach in these commands is plain to those who can understand from what is said in another place expressly upon the same subject. "For he that loves, He says, father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me: and he that loves son or daughter more Me, is not worthy of Me." By adding then "more than Me," it is plain that He permits us to love, but not more than we do Him. For He demands for Himself our chief affection; and that very justly: for the love of God in those who are perfect in mind has something in it superior both to the honour due to parents, and to the natural affection felt for children.

"We must explain however what the occasion was which directed our Lord's words to this subject. The passage then read from the Gospel at our last meeting described the celebration of a great supper, unto which many were invited by him who gave the feast. But they were men indifferent to it: for "they made excuse, it says, with one accord, and said, one that he had bought a field, and must needs go to see it: and another, that he had bought five yoke of oxen: and a third again, that he had married a wife: and by employing these feigned excuses, they vexed him who invited them. We are therefore given most clearly to understand, that when God calls us unto Him, to make us partakers of His bounty, we must disregard the lusts that are of the flesh, and minister to the flesh, and set no value whatsoever upon the things of this world, but exerting all our force must advance unto those things which will never have to be abandoned, and which fill us with all blessedness, as God bestows with bounteous hand upon us His gifts, and like one welcoming us to a costly banquet, admits us to the right of rejoicing with the rest of the saints in the hope of future blessings. For the things of earth, are but of little value and last only for a time, and belong to the flesh solely, which is the victim of corruption:

but those things which are divine and spiritual constantly and without ceasing accompany those who have once been counted worthy of receiving them, and reach onwards to unending worlds. What value therefore will men of sense set upon earthly farms, or the love of carnal pleasure, or the respect due to kinsmen in the flesh, if it be laid down that for love's sake unto Christ, we must disregard all these

things that have been named? For many instances have there been of men desirous of a blameless life, who even after touching, so to speak, the dust of the palaestra, and making trial of the combats therein, and all but attaining to the right of receiving the crown of the heavenly calling, have been drawn backward, as it were, either from regard to relatives, or from being too weak to bear a struggle of endurance, or from being entangled in the snares of carnality, and foolishly preferring present pleasure to the blessings laid up in hope. Many too the feav of death has terrified, and when the season called them unto persecutions, that being proved they might receive the crown of incorruption, they have denied the faith, have avoided, that is, the duty of suffering patiently, and having shown themselves weak and cowardly, have fallen from their steadfastness.

To work in us therefore a mind incapable of being broken, and make us careless of every worldly matter for our love of Him, He commands us to hate even our relatives according to the flesh, and our own self also, if, as I have just said, the season call us thereto.

And next He uses two examples, to encourage unto an invincible fortitude those who are His friends, and to establish in an unwavering zeal those whose desire it is to attain to honours by patience and endurance. ”For if, says He, any one wish to build a tower, he reckons first if he have means sufficient to finish it, lest when he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, men laugh at him.” For those whose choice it is to lead a glorious and blameless life ought to store up beforehand in their mind a zeal sufficient thereunto, and to remember him who says, ”My son, if you draw near to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for every temptation: make your heart straight, and endure.’” But those who have no such zeal, how will they be able to reach the mark that is set before them?

”Or what king, He says, wishing to make war with another king, does not consider with himself, whether with his ten thousand he can prevail over one who is more mighty than himself?” And what does this mean? ”Our wrestle is not against blood and flesh, but against governments; against empires; against the worldholders of this darkness; against wicked spirits in the heavenly regions.” We have too a crowd, as it were, of other enemies, the carnal mind, the law that rages in our members, passions of many kinds, the lust of pleasure, the lust of the flesh, the lust of wealth, and others: with these we must wrestle; this is our savage troop of enemies. How therefore shall we conquer? By believing that ”in God we shall do valiantly, as Scripture says, and He shall bring to naught those that oppress us:” In this confidence one of the holy prophets said, ”Behold the Lord helps me: who shall make me ashamed?” And the divine David also sings, ”The Lord is my light, and my Saviour: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the helper of my life, at whom shall I tremble?” For He is our strength, and by Him we shall gain victory: for He has given unto us to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the

enemy. As therefore He says, ”Salt is good: but if the salt be tasteless, with what can it be seasoned? It is cast out,” He says. Let there be therefore, He proceeds, salt in you,” that is, the divine words which bring salvation: but which if we despise, we become without savour, and foolish, and utterly useless. Such things must the congregation of the saints cast out, by the gift unto them of mercy and love from Christ, the Saviour of us all; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CVI.

15:1-10. Now all the publicans and sinners used to draw near unto Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This man receives sinners, and eats with them. And He spoke this parable unto them, saying, What man of you having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it. And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he has come home, he calls together his friends and his neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me: for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. Or what woman having ten drachms, if she lose one of them, does not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and search diligently till she find it. And when she has found it, she calls her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me: for I have found the drachm which I had lost. Likewise I say unto you, that there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner that repents.

YOU have no doubt attended here also to what has been read; you have wondered with me at the Saviour's words: have you also understood it thoroughly and spiritually, and fixed the searching eye of the mind upon its profounder interpretation? Has the sense of what has been said been caught by you? Or possibly has the word, after having rung in your hearing, flown away, and nothing settled there that would be to your profit. But as I imagine, in that you are believers, and love instruction, the Saviour illumines your understanding. For He it is "Who reveals the deep things of darkness, and puts the light of understanding in the hearts of those that love Him." The two parables then that follow close upon one another depict to us an image of the divine gentleness, being both of similar meaning, and, so to say, at concord with one another. But the senseless Jew is openly reproved, for refusing in every way to understand the great and profound mystery of the Incarnation. From him it was completely hidden, that God the Father sent the Son from heaven, not "to judge the world," as He Himself declares, but that the world might be saved through Him. In what manner then was it fitting for the world to be saved, which had been caught in the meshes of sin, and proved guilty of the

charge of wickedness, and that was subject to a cruel tyrant, even Satan? Was it by demanding of it punishment, for having fallen into transgression and sin? Or was it not rather by helping it, in that God is long-suffering, and ready, so to speak, to cover over in forgetfulness those things wherein man had transgressed, and to renew unto holiness of life those who know not how to live uprightly?

Tell me therefore, O Pharisee, why you murmur, because Christ disdained not to be with publicans and sinners, but purposely provided for them this means of salvation? To save men He yielded Himself to emptiness, and became in fashion like unto us, and clothed Himself in human poverty. And do you then blame the dispensation of the Only-begotten in the flesh? Do you find fault with His humbling Himself from above in heaven, Who transcends all? Nay, leave you not the very Incarnation without censure? And yet the holy prophets wondered at the beautiful skill of the mystery. For the prophet David in the Psalms declares, ”Sing you with understanding: God has set a King over all the nations.” And the prophet Habakkuk says, ”That he heard His hearing, and was afraid: and that he considered also His doings, and was astonished.” How therefore are you not ashamed of blaming those things which you ought to have admired? Would you have the Lord of all stern and inexorable, or good rather and kind to men? The family upon earth had gone astray: it had wandered from the hand of the chief shepherd: and therefore He Who feeds the flocks above in heaven, became like unto us, that He might make us also dwell in His folds:----that He might unite us to those who had never gone astray, and drive from us the beast of prey, and ward off like some impious band of robbers those impure demons, who had led astray all beneath the sky.

He sought therefore that which was lost: and, to show that the Jewish fault-finding on this account was vain, He says unto them, ”What man of you having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go to seek that which is lost. And if it chance to be found, he rejoices in it, He says, more than in those that went not astray.” Understand from this, my beloved, the wide extent of the Saviour’s kingdom, and the multitude past numbering of His subjects, and the skilful plan of the dispensation towards us. For the sheep, He says, are a hundred, so making the number of His subjects mount up to a multitude complete and altogether perfect. For constantly, so to speak, a hundred is a perfect number, being composed of ten times ten. And we have learnt also from the divinely-inspired Scripture, that a ”thousand thousands minister to God, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand around His lofty throne.” The sheep therefore are a hundred: and of them one has gone astray, even the family upon earth; which also the chief Shepherd of all sought, having left in the wilderness those ninety and nine. Was it therefore because He had no regard for the many, that mercy was shown to the one only? No! not because He had no regard for them; that were impossible: but because they are in security, guarded by His Almighty hand. It was right therefore that mercy should rather be shown to that which was

lost, that evidently nothing might be wanting to that other multitude, but the one being restored thereto, the hundred might regain its beauty.

The search therefore after that which was lost was no act of contempt towards those who had not erred, but one of grace and mercy and love to mankind fit for the supreme and transcendent nature to bestow on His fallen creatures. For come, and let us examine the matter by the help also of another example, in order that we may at all times defend the incomparable gentleness of Christ, the Saviour of us all. For let it be supposed that in one house there are many inmates, of whom it so chances that one falls ill. For whom then are those skilled in healing summoned? Is it not for him only who has fallen ill? But it is not through any disregard of the many, that those who have been called in to heal attend only to him who is sick, and give him the benefit of their skill, as the time and his need require. In like manner therefore it was worthy, right worthy of God, Who rules over all, to stretch out His saving hand to that which had gone astray. The wild beast had seized it: it had led the family upon earth astray from the pasture, and had hurried it into all misery. The chief Shepherd saved it: for He sought that which had wandered, and has established for us a fold, unassailable and impregnable against wild boasts and robbers, even the Church; in admiration of which we may say, in the words of the prophet, ”Behold, we have a strong and secure city: He will place (for us) a wall and rampart.”

And the sense of the parable which immediately follows is exactly similar, in which, He says, that ’a woman who had ten drachms lost one of them, and having lit a lamp and found it, rejoiced greatly therein, and made it a reason for special joy.’ By the former parable therefore, in which the wandering sheep signified the family upon earth, we learnt, that we are the property of God over all, in that He it is Who brought into existence those things which previously had no existence. For ”He made us, and not we ourselves,” as it is written. And ”He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.” And by this second parable, in which that which was lost is compared to a drachma, and that again as one out of ten, that is of a perfect number, and of a sum complete in the reckoning;----for the number ten also is perfect, being the close of the series from the unit upwards;----it is clearly shown, that we are in the royal likeness and image, even that of God over all. For the drachma is, I suppose, the denarius, on which is stamped the royal likeness, That we then who had fallen, and, so to speak, been lost, have been found by Christ, and transformed by holiness and righteousness into His image, how can any one doubt, when the blessed Paul has thus written, ”But we all, with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as of the Lord the Spirit.” And he sends to the Galatians also in these words, ”My children, of whom I am again in labour, until Christ is formed in you.”

A search then was made for that which had fallen, for which purpose the woman lighted a lamp. For we were found, as I said, by the wisdom of God the Father, Which is the Son, when the divine and intellectual light shone upon us, and the sun arose, and ”the day star ascended, and the day dawned,” according to the Scripture. For God also has somewhere said by one of the holy prophets of Christ the Saviour of us all, ”My righteousness quickly approaches, and My mercy to be revealed, and My salvation shall burn as a lamp.” And He says of Himself, at one time, ”I am the light of the world:” and again at another, ”I am come a light into this world: he that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall possess the light of life.” By the light therefore that which was lost is saved, and there was joy thereby to the powers above. For they rejoice even in one sinner that repents, as He has taught us Who knows all things. If they then keep festival over one who is saved, in unison altogether with the divine purpose, and laud with never-ceasing praises the Saviour’s gentleness, with how great joy must they be filled, when all beneath the heaven is saved, and called by faith in Christ to the acknowledgment of the truth, having put off the pollutions of sin, and loosed its neck from the bonds of death, and escaped from blame, even the blame of its wandering and fall! For all these things we gain in Christ: by Whom, and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion with, the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CVII.

15:11-32. And He said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of your goods that comes to me. And he divided unto them his substance. And not many days after, the younger son gathered every thing together, and journeyed into a far country, and there scattered his goods by riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he desired to fill his belly with the husks which the swine were eating: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father have bread in abundance, and 1 perish here with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you, and am no more 'worthy to be called your son: make me as one of your hired servants. And he arose and went to his father. And while He was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and his bowels yearned, and he ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And his son said unto him, My father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son.

But his father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the chief robe, and clothe him: and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and we will eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive: and was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.----Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard the sound of music and rejoicing. And he called one of the servants, and asked him what these things meant. And he said unto him, Your brother is come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and besought him. But he answered and said to his father, Lo! all these years do I serve you, and never have transgressed your commandment, and you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this your son, who has, eaten up your wealth with harlots, is come, you have killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, My son, you are ever with me: and all that is mine is yours. But it was fitting to make merry and be glad: for this your brother was dead, and is alive: and was lost, and is found.

I HEAR one of the holy prophets trying to win unto repentance those who are far from God, and saying, ”Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God: for you have become weak in your iniquity. Take with you words, and return to the Lord our God.” What sort of words then did he, under the influence of the Spirit, command them to take with them? Or were they not such as become those who wish to repent; such namely, as would appease God, Who is gentle, and loves mercy. For He even said by one of the holy prophets, ”Return you returning children, and I will heal your breaches.” And yet again by the voice of Ezekiel, ”Return you altogether from your wickednesses, O house of Israel. Cast away from you all your iniquities which you have committed, that they be not to you for a punishment of iniquity. For I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner, as that he should turn from his evil way and live.” And the same truth Christ here also teaches us, by this most beautifully composed parable, which I will now to the best of my ability endeavour to discuss, briefly gathering up its broad statements, and explaining and defending the ideas which it contains.

It is the opinion then of some, that by the two sons are signified the holy angels, and we the dwellers upon earth: and that the elder one, who lived soberly, represents the company of the holy angels, while the younger and profligate son is the human race. And there are some among us who give it a different explanation, arguing that by the elder and well conducted son is signified Israel after the flesh: while by the other, whose choice it was to live in the lust of pleasures, and who removed far from his father, is depicted the company of the Gentiles. With these explanations I do not agree: but I would have him who loves instruction, search after that which is true and unobjectionable. What then I say is as follows, ”giving occasions to the wise, and to the just offering knowledge,” as Scripture commands: for they will examine for a fitting meaning the explanations proposed to them. If then we refer the upright son to the person of the holy angels, we do not find him speaking such words as become them, nor sharing their feelings towards repentant sinners, who turn from an impure life to that conduct which is worthy of admiration. For the Saviour of all and Lord says, that ”there is joy in heaven before the holy angels over one sinner that repents.

But the son, who is described to us in the present parable as being acceptable unto his father, and leading a blameless life, is represented as being angry, and as even having proceeded so far in his unloving sentiments as to find fault with his father for his natural affection for him who was saved. ”For he would not, it says, go into the house,” being vexed at the reception of the penitent almost before he had come to his senses, and because there had even been slain the calf in his honour, and his father had made for him a feast. But this, as I said, is at variance with the feelings of the holy angels: for they rejoice and praise God when they see the inhabitants of the earth being saved. For so when the Son submitted to be born in the flesh of a woman at Bethlehem, they carried the joyful news to the shepherds,

saying, ”Fear you not: for behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people, that there is born to you today in the city of David a Saviour Who is Christ the Lord. And crowning with lauds and praises Him Who was born, they said, ”Glory to God in the highest, and upon earth peace, and among men good-will.”

But if any one say, that Israel according to the flesh is meant by the virtuous and sober son, we are again prevented from assenting to this opinion by the fact, that in no way whatsoever is it fitting to say of Israel that he chose a blameless life. For throughout the whole of the inspired Scripture, so to say, we may see them accused of being rebels and disobedient. For they were told by the voice of Jeremiah, ”What fault have your fathers found in Me, that they have wandered far from Me, and have gone after vanities, and become vain?” And in similar terms God somewhere spoke by the voice of Isaiah, ”This people draws near unto Me; with their lips they honour Me, but their heart is very far from Me: but in vain do they fear Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” And how then can any one apply to those who are thus blamed the words used in the parable of the virtuous and sober son? For he said, ”Lo! all these years do I serve you, and never have I transgressed your commandment.” But they would not have been blamed for their mode of life, had it not been that transgressing the divine commandments, they betook themselves to a careless and polluted mode of life.

And yet again,----for I think it right to mention this also,----some would refer to the person of our Saviour that fatted calf which the father killed when his son was called unto conversion. But how then could the virtuous son, who is described as wise and prudent, and constant in his duty, and whom some even refer to the person of the holy angels, treat it as a reason for anger and vexation that the calf was slain? For one can find no proof of the powers above being grieved when Christ endured death in the flesh, and, so to speak, was slain in our behalf. Rather they rejoiced, as I said, in seeing the world saved by His holy blood. And what reason too had the virtuous son for saying ”you never gave me a kid.” For what blessing is wanting to the holy angels, inasmuch as the Lord of all has bestowed upon them with bounteous hand a plentiful supply of spiritual gifts? Or of what sacrifice stood they in need as regards their own state? For there was no necessity for the Emmanuel to suffer also in their behalf. But if any one imagine, as I have already said before, that the carnal Israel is meant by the virtuous and sober son, how can he say with truth ”you never gave me a kid?” For whether we call it calf or kid, Christ is to be understood as the sacrifice offered for sin. But He was sacrificed, not for the Gentiles only, but that He might also redeem Israel, who by reason of his frequent transgression of the law had brought upon himself great blame. And the wise Paul bears witness to this, saying, ”For this reason Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people by His blood, suffered outside the gate.”

What then is the object of the parable? Let us examine the occasion which led to it; for so we shall learn the truth. The blessed Luke therefore had himself said a little before of Christ the Saviour of us all, ”And all the publicans and sinners drew near unto Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured saying, This man receives sinners and eats ” with them.” As therefore the Pharisees and Scribes made this outcry at His gentleness and love to man, and wickedly and impiously blamed Him for receiving and teaching men whose lives were impure, Christ very necessarily set before them the present parable, to show them clearly this very thing, that the God of all requires even him who is thoroughly steadfast, and firm, and who knows how to live holily, and has attained to the highest praise for sobriety of conduct, to be earnest in following His will, so that when any are called unto repentance, even if they be men highly blameable, he must rejoice rather, and not give way to an unloving vexation on their account.

For we also sometimes experience something of this sort. For some there are who live a perfectly honourable and consistent life, practising every kind of virtuous action, and abstaining from every thing disapproved by the law of God, and crowning themselves with perfect praises in the sight of God and of men: while another is perhaps weak and trodden down, and humbled unto every kind of wickedness, guilty of base deeds, loving impurity, given to covetousness, and stained with all evil. And yet such a one often in old age turns unto God, and asks the forgiveness of his former offences: he prays for mercy, and putting away from him his readiness to fall into sin, sets his affection on virtuous deeds. Or even perhaps when about to close his mortal life, he is admitted to divine baptism, and puts away his offences, God being merciful unto him. And perhaps sometimes persons are indignant at this, and even say, ’This man, who has been guilty of such and such actions, and has spoken such and such words, has not paid unto the judge the retribution of his conduct, but has been counted worthy of a grace thus noble and admirable: he has been inscribed among the sons of God, and honoured with the glory of the saints.’ Such complaints men sometimes give utterance too from an empty narrowness of mind, not conforming to the purpose of the universal Father. For He greatly rejoices when He sees those who were lost obtaining salvation, and raises them up again to that which they were in the beginning, giving them the dress of freedom, and adorning them with the chief robe, and putting a ring upon their hand, even the orderly behaviour which is pleasing to God and suitable to the free.

It is our duty, therefore, to conform ourselves to that which God wills: for He heals those who are sick; He raises those who are fallen; He gives a helping hand to those who have stumbled; He brings back him who has wandered; He forms anew unto a praiseworthy and blameless life those who were wallowing in the mire of sin; He seeks those who were lost; He raises as from the dead those who had suffered the spiritual death. Let us also rejoice: let us, in company with the holy angels, praise Him as being good, and loving unto men; as gentle, and not remembering evil. For

if such is our state of mind, Christ will receive us, by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CVIII.

16:1-9. And He said unto His disciples, There was a certain rich man, who had a steward, and they accused him of scattering his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, What is this that I hear of you? Give up the account of your stewardship: for you can be no longer steward. And the steward said within himself What shall I do, for my lord takes away from me the stewardship? I cannot dig: and to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that when I am removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called each one of his lord's debtors, and said unto the first; How much do you owe unto my lord? And he said, A hundred baths of oil. And he said unto him, Take your writing, and sit down, and write fifty quickly. And afterwards he spoke to the second, And how much do you owe? And he said, A hundred cors of wheat. And he said unto him, Take your writing, and write eighty. And the lord praised the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are wise in their generation more than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make for yourselves friends of the unrighteous mammon: that when it has failed, they may receive you into eternal tabernacles.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, revealing His glory to the Jewish multitudes, or rather to all those who have believed on Him, said; "I am the light of the world:" and again, "I am come a light into this world." For He fills the mind of those who fear Him with a divine and intellectual light, that they may not wander from the right way by walking in gloom and darkness; but may rather know how to advance uprightly in every good work, and in whatsoever aids a man in leading a saintly life. He would have us therefore to be good, and ready to communicate, loving one another, and merciful, and adorned with the honours of charity. Most wisely therefore did He prepare for us the present parable: which we being anxious to explain to the best of our ability, of necessity speak as follows to those who love instruction.

The parables then indirectly and figuratively explain to us much that is for our edification, provided only we consider their meaning in a brief and summary manner. For we are not to search into all the parts of the parable in a subtle and prying way, lest the argument by its immoderate length weary with superfluous matter even those most fond of hearing, and tire men with a crowd of words. For if, for

instance, any one were to undertake to explain, who is to be regarded by us as the man who had a steward, who was accused unto him; or who possibly it is that accused him; and who too those are who owed the debts, and subtracted a portion from them; and for what reason one is said to have owed oil, and the other wheat; he will render his discourse at once obscure and redundant. All the parts of the parable therefore are not necessarily and in every respect useful for the explanation of the things signified, but, so to speak, have been taken to form an image of some important matter, which figuratively sets forth some lesson for the profit of the hearers.

The sense therefore of the present parable is something like the following: ”The God of all wills that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. For this reason ”He also gave the law for a help,” according to the expression of the prophet. And the law in such passages we say means, not of course that which was ministered by Moses, but rather the whole inspired Scripture, by means of which we learn the path which leads straight unto every good and saving thing. The Lord of all therefore requires us to be thoroughly constant in our exertions after virtue, and to fix our desires upon the better and holy life, setting ourselves free from the distractions of the world, and from all love of riches, and of the pleasure which wealth brings, that we may serve Him continually, and with undivided affections. For He also says by the harp of the Psalmist; ”Be constant, and know that I am God. And further, by His own mouth, the Saviour of all says to those who possess worldly riches, ”Sell your possessions, and give alms: make for you purses that grow not old: a treasure for ever, unfailing in heaven. Now the commandment is indeed for our salvation, but the mind of man is very weak, fixed constantly, so to speak, upon things which are of earth chiefly, and unwilling to withdraw itself from the delight of riches. It loves vain boasting; is soothed much by the praises of flatterers;

longs for beautiful equipments, and counts nothing better than temporal honour. And knowing this, the Saviour has Himself somewhere said of them, ”How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And further, ”that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than a rich man into the kingdom of God. For as long as a man lives in wealth and pleasure, he is careless about piety to God. For wealth renders men contemptuous, and sows in the minds of those that possess it the seeds of all voluptuousness.

Is there then no way of salvation for the rich, and no means of making them partakers of the hope of the saints? Have they fallen completely from God’s grace? Is hell and the fire necessarily prepared for them, such as is the fitting lot of the devil and his angels? Not so: for lo! the Saviour has shown them a means of salvation in the present parable. They have been entrusted with worldly wealth by the merciful permission of Almighty God: according nevertheless to His intention they have been appointed stewards for the poor. But they discharge not their stewardship

rightly, in that they scatter, so to speak, what has been given them of the Lord: for they waste it solely on their pleasures, and purchase temporal honours, not remembering God, Who says, ”You shall open wide your mercy unto your brother, even to him that has need of you. Nor moreover Christ Himself, the Saviour of us all, Who says, ”Be you merciful, even as your Father Who is in heaven is merciful.” But they, as I said, make no account whatsoever of showing mercy to their brethren, but study only their own pride. And this it is which accuses them before the Lord of all. And of course upon the approach of death they must cease from their stewardship, withdrawing them as it does from human affairs. For the net of death no man can escape from. What therefore would Christ have them to do?

It is, that while they are yet in this world, if they are unwilling to divide all their wealth among the poor, that at least they should gain friends by a part of it; and numerous witnesses to their charitableness, even those who have received well at their hands: that when their earthly wealth fails them, they may gain a place in their tabernacles. For it is impossible for love to the poor ever to remain unrewarded. Whether therefore a man give away all his wealth, or but a part, he will certainly benefit his soul.

It is an act therefore that becomes the saints, and is worthy of perfect praises, and that wins the crowns above, to set no store by earthly wealth, but distributing it among those that are in need, to gather rather that which is in heaven, and obtain purses that grow not old, and possess a treasure that fails not: and next in order comes the employment of a sort of artifice, so as to obtain those for friends who are especially near unto God, by giving them some portion of their wealth, and comforting the many who are afflicted with poverty, that so they may share what is theirs. And something of this sort the very wise Paul also advises, saying unto those who love wealth: ”Let your abundance be for their want, that their abundance also may be for your want.”

It is our duty therefore, if we are right-minded; if we fix the eye of the mind on what will be hereafter; if we remember the sacred Scripture, which says plainly, ”that we shall all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive retribution for the things done by means of the body, according to that he has done, whether good or bad;” if we fear the cruel and unappeasable flame; to remember God, Who requires us to show mercy upon the brethren, to suffer with those that are sick, to open our hand wide to those that are in need, and to honour the saints, of whom Christ says, ”He that receives you receives Me: and he that receives Me, receives Him That sent Me.” For that mercy towards the brethren is not without profit and benefit, the Saviour Himself teaches us, saying; ”Whosoever shall give only a cup of cold [water] to drink in the name of a disciple, shall not lose his reward.” For the Saviour of all is bounteous in giving: by Whom and with

Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CIX.

16:10-13. He that is faithful in little, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in little, is unjust also in much. If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will give you the true? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you, that which is your own? No servant can serve two lords: for either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will honour the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. THE most distinguished and experienced teachers, when they wish to fix any important doctrine deep in the minds of their disciples, omit no kind of reasoning able to throw light upon the chief object of their thoughts; at one time weaving arguments together, at another employing apposite examples, and so gathering from every quarter whatever is serviceable for their use. And this we find Christ also, Who is the Giver unto us of all wisdom, doing in many places. For oftentimes He repeats the very same arguments upon the subject, whatever it may be, that the mind of those who hear may be led on to an exact understanding of His words. For look again, I pray, at the purport of the lessons set before us: for so you will find our words to be true. "He that is faithful in little," He says, "is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in little, is unjust also in much."

Before, however, I proceed further, I think it would be useful to consider, what was the occasion of a discourse such as this, and from what root it sprung: for so the sense of what is said will become very evident. Christ then was teaching the rich to feel especial delight in showing kindness to the poor, and in opening their hand to whoever are in need, so laying up treasures in heaven, and taking forethought for the riches that are in store. For He said, "Make for yourselves friends of the unrighteous mammon: that when it has failed, they may receive you into eternal tabernacles. But as being God by nature, He well knew the slothfulness of the human mind in every earnest and good work. It escaped not His knowledge, that men, in their greediness after wealth, giving up their mind to the love of lucre, and being tyrannized over by this passion, become hard-hearted and unsympathizing with affliction, and show no kindness whatsoever to the poor, even though they have heaped up much wealth in their stores. That those therefore who are thus minded, have no share in God's spiritual gifts, He shows by most evident examples,

and says, ”He that is faithful in little, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in little, is unjust also in much. O Lord, explain unto us the meaning: open You the eye of our heart. Listen therefore while He explains clearly and exactly what He said.

”If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will give you the true? The little therefore is the unrighteous mammon: that is, worldly wealth, gathered often by extortion and covetousness. But those who know how to live virtuously, and thirst after the hope that is in store, and withdraw their mind from earthly things, and think rather of those things that are above, utterly disregard earthly wealth; for it offers nothing but pleasures, and voluptuousness, and base carnal lusts, and splendour that profits not, but is transitory and vain. And so one of the holy apostles teaches us, saying, ”That all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of the world. But such things as these are absolutely nothing to those who lead a sober and virtuous life: for they are trifling, and temporary, and full of impurity, and provocative of the fire and judgment, and scarcely reaching to the end of the life of the body, even if they do not, when any danger suddenly befalls those that possess them, unexpectedly depart away. Christ’s disciple therefore rebukes the rich, saying, ”Come now, you rich men, weep, and lament over the miseries that are coming upon you. Your wealth is decayed, your garments are motheaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted, and the rust of them shall be your testimony. How then are the gold and silver rusted? By being stored up in excessive abundance;

and this very thing is the witness against them before the divine judgment seat, of their being unmerciful. For having gathered into their treasuries a great and unnecessary abundance, they made no account of those who were in need, although it was in their power, had they so wished, to do good easily to many; but they were not ”faithful in the little.”

But in what way men may become faithful, the Saviour Himself next taught us: and I will explain how. A certain Pharisee besought Him to eat bread with him on the sabbath day, and Christ consented: and having gone there, He sat down to meat: and there were many others also feasting with them. And none of them by any means resembled men who possessed nothing, but, on the contrary, they were all persons of distinction, and great haughtiness, and lovers of the foremost seats, and thirsting after vainglory, being clothed as it were in the pride of wealth. What then said Christ to His inviter? ”When you make a dinner or a supper, call not your friends, nor your brethren, neither your kinsmen, nor your rich neighbours, lest they also invite you again, and a re-compense be made you. But when you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind. And you shall be blessed, because they cannot recompense you; for you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. This then I think is a man’s being faithful in little, that he

have pity upon those who are in need, and distribute assistance from his means to such as are in extreme distress. But we, despising a way thus glorious and sure of reward, choose one dishonourable and without reward, by treating with contempt those who are in utter poverty, and refusing even sometimes to admit their words into our ears;

while, on the other hand, we luxuriously provide a costly table, either for friends who live in pomp, or for those whose habit it is to praise and flatter, making our bounty an occasion for indulging our love of praise. But this was not God's purpose in permitting us to possess wealth. If therefore we are unfaithful in the little, by not conforming ourselves to the will of God, and bestow the best portion of ourselves upon our pleasures and our boasts, how can we receive from Him that which is true? And what is this? The abundant bestowal of those divine gifts which adorn man's soul, and form in it a godlike beauty. This is the spiritual wealth, not that fattens the flesh, which is held by death, but rather that saves the soul, and makes it worthy of emulation, and honourable before God, and that wins for it true praises.

It is our duty therefore to be faithful unto God, pure in heart, merciful and kind, just and holy: for these things imprint in us the outlines of the divine likeness, and perfect us as heirs of eternal life. And this then is that which is true. And that this is the purport and view of the Saviour's words, any one may readily learn from what follows. For He said, "If you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" And again, we say that which is another's is the wealth we possess. For we were not born with riches, but, on the contrary, naked; and can truly affirm in the words of Scripture, "that we neither brought anything into the world, nor can carry anything out. For the patient Job also has said something of this kind: "Naked was I born from my mother's womb; naked also shall I go onwards." It is therefore no man's own by right of nature that he is rich, and lives in abundant wealth: but it is a thing added on from without, and is a chance matter; and if it cease and perish, it in no respect whatsoever harms the definitions of human nature. For it is not by virtue of our being rich that wc are reasonable beings, and skilful in every good work: but it is the property of our nature to be capable of these things. That therefore, as I said, is another's which is not contained in the definitions of our nature, but, on the contrary, is manifestly added to us from without. But it is our own, and the property of human nature to be fitted for every good work: for as the blessed Paul writes, "We have been created unto good works, which God has before prepared, that we should walk in them."

When therefore any are unfaithful in that which is another's, in those things namely, which are added unto them from without, how shall they receive that which is their own? How, that is, shall they be made partakers of the good things which God gives, which adorn the soul of man, and imprint upon it a divine beauty, spiritually formed

in it by righteousness and holiness, and those upright deeds which are done in the fear of God. Let such of us then as possess earthly wealth open our hearts to those who are in need; let us show ourselves faithful and obedient to the laws of God, and followers of our Lord's will in those things which are from without, and not our own, that we may receive that which is our own, even that holy and admirable beauty which God forms in the souls of men, fashioning them like unto Himself, according to what we originally were.

And that it is a thing impossible for one and the same person to divide himself between contraries, and still be able to live blamelessly, He shows by saying, "No man can serve two lords: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or he will honour the one, and despise the other." And this indeed is a plain and evident example, and very suitable for the elucidation of the subject before us. For that which follows is, so to speak, the conclusion of the whole argument: "for you cannot serve God and mammon." For if, He says, a man be a slave of two masters, of diverse and contrary wills, and whose minds are irreconcilable with one another, how can he please them both? For being divided in endeavouring to do that which each one approves, he is in opposition to the will of both: and so the same person must inevitably appear bad and good. If therefore, He says, he determine to be true to the one, he will hate the other, and set him of course at nought. It is not therefore possible to serve God and mammon. For the unrighteous mammon, by which wealth is signified, is a thing given up to voluptuousness, and liable to every reproach, engendering boasting, and the love of pleasure, making men stiff-necked, the friends of the wicked, and contemptuous: yes, what base vice does it not produce in them that possess it?

But the goodwill of God renders men gentle, and quiet, and lowly in their thoughts; long-suffering, and merciful, and of exemplary patience, not loving lucre, nor desirous of wealth, content with food only and raiment, and especially fleeing from "the love of money, which is the root of all evils:" joyfully undertaking toils for piety's sake; fleeing from the love of pleasure, and earnestly shunning all feeling of wearisomeness in good works, while constantly they value, as that which wins them reward, the endeavour to live uprightly, and the practice of all soberness. This is that which is our own, and the true. This God will bestow on those who love poverty, and know how to distribute to those who are in need that which is another's, and comes from without, even their wealth, which also has the name of mammon. May it then be far from the mind of each of us to be its slaves, that so we may freely and without hindrance bow the neck of our mind to Christ the Saviour of us all; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

Introduction

Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on Luke (1859) Sermons 110-123 (Luke 16:14-18:27) pp. 517-572 Sermon 110 Sermon 111 Sermon 112 (start) Sermon 113-116 (fragments) Sermon 117 Sermon 118 Sermon 119 Sermon 120 Sermon 121 Sermon 122 Sermon 123

SERMON CX.

16:14-17. And the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He said unto them, You are they who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts: for that which is high among men, is an abomination before God. The law and the prophets until John: thenceforth the kingdom of God is preached, and every one takes it by force. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one point of the law to fall.

THE love of money, my brethren, is a most wicked passion, and not easy to abandon. For when Satan has planted this malady in a man's soul, he next proceeds to blind him, nor does he permit him to listen to the words of exhortation, lest there be found for us a way of healing, able to save from misery those who are ensnared thereby. And observe again, I pray, how true my words upon this subject are from the instance even of the Pharisees. For they were lovers of riches, and enamoured of gain, and regarded a bare sufficiency with contempt. For even, so to speak, throughout the whole of the divinely inspired Scripture, one may see them blamed on this very account. For it is said by the voice of Isaiah to the mother of the Jews, I mean, Jerusalem, "Your princes are rebellious, the partners of thieves: loving bribes, pursuing after reward: they judge not the fatherless, neither do they regard the widow's suit." And the prophet Habbakuk also said, "How long, O Lord, shall I cry unto you, and You wilt not hear? and shout unto You, being oppressed, and You will not deliver? Judgment is before me, and the judge has taken a bribe: therefore is the law of none avail, and judgment comes not forth unto completion: for the wicked prevails over the righteous, therefore does judgment come forth perverted." For as being lovers, as I said, of lucre, they repeatedly gave judgment on the matters before them, |518 not according to what was agreeable to the laws of God, but, on the contrary, iniquitously, and in opposition to God's will.

Moreover, the Saviour Himself rebuked them, thus saying, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: who tithe anise, and mint, and cummin; and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith." For as the law had set apart for them the right of receiving tithes of every one, they extended the exactness of the search after them down to the most insignificant vegetables,

while they made but slight account of the weightier matters of the law, that is, of those commandments which were of necessary obligation and for men's good. "Because therefore the Pharisees, it says, were lovers of money, they derided Jesus," for directing them by His salutary doctrines to a praiseworthy course of conduct, and rendering them desirous of saintly glories. For it was their duty, He tells them, to sell their possessions, and make distribution to the poor; so would they possess in heaven a treasure that could not be plundered, and purses that could not be harmed, and wealth that would not have to be abandoned. And why then did they deride Him? For certainly the doctrine was salutary, a pathway of hope in things to come, and a door leading unto the life incorruptible: for they were being taught by Him the manners of true prosperity, and learning how they must seize the crown of the heavenly calling; how too they might become partakers with the saints, and children of the city that is above, the Jerusalem which is in heaven, and which is truly free, and the mother of the free. For as the blessed Paul writes, "Jerusalem, which is our mother and is above, is free." And why then did they mock Him?

Let us see the cause of their wickedness. The passion of avarice had possession of their heart, and their mind being tyrannized over by it was in subjection even against its will; humbled under the power of wickedness, and bound as it were by inevitable bonds. For so the writer of Proverbs somewhere says, "that every man is bound by the cords of his sins." For as the more virulent diseases of the body do not admit of the remedies of medicine, and flee away as it were from healing; and if any one apply that which is naturally adapted to do good, are irritated the more, and grow angry, however |519 gently treated by the art: so also those passions to which the souls of men are liable, are sometimes obdurate, and refuse to listen to admonition, and will not hear a single word that summons them to depart from evil, and directs them into a better course. And as horses that are hard-mouthed and unmanageable, and excessively spirited will not obey the reins; so also the mind of man when under the influence of passion, and thoroughly inclined to turn aside unto evil, is disobedient and intractable, and rejects with hatred the being healed.

When therefore the Saviour of all had expended upon them many words, but saw that they would not change from their crafty purposes and passions, but preferred rather to abide in their innate folly, He betakes Himself at length to sterner reproofs, the very occasion calling them thereto. He shows therefore that they are hypocrites, and liers in wait among the altars, and eager after the glory due to righteous and good men, without being such in reality: not being in earnest in meriting the approval of God, but hunting on the contrary eagerly after the honours which come from men. He said therefore, "You are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knows your hearts: for that which is high among men, is an abomination before God. This He is found also in another place saying unto them; "How can you believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that comes from the one God. For the God of all crowns with praises unto righteousness

those who are truly good: but those who love not virtue, but are hypocrites, steal perchance by their own votes solely the reputation of being honourable. But no one, O worthy sirs, some perchance may say, crowns himself; and the man is justly ridiculed, who devises praises for himself: for it is written, ”Let your neighbour praise you, and not your own mouth: a stranger, and not your own lips.

But though hypocrites may be able possibly to remain undetected, and seize the honours which men bestow, ”yet God, He says, |520 knows your hearts. The Judge cannot be deceived; He sees the depth of our mind; He knows who is the true combatant, and who steals by fraud the honour which another truly deserves: and while He honours him who is truly just, He ”scatters the bones of the men-pleasers,” according to the Psalmist’s expression. For the desire of pleasing men is constantly, so to speak, the nurse, and head, and root of that accursed pride which is hated alike by God and men. For he who is the victim of this passion lusts after honour and praise: and this is hateful unto God: for He hates the proud, but accepts and shows mercy to him who loves not glory, and is lowly in mind.

And when Christ had crushed them with these reproofs He added thereto yet something more; even that which they were about to suffer by reason of their disobedience and wickedness; ”For the law, He says, and the prophets were until John: thenceforth the kingdom of God is preached, and every one takes it by force. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one point of the law to fall.” Again does He conceal in obscurity that which would give them pain, and veils, so to speak, the prediction of those things that were about to happen to all who would not obey Him. For Moses, He says, and with him the company of the holy prophets, before announced the import of My mystery to the inhabitants of earth: both the law declaring by shadows and types that to save the world I should even endure the death of the flesh, and abolish corruption by rising from the dead; and the prophets also speaking words of the same import as the writings of Moses. It is nothing strange therefore, He says, or that was not known before, that you spurn My words, and despise everything that would avail for your good. For the word of prophecy concerning Me, and you, extends until the holy Baptist John: but ”from the days of John, the kingdom of heaven is preached, and every one takes it by force.” And by the kingdom of heaven He here means justification by faith, the washing away of sin by holy baptism, sanctification by the Spirit, worshipping in the Spirit, the service that is superior to shadows and types, the honour of the adoption of sons, and the hope of the glory about to be given to the saints.

The kingdom of heaven therefore, He says, is preached, for |521 the Baptist has stood forth in the midst saying, ”Prepare you the way of the Lord:” and has shown, that lo! He is already near, and as it were within the doors, even the true Lamb of God, Who bears the sin of the world. Whosoever therefore is a hearer and lover of the sacred message takes it by force: by which is meant, that he uses all his

earnestness and all his strength in his desire to enter within the hope. For, as He says in another place, ”The kingdom of heaven is taken by violence and the violent seize upon it.” ”And it is easier, He says, for heaven and earth to pass away, before the day that God commands this to be, than for one point of the law to fall.” Now sometimes by the word law He signifies collectively the whole divinely inspired Scripture, the writings, that is, of Moses and the prophets. What then did it foretell, which must also necessarily reach its accomplishment? It foretold, that by reason of their excessive unbelief and immorality, Israel would fall from being of God’s family, even though he be the eldest son: and that Jerusalem would be thrust away from His indulgence and His love. For so He spoke concerning it by the voice of Jeremiah, ”Behold! I will hedge up her way with stakes, and block up her ways, and she shall not find her path.” For the way of those who fear God is straight, nor is there any steep part therein, but all is level and well beaten. But the path of the mother of the Jews is hedged up with stakes, in that the way of piety has been rendered impassable for them.

And that they were darkened in mind, and did not accept the light of the glory of Christ,----for they knew Him not;----He before proclaimed saying unto the multitude of the Jews; ”I have likened your mother unto the night. My people is like unto one that has no knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, therefore will I reject you from being My priest. And you have forgotten the law of your God, and I will forget your children.” You hear that the multitude of the disobedient are very justly compared unto darkness and the night: for the intellectual day star, and the Sun of |522 righteousness arises and shines in the mind and heart of those who believe: but the mind of those who treat with contumely a grace so splendid and worthy of our possessing, is blackened in darkness, and intellectual gloom. And thus much then concerning those things which the company of the holy prophets before announced respecting Israel.

But unto those who have acknowledged the revelation of the glory of Christ the Saviour of all, God the Father promised by one of the holy prophets, thus saying; ”And I will strengthen them in the Lord their God, and in the name of their God they shall be established. And in accordance with this the Psalmist also says in the Spirit unto our Lord Jesus Christ: ”They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance: and in Your Name shall they rejoice all the day. For you are the glory of their strength, and in Your righteousness shall our horn be exalted. For we glory in Christ, and as being justified by Him are exalted, having cast off the abasement of sin, and living in the excellence of every virtue, we have been enriched also with the exact and unadulterated knowledge of the doctrines of truth. For this God promised us where He says by the voice of Isaiah, ”And I will lead the blind by a way that they know not: and in paths which they have not known I will make them walk. I will make their darkness to be light, and all their steep places to be smooth. For we, who were once blind, have been enlightened, and travel in an

unwonted pathway of righteousness; while those who boasted of the law as their schoolmaster, have become darkened. For as Christ Himself said; ”Darkness has blinded their eyes:

and blindness in part has happened unto Israel, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not hear. For they sinned against the holy prophets; and even ventured to lift their hands against Him Who was calling them to salvation and life. Even though therefore, He says, you be disobedient, and though you foolishly deride My words, which would guide you in the attainment of that which is useful and becoming, yet this conduct, He says, was not |523 unforeknown, but already had been declared by the law and the prophets. And it is a thing impossible for the words of God to fail of their accomplishment: for He declared that which He knew must altogether and necessarily happen.

Unbelief therefore brings upon men destruction, as also does the stretching out of the haughty neck of the mind from excessive pride against Christ the Saviour of us all; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen. |524

SERMON CXI.

16:19-31. But there was a certain rich, man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, feasting sumptuously every day. And a certain poor man whose name was Lazarus had been laid at his gate, full of sores; and desiring to satisfy himself with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the poor man died, and the angels carried him to Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died, and was buried. And in Hades, having lifted up his eyes, being in torment, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for behold! I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that you received your good things in your life time; and Lazarus in like manner his evil things: but now he is comforted here, and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you a great gulf is placed, so that those who would pass from hence to you cannot; nor can those pass who would come from thence unto us. And he said, I pray you, father, to send him to my father's house: I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come unto this place of torment. But Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them. But he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one go unto them from the dead they will repent. But he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, they would not be persuaded even though one rose from the dead.

WHEN Solomon was offering up prayers in behalf of his kingdom, he somewhere said unto God, "Give me wisdom, even that which abides by Your throne." And God praised him for earnestly desiring such blessings as these; for there is nothing better for men than sacred gifts: of which one worthy of our acceptance, and that perfects in blessedness those who have been counted worthy of it, is the wisdom which |525 God bestows. For it is the sight of the mind and heart, and the knowledge of every good and profitable thing. And it is our duty also to be enamoured of such gifts as these: that being counted worthy thereof we may rightly and without error approach the Saviour's words. For this is useful for us unto spiritual improvement, and leads unto a praiseworthy and blameless life. Come therefore,

that being made partakers of the wisdom which is from above, we may examine the meaning of the parable now set before us.

It is necessary however, I think, in the first place to mention, what was the occasion which led to His speaking of these things; or what Christ intended to illustrate in so excellently sketching and describing the parable set before us. The Saviour therefore was perfecting us in the art of well-doing, and commanding us to walk uprightly in every good work, and to be in earnest in adorning ourselves with the glories which arise from virtuous conduct. For He would have us be lovers one of another, and ready to communicate: prompt to give, and merciful, and careful of showing love to the poor, and manfully persisting in the diligent discharge of this duty. And He especially admonished the rich in this world to be careful in so doing, and to guide them into the way winch altogether becomes the saints, He said, ”Sell your possessions, and give alms: make you purses that grow not old; a treasure that does not fail for ever in heaven.” Now the commandment indeed is beautiful, and good, and salutary: but it did not escape His knowledge, that it is impossible for the majority to practise it. For the mind of man has ever been, so to speak, infirm in the discharge of those duties which are arduous and difficult: and to abandon wealth and possessions and the enjoyment which they give, is not a thing very acceptable to any, inasmuch as the mind is early clothed and entangled, as it were, in indissoluble cords, which bind it to the desire of pleasure.

As being therefore good and loving unto men, He has provided for them a special kind of help, lest eternal and never-ending poverty should follow upon wealth here, and everlasting torment succeed to the pleasures of the present time. ”For make for yourselves friends, He says, of the unrighteous mammon: that when it has failed, they may receive you into |526 eternal tabernacles.’” And this then is the advice of One providing them with something which they can do. For if, He says, you cannot he persuaded to give up this pleasure-loving wealth, and to sell your possessions, and make distribution to those who are in need, at least be diligent in the practice of inferior virtues. ”Make for yourselves friends with the unrighteous mammon: that is, do not consider your riches as belonging to yourselves alone; open wide your hand to those who are in need: assist those in poverty and pain: comfort those who have fallen into extreme distress: condole with those who are in sorrow, or oppressed with bodily maladies, and the want of necessaries: and comfort also the saints who embrace a voluntary poverty that they may serve God without distraction. Nor shall your so doing be unrewarded. For when your earthly wealth abandons you, as you reach the end of your life, then shall they make you partakers of their hope, and of the consolation given them by God. For He being good and kind to man, will lovingly and bountifully refresh those who have laboured in this world:

and more especially such as have wisely and humbly and soberly borne the heavy burden of poverty. And somewhat similar advice the wise Paul also gives to those who live in wealth and abundance respecting those in misery: ”Your abundance shall be to supply their falling short: in order that also their abundance may supply your falling short. But this is the advice of one who enjoins that simply which Christ spoke; ”Make to yourselves friends of the unrighteous mammon: so that the commandment is well worthy of our admiration.

And that our refusal so to act will cause our ruin, and bring us down to the inextinguishable flame, and to an unavailing remorse, He plainly shows by weaving for us the present parable. ”For there was a certain rich man, He says, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, feasting sumptuously every day. And a certain poor man whose name was Lazarus had been cast down at his gate, full of sores.” Here observe, I pray, and mark accurately the Saviour’s words. For while it was easy to have said, ”That there was such and such a rich man whoever it might be 1,” He does not say so, but simply calls him a rich man: while He |527 mentions the poor man by name. What conclusion therefore must we draw? That the rich man as being uncompassionate was nameless in God’s presence: for He has somewhere said by the voice of the Psalmist, concerning those who do not fear Him, ”I will not make mention of their names with My lips:” while, as I said, the poor man is mentioned by name by the tongue of God.

But let us look at the pride of the rich man puffed up for things of no real importance; ”he was clothed, it says, in purple and fine linen,” that is, his study was to deck himself in beautiful attire, so that his raiment was of great price, and he lived in never-ceasing banquetings; for such is the meaning of his feasting every day: besides which it adds that he feasted sumptuously, that is, prodigally. All the luxury therefore of that rich man consisted in things of this sort: in clothing clean, delicate, and embroidered with linen, and dyed with purple, so as to gratify the eyes of beholders. And what is the result? Differing but little from the figures in statuary and painting, the rich man is indeed admired by those who are destitute of sense, but his heart is full of pride and haughtiness: he has high thoughts of himself and is boastful, and while there is nothing of excellence in his mind, he makes variously coloured hues a reason for his empty pride. His delight is in expensive banquets; in music and revellings; he has numerous cooks, who labour to provoke gluttony by carefully prepared meats: his cupbearers are beautifully attired; he has singing men and singing women, and the voices of flatterers. Such were the things in which the rich man lived; for the disciple of Christ certifies us. saying, ”that all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of the world.”

Meanwhile Lazarus, bound fast by sickness and poverty, was cast down, He says, at his gate. For the rich man dwelt in lofty halls, and spacious mansions nobly built:

whereas the poor man was not so much laid as cast down, thrown there in neglect, and not deemed worthy of any account. Cut off from compassion and care, he would have liked, to satisfy his hunger, have gathered the worthless morsels that fell from the rich man's table 2. He was tormented moreover by a severe and |528 incurable malady; "Yes, even the dogs, it says, licked his sores," and that, as it seems, not to injure him, but rather, so to speak, as sympathizing with him, and tending him: for with their tongues they allay their own sufferings, removing with them that which pains them, and gently soothing the sore. But the rich man was more cruel than the beasts; for he felt neither sympathy for him nor compassion; but was full of all mercilessness. And what the result was, the outline of the parable teaches us in what follows: but it is too long to tell it now. For lest my discourse should prove more than sufficient for my hearers, and a fatigue beyond due measure to him who speaks, stopping now from a due regard for the good both of myself and you, I will speak to you again upon these things at our next meeting, if Christ our common Saviour grant me the ability so to do: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen 3. |529

SERMON CXII.

The same subject continued. THE blessed prophet Isaiah has somewhere introduced those who by faith in Christ have been won unto life, as calling out eagerly, so to speak, unto one another, and saying; ”Come, let us go up unto the mountain of the Lord, and unto the house of the God of Jacob, and they shall teach us His way, and we will walk in it.” Now by the mountain here we affirm to be meant not any earthly mountain; for to imagine this would be foolish: but rather the church which Christ has rescued for Himself. For it is high and conspicuous to people everywhere, and, so to say, exalted, because there is nothing in it which brings men down to earth. For those who dwell within it care nothing for the things of earth, but rather desire those things that are above: and, as the Psalmist says, ”They are exalted far above the earth;” as being altogether brave and courageous, and practising uninterrupted endeavours after all things whatsoever which please God.

And such we believe you to be; and your earnest desire after instruction is a plain proof thereof. For you have come of course to seek the fulfilment of the promise given unto you: but neither have we forgotten what we promised, but pay our debt, adding on to what has been already said that which is still wanting to the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. ”For it came to pass, He says, that Lazarus died, and was carried by angels to Abraham’s bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried.” Observe carefully the Saviour’s words. For of the poor man, He says, that he was carried by angels to Abraham’s bosom: but of the rich man there is nothing of the sort, but only that he died and was buried. For those who have hope towards God find in their departure from the world a deliverance from anguish and pain. And something like this Solomon also has taught us, saying, ”In the sight of men they seemed to die, and their departure was considered an injury and their going from among us a breaking to pieces: but they are at peace, and their hope is full of |530 immortality.” For there is given unto them a measure of consolation commensurate with their labours: or even perhaps one which surpasses and exceeds their toils: for Christ has somewhere said, that ”good measure, pressed down, and heaped up, and running over shall they give into your bosom.” For like as ships that sail upon the sea stand the shock of savage waves, and struggle with the violence of mighty

winds, but afterwards arriving at tranquil havens fit for their rest, cease there from tossing; so in like manner I think that the souls of men, when they emerge from the turbulence of earthly things, enter the mansions that are above, as into a haven of salvation.

”Lazarus then, He says, was carried by the holy angels unto Abraham’s bosom: but the rich man died and was buried. For to that rich man who had shewn himself harsh and unmerciful the separation from the body was death. For he was going from pleasure to torment: from glory to shame: from light to darkness. Such were the things that the rich man must suffer, who had been voluptuous, and close-handed, and unready for mercy. And to torment him the more now that he dwells in Hades, he beheld, it says, Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham: and made supplication that he might be sent to drop a little water upon his tongue: for he was tormented, it says, as in a fierce flame. And what reply does the patriarch Abraham make? ”Son, you received your good things in your life: and Lazarus his evil things. You were enamoured, He says, of these temporal things; you were clad in fine linen and purple ; you were boastful and haughty; all your time was spent in luxury; you offered up your wealth to your appetite and to flatterers; but you never once called to mind the sick and sorrowful: you had no compassion on Lazarus when you saw him thrown down at your portals. You beheld the man suffering incurable misery, and a prey to intolerable griefs: for two maladies at once possessed him, |531 each worse than the other, the cruel pain of his ulcers, and the want of the necessaries of life.

The very beasts soothed Lazarus, because he was in pain; ”the dogs licked his sores,” but you were more hard-hearted than the beasts. ”You have received therefore, He says, your good things in your life, and Lazarus his evil: and now here he is comforted, and you are tormented; and, as the sacred Scripture says, ”they shall have judgment without mercy who have wrought no mercy. You would have been a partner with Lazarus, and a portion of his consolation would have been given you by God, if you had admitted him to be a partner of your wealth. But this you did not do, and therefore you alone are tormented: for such is the fitting punishment of the unmerciful, and of those whose mind feels no sympathy for the sick.

Let us therefore make for ourselves friends of the unrighteous mammon: let us listen to Moses and the prophets calling us unto mutual love and brotherly affection: let us not wait for any of those now in Hades to return hither to tell us the torments there: the sacred Scripture is necessarily true: we have heard, that ”Christ shall sit upon the throne of His glory to judge the world in righteousness, and that He shall set the sheep indeed on His right hand, but the goats on His left. And to those on His right hand He shall say, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundations of the world: for I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; and thirsty also, and you gave Me to drink: I was naked, and

you clothed Me; in prison, and you came unto Me." But upon those upon the left hand He shall lay a heavy condemnation, saying, "Go to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." And the charge against them is, that they have done the very opposite of that for which the saints were praised. "For I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat; and thirsty, and you gave Me not to drink: for inasmuch as you did it not, He says, to one of these little ones, you did it not to Me."

But to this perhaps some one will object, that there are many kinds of well living; for virtue is diversified, so to speak, and manifold: why therefore, having omitted those other kinds, does He make mention only of love to the poor? To this we reply, that the act is better than any other kind of |532 well doing: for it works in our souls a certain divine likeness which moulds us, so to speak, after God's image. For Christ also has said, "Be you merciful, as your Father also in heaven is merciful," He who is quick to show mercy, and compassionate and kind, is ranked with the true worshippers; for it is written, that "a pure and unpolluted sacrifice to God the Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their poverty, and that a man keep himself unspotted from the world." And the wise Paul also has somewhere written, "But alms and communication forget not: for with such sacrifices God is content." For He loves not the incense of the legal worship, but requires rather the pleasantness of the sweet spiritual savour. But the sweet spiritual savour unto God is to show pity unto men, and to maintain love towards them. This also Paul advises us, saying, "Owe no man anything, but that you love one another:" and the daughter of love is pity for poverty.

Come therefore, you rich, cease from transitory pleasure: be earnest after the hope that is set before you: clothe yourselves with mercy and kindness: hold out the hand to them that are in need: comfort those who are in necessity: count as your own the sorrows of those who are in extreme distress. * * * * [the remainder is lost] * * * * * * |533

SERMONS CXIII-CXVI. (fragments)

17:1. It is impossible but that offences come. WHAT are the offences which Christ mentions as being in every way certain to happen? Offences then are of two kinds: for some are against the glory of the Supreme Being, and assail That Substance Which transcends all, as far at least as regards the purpose of the contrivers of them: while other offences happen from time to time against ourselves, and proceed no further than to the injury of some of the brethren, who are our partners in the faith. For whatever heresies have been invented, and every argument which opposes itself to the truth, resist really the glory of the supreme Godhead, by drawing away those who are caught therein from the uprightness and exactness of the sacred doctrines. And such wore the offences concerning which the Saviour Himself again somewhere said, "Woe to the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence comes." For offences

of this kind, caused I mean by unholy heretics, are not levelled against some single individual, but are aimed rather against the world, that is, against the inhabitants of the whole earth. And the inventors of such offences the blessed Paul rebukes, saying, "But in thus sinning against the brethren, and wounding their weak conscience, you sin against Christ." And that such offences might not prevail over the faithful, God somewhere spoke unto those who are the ambassadors of the upright word of truth, and skilful in teaching it, saying, "Go through My gates, and make a pathway for My people, and cast away the stones out of the way." And the Saviour has attached a bitter penalty against those who lay such stumbling-blocks in men's road.

Perhaps, however, these are not the offences here referred to, but those rather, which very frequently from human infirmity happen between friends and brethren: and the accompanying discourse which immediately follows these opening |534 remarks, and which speaks of our pardoning the brethren in ease they ever sin against us, leads us to the idea that these were the offences meant. And what then are these offences? Mean and annoying actions, I suppose; fits of anger, whether on good grounds or without justification; insults; slanders very frequently; and other stumbling-blocks akin and similar to these. Such, He says, must needs come. Is this then because God, Who governs all, obliges men to their commission? Away with the thought: for from Him comes nothing that is evil, yes! rather He is the fountain of all virtue. Why then must they happen? Plainly because of our infirmity: "for in many things we all of us stumble," as it is written. Nevertheless there will be woe, He says, to the man who lays the stumblingblocks in the way: for He does not leave indifference in these things without rebuke, but restrains it rather by fear of punishment. Nevertheless He commands us to bear with patience those who occasion them.

17:4. If seven times in the day he sin against you. For if, He says, he who sins against you repent and acknowledge his fault, you shall forgive him: and that not once only, but very many times. For we must not show ourselves deficient in mutual love, and neglect forbearance, because any one is weak, and again and again offends; but must rather imitate those whose business it is to heal our bodily maladies, and who do not tend a sick man once only or twice, but just as often as he chances to fall ill. For let us remember that we also are liable to infirmities, and overpowered by our passions: and such being the case, we pray that those whose duty it is to rebuke us, and who possess the authority to punish us, may show themselves kind to us and forgiving. It is our duty therefore, having a common feeling for our mutual infirmities, "to bear one another's burdens; for so we shall fulfil the law of Christ." And observe also, that in the Gospel according to Matthew, Peter makes the inquiry, "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive Him?" And thereupon the Lord tells the Apostles, 'that though he sin seven times in the

day; that is, frequently, and shall as often acknowledge his fault, you shall forgive him.' |535

17:5. The Apostles said to the Lord, Increase our faith.

That which necessarily gives joy to the soul of the saints is not the possession of transitory and earthly goods; for they are corruptible, and easily lost; but of such rather as render those that receive them reverend and blessed, even the spiritual graces which are God's gift. And of these one of special value is faith, by which I mean the having been brought unto a belief in Christ, the Saviour of us all: which also Paul recognised as being the chief of all our blessings; for he said, that "without faith it was impossible ever to have pleased (God): for by it the elders obtained their testimony. Observe therefore the holy apostles emulating the conduct of the saints of old time. For what do they ask of Christ? "Increase our faith," They do not ask faith simply, lest you should imagine them to be without faith; but they rather ask of Christ an addition to their faith, and to be strengthened therein. For faith partly depends upon ourselves, and partly is the gift of the divine grace: for the commencement of it depends upon ourselves, and to maintain confidence and faith in God with all our power; but the confirmation and strength necessary for this comes from the divine grace: for which reason, because all things are possible with God, the Lord says, that "all things are possible to him that believes. For the power which comes unto us through faith is of God.

And knowing this, the blessed Paul also says in the first Epistle to the Corinthians: "For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom: and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit: and to another faith in the same Spirit. You see that he has placed faith also in the catalogue of spiritual graces. And this the disciples requested they might receive of the Saviour, contributing also that which was of themselves: and He |536 granted it unto them after the fulfilment of the dispensation, by the descent upon them of the Holy Spirit: for before the resurrection their faith was so feeble, that they were liable even to the charge of littleness of faith.

For the Saviour of all was sailing once, for instance, with the holy apostles upon the lake or sea of Tiberias, and purposely permitted Himself to fall asleep: and when a violent storm agitated the surge, and raised a mighty wave against the vessel, they were greatly troubled, so that they even roused the Lord from sleep, saying, "Master, save us, we perish." And He, it says, arose, and rebuked the waves, and changed the savageness of the tempest into a calm. But He greatly blamed the holy apostles, saying, "Where is your faith?" For they ought not to have been troubled in any respect whatsoever, when the Sovereign of the universe was present with them, at Whom all His works tremble and shake. And if we must add a further and similar example, I will mention one. He commanded the holy apostles to go on board the vessel, and precede Him unto the opposite side of the lake: and they

of course did so. And when they had rowed, it says, about thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and were greatly terrified, imagining that they saw a spectre. But when He called out unto them, saying, ”It is I: be not afraid;” Peter said, ”If it is You, bid me come unto You on the water: and He said, Come,” And having leaped down from the ship, he began to walk unto Him. But when, it says, he saw the wind and the wave, he was terrified: and beginning to sink, he cried out, ”Lord, help me:” and He saved him in his danger, but again rebuked him, saying, ”O you of little faith, wherefore did you doubt?” And that at the season of the passion, when the band of soldiers, and wicked officers, came to seize Jesus, they all forsook Him and fled, and Peter also denied Him, being terrified at a maidservant, is well known.

You have seen the disciples while still possessed of but little faith: now wonder at them when they had obtained an increase |537 of their faith from Christ, the Saviour of us all. He commanded them ”not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father’s promise,” until they should be clothed with power from on high. But when the power from on high had descended upon them in the shape of fiery tongues, even the grace which is through the Holy Spirit, then indeed they became bold and manly and fervent in the Spirit, so as even to despise death, and to count as nothing the dangers with which they were threatened from unbelievers; yes, and then too they became able to work miracles.

But that to be confirmed in the faith is a great and special grace, the Lord shows by saying, ”If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, hot, that is, and fervent, you might have said to the sycamine tree, Be you uprooted in the sea, and it would have obeyed you.” For he who confides in Christ trusts not to his own strength, but rather assigns to Him the power of performing all things. From Him then confessedly comes the accomplishment of all good things in men’s souls: but they nevertheless must prepare themselves to receive this great grace. For if the power of faith remove that which is fixed and rooted in the ground, one may say absolutely that there is nothing so immovable as that faith cannot shake it, if its removal be required. The earth accordingly was shaken when the apostles were praying, as the Acts of the Apostles record: and so, on the other hand, faith stays those things which are in motion, as the rapid course of a running river, and the ceaseless way of the lights which move in heaven. This, however, we must carefully notice, that God does not excite an empty astonishment or vain wondering, but that such things are far from the divine Substance, Which is free from pride and boasting, and altogether true, for the solo good and safety of mankind. And this I say, that no one may expect from sacred faith and the divine power useless changes, for instance, of the elements, or the removal of mountains and plants; nor give way to impiety, as though the word were not true, if these things come not so to pass: nor again count faith weak, if it cannot accomplish such things. Let the thing be but useful for some real benefit, and the power will not be wanting. |538

17:7. But which of you having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle. In the verses which precede a long and important discourse has been addressed to us by the Lord, to show unto us the paths which lead unto honour, and to manifest the glories of the blameless life, that making progress therein, and advancing zealously unto whatsoever is admirable we may attain unto ”the prize of our high calling.” But since it is the nature of the mind of man ever to be carried away unto vain-gloriousness, and to be afflicted most readily with a tendency thereto; and since a pretext for this fault is often given by the being distinguished before God for some of the noblest virtues; and since it is a sin grievous and hateful unto God:----for the serpent, the author of evil, leads men sometimes into such a state of mind, as for them to imagine perhaps that God even owes them the highest honours, when their life is glorious and distinguished: ----to draw us away from such passions, He sets before us the purport of the lessons which have just been read, teaching us thereby, under the form of an example, that the might of sovereign authority demands everywhere of its slaves subjection as a debt. For the lord, He says, will not acknowledge any gratitude to the slave, even if all that is due be done by him, according to what becomes the condition of a slave.

Here observe, I pray, that the disciples, yes, all who are subject to the sceptre of Christ the Saviour of us all, are encouraged unto industry, but that, not as though they rendered unto Him their service as a favour, but as discharging the debt of obedience incumbent upon slaves. And hereby the accursed malady of vainglory is done away. For if you do that which is your due, why do you pride yourself? Do you not see that if you don’t discharge your debt, there is danger: and that if you do discharge it, no gratitude is owed you? Which truth that admirable servant Paul having well learnt and understood, says, ”If I preach the gospel, I have no cause of boasting; for a necessity is laid upon me: but woe unto me if I preach not the gospel. And again, ”I am a debtor, he says, of the preaching of the doctrine, both to Greeks and barbarians, both to wise and foolish. If therefore you have done well, and have kept the divine commands, and have obeyed |539 your Lord, ask not honour of God as your due, but rather draw near, supplicating for the gifts of His bounty. Bear in mind that also among us, masters acknowledge no gratitude when any of their slaves perform their appointed service, though often by their bounty they gain the goodwill of their faithful servants, and so beget in them a more ready alacrity. Similarly God demands of us the service of slaves, using the right of His sovereign authority:

but as being good and bountiful. He promises also rewards to those who labour. And the greatness of His bounty far surpasses the labours of His subjects, as Paul shall prove unto you, writing, ”The sufferings of the present season are not worthy to the glory about to be revealed upon us. Yes! though we are slaves, He calls us sons, and crowns us with the honour which becomes children. And observe that each one, having first attended to his own flesh, so must take charge of the good

of others: for he ”who cannot govern his own house well, how shall he take care of the church?”

17:12. Ten lepers met him. Again the Saviour manifests unto us His glory, and by working godlike miracles, endeavours to win senseless Israel unto faith, obdurate though he was, and unbelieving. What argument then will avail him at the day of judgment for refusing to accept salvation through Christ? Especially when they themselves heard His words, and were eyewitnesses of His ineffable miracles? For which reason He said Himself of them, ”If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin.” And again, ”If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin, but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.” The cleansing of the lepers, as I said just above, was a plain demonstration (of His miraculous power): for by the law of Moses they were shut out of the cities and villages, as being impure.

This then will suffice, I suppose, for introductory remarks. The lepers then having met the Saviour, earnestly besought Him to free them from their misery, and called Him Master, that is, Teacher. No one pitied them when suffering this malady: but He Who |540 had appeared on earth for this very reason, and had become man that He might show pity unto all, He was moved with compassion for them, and had mercy upon them. 17:14. He said unto them, Go and show yourselves unto the priests.

And why did He not rather say, ”I will, be you cleansed;” as he did in the case of another leper: but commanded them rather to show themselves unto the priests? It was because the law gave directions to this effect to those who were delivered from leprosy: for it commanded them to show themselves to the priests, and to offer a sacrifice for their cleansing. He commanded them therefore to go, as being already healed, and, that they might, so to speak, bear witness to the priests, as the rulers of the Jews, and ever envious of His glory, that wonderfully, and beyond their hope, they had been delivered from their misfortune by Christ’s willing that they should be healed. He did not heal them first, but sent them to the priests, because the priests knew the marks of leprosy, and of its being healed. He sent them to the priests, and with them He sent also the healing. What however was the law of leprosy, and what the rules for its purification, and what the meaning of each of the particulars commanded by the law, we have more fully described at the commencement of our Saviour’s miracles as recorded by Luke, and referring thither such as are anxious for learning, let us now proceed to what follows. The nine then, as being Jews, falling into a thankless forgetfulness, did not return to give glory to God: by which He shows that Israel was hard of heart, and utterly unthankful: but the stranger,----for as being a Samaritan he was of foreign race, having been brought thither from Assyria: for the phrase is not without meaning, ”in the middle of Samaria and Galilee:” ----returned with a loud voice to glorify God.

It shows therefore that the Samaritans were grateful, but that the Jews, even when benefited, were ungrateful. |541

SERMON CXVII.

17:20-30. And having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God comes, He answered and said unto them, The kingdom of God comes not by watchings; neither shall they say, Lo! here, or Lo! there: for behold! the kingdom of God is within you. And He said unto the disciples, The days will come, when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it. And if they shall say unto you, Lo! here, or Lo! there, go you not, neither run thither. For as the lightning that lightens from under heaven gives light to that which is under heaven, so shall the Son of man be in His day. But first He must suffer many things, and be rejected by this generation. And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of man. They were eating, and drinking, and were taking wives, and being made the wives of men, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot: they were eating and drinking; they were buying and selling; they were planting, were building: but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom, there rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. So shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

AGAIN is the Pharisee fighting against God, nor feels that he is kicking against the pricks: for while assuming the appearance of being anxious to learn, he makes a mock at divine mysteries so holy, that ”the angels desire to look into them,” according to the word of the blessed Peter. For this reason ”blindness in part has happened unto Israel,” and darkness has blinded their eyes. For that they were dark and blind, so as even often to make the mystery of Christ an occasion of ridicule, any one may learn from what has now been read to us. For they drew near asking Him, and saying, ”When will the kingdom of God come?” Moderate your pride, O foolish Pharisee: desist from a mockery that exposes you to |542 heavy and inevitable guilt. ”For he, it says, that does not believe the Son, is condemned already, because he has not believed in the Name of the Son of God.” For the divine Moses showed before by type and shadow that the Word is the world’s way and door of salvation, in that though He is God, He appeared in human form, and endured the death of the flesh for the sake of the whole earth. And the declarations also of the holy prophets agree with what was said by Moses. For they foretold that He

would come in due time in form like unto us. And this also came to pass: for He was manifested to those upon earth, having assumed the form of a slave; but even so He retained His natural lordship, and power, and glory such as befits God, as is proved by the splendour of the works He wrought. But you did not believe in Him: you did not accept justification by His means, in that you were obdurate and proud. And after this you ask, ”When the kingdom of God shall come?”

As I said therefore, he mocks at a mystery thus truly holy and worthy of admiration. For because the Saviour of all in His public discourses spoke from time to time of the kingdom of God, therefore these miserable men, in contempt of Him,----or perhaps even having it in their mind that being entrapped by their malice, He will have to endure the death upon the cross,----ask in mockery, ”When the kingdom of God will come;” as much as to say, that before this kingdom which You talk about, the cross and death will seize You. What therefore does Christ reply? Again He displays His long-suffering and incomparable love unto man: for ”being reviled, He does not revile back: suffering, He does not threaten.” He does not therefore harshly chide them, nor yet because of their wickedness does He deign to give them an answer to their question, but says that only which is for the benefit of all men, that ”the kingdom of God comes not by watchings: for behold! the kingdom of God is within you.” For ask not, He says, about the times in which the season of the kingdom of heaven shall again arise and come: but rather be in earnest, that you may be found worthy of it, for ”it is within you,” that is, it depends upon your own wills, and is in your own power, whether or not you receive it. For every man who has attained to justification by means of faith in Christ, and is |543 adorned by all virtue, is counted worthy of the kingdom of heaven s.

Having therefore made this plain to all men, He now transfers His words to the holy disciples, to whom as His true companions He says, ”The days will come when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it.” Is the Lord then in so speaking working cowardice in His disciples? Does He enervate them beforehand, and make them without heart for the endurance of those persecutions and temptations which they would have to bear? This is not His meaning, but the contrary: for He would have them prepared for all that can grieve men, and ready to endure patiently, that so being approved, they may enter the kingdom of God. He forewarns them therefore that before His advent from heaven, at the consummation of the world, tribulation and persecution will precede Him, so that they will wish to see one of the days of the Son of man; that is, one such as those when they were still going about with Christ, and conversing with Him. And yet the Jews even then were guilty of no little violence against Him. They stoned Him with stones: they persecuted Him not once only, but oftentimes: they led Him to the brow of the hill, that they might throw Him down from the precipice: they vexed Him with reproaches and calumnies, and there was no form of wickedness which the Jews did not practise against Him. How then did He say that the disciples would

desire to sec one of His days? It was because, by comparison with the greater evils, the less are, so to speak, desirable.

But that He will descend from heaven in the latter times of the world, not obscurely nor secretly, but with godlike glory, and as ”dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto,” He declared, saying, that His coming shall he as the lightning. He was born indeed in the flesh of a woman, to |544 fulfil the dispensation for our sakes, and for this reason He emptied Himself, and made Himself poor, and no longer showed Himself in the glory of the Godhead: for the season itself, and the necessity of the dispensation, summoned Him to this humiliation. But after the resurrection from the dead, having ascended to heaven, and sat down with God the Father, He shall descend again, not with His glory withdrawn, nor in the meanness of human nature, but in the majesty of the Father, with the companies of the angels guarding Him, and standing; before Him as God and Lord of all. He shall come therefore as the lightning, and not secretly.

Nor must we believe any one saying, ”Lo! Christ is here, or lo! He is there. But first He must suffer many things, and be rejected by this generation,” He cuts away another expectation from the heart of the disciples: for they supposed, that when He had gone round about Judaea, and afterwards been in Jerusalem, that He would immediately manifest the kingdom of God. They even drew near to Him and said, ”Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” Yes, even the mother of Zebedee’s sons, expecting that this would be the case, drew near and said, ”Lord, say that my two sons shall sit, the one on Your right hand, and the other on Your left, in Your kingdom.” That they might know therefore that He was about first to undergo His saving passion, and to abolish death by the death of His flesh, and put away the sin of the world, and bring to nought the ruler of this world, and so to ascend unto the Father, and in due time to appear to ”judge the world in righteousness,” He says, that ”He must first suffer many things.”

And to show that He will appear unexpectedly, and with no man knowing it, and the end of the world come, He says, that the end shall be ”as it was in the days of Noah and Lot. For they were eating, He says, and drinking: and were taking wives, and being made the wives of men: they were selling and buying, and building; but the coming of the waters destroyed the one, while the others were the prey and food of brimstone and fire.” What therefore is signified by this? That He requires us to be always watchful, and ready to make our defence before the tribunal of God. For as Paul says, ”We are all about to be revealed before the judgment-seat of |545 Christ, that every man may receive a retribution for the things that are by the body, according to that he has done, whether good or bad.” ”Then shall He set the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on His left: and He shall say unto the sheep, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from

the foundations of the world." But upon the goats He will utter a terrible sentence; for He will send them to the flame that shall never be appeased.

If therefore, O Pharisee, you desire to be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, become one of the sheep. Offer unto Christ the fruit of faith in Him, and the praise of holy conduct, even that which is by the Gospel. But if you continue to be a goat, that is, one unfruitful, and destitute both of faith and good works, why do you enquire when the kingdom of God will come? For it does not concern you. Fear rather because of the torment which is decreed against the unbelieving, and the unappeasable flame appointed for those who sin against Christ: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen. |546

SERMON CXVIII.

17:31-37. In that day, he who is upon the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to carry them away: and he who is in the field, let him in like manner not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose it, shall save it alive. 1 tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed: the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at a mill together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answer and say unto Him, Where, Lord? And He said unto them, Where the body is, there will also the eagles be gathered. THE sacred Scripture has some where said, "Prepare your works for your departure, and make yourself ready for the field." Now by our departure I imagine is meant our going from this world, and removal hence. For this time must of course overtake every one: for, as the Psalmist says, "What man is there that shall live and not see death, and that can save his soul from the hand of hell?" For the nature of man was condemned in Adam, and fell away unto corruption, because he foolishly transgressed the commandment given him. But those who are careless and contemptuous, lead a shameful and pleasure-loving life, not even perhaps admitting into their mind the thought of the world to come, and the hope prepared for the saints, nor feeling moreover any alarm at the torment that is appointed for those who love sin. But those who embrace a virtuous life rejoice in labours for probity's sake, bidding, so to speak, farewell to the desire after earthly things, and paying but slight attention to the vain turmoil of the world.

To a purpose thus excellent, and a proportionate earnestness the Saviour bids us hold fast, thus saying; "In that day he who is upon the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to carry them away: and he who is in the field, let him in like manner not return back." He was speaking of the last day, that is, of the end of this world; |547 for as it was, He said, in the days of Noah and Lot: they were eating, and drinking, and were taking wives, and being made the wives of men, until the flood came; and upon Sodom fire descended, and destroyed them all: so shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Strengthening them therefore for the remembrance of the last day, and the final time, He commands them to disregard all earthly and temporal matters, and look only unto one end, the

duty namely of every one saving his soul. ”He therefore, He says, that is upon the housetop, let him not go down to the house to carry away his goods.” And in these words He apparently means the man who is at ease, living in wealth and worldly glory: for always those that stand upon the housetops are conspicuous in the eyes of them who are round about the house. If therefore, He says, there be any one in this condition, let him at that time make no account of the goods stored up in his house. For vain henceforth are such things, and unavailing to his advantage. For, as it is written, ”Treasures profit not the wicked: but righteousness delivers from death.”

But even ”if any one be, He says, in the field, in like manner let him not return back.” That is, if any one be found devoted to industry, and occupied in labours, earnestly desirous of spiritual fruitfulness, and gathering the wages of virtuous toil, let him hold firmly to this diligence: ”let him not return back:” for, as Christ Himself again has somewhere said, ”No man that puts his hand to the plough, and turns back, is fit also for the kingdom of heaven.” For it is our duty to maintain our religious exertions without wavering, and to persevere in them with undaunted wills, lest we suffer some such fate as befell the woman at Sodom, taking whom as an example, He says, ”Remember Lot’s wife,” For when she had been rescued from Sodom, but would afterwards have returned, she became a pillar of salt, became, that is, foolish and stone-like.

On that day therefore, He says, and at that time, both those who are accustomed to live in luxury must entirely abstain from such pride, and readily labour, in order that they may save themselves: and in like manner those who are industrious, and honour useful exertion, must bravely hold to the mark that has been set before them. ”For whosoever shall seek to save |548 his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose it, shall save it alive.” But the way in which a man loses his life that he may save it, and how he who imagines that he is saving loses it, Paul clearly shows, where he says of the saints, ”They that are Jesus Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts.” For those who have really become true [followers] of Christ our common Saviour, crucify their flesh, and put it to death, by being constantly engaged in labours and struggles unto piety, and by mortifying its natural desire. For it is written, ”Mortify your members that are upon earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil lust, and covetousness.” But those who love a voluptuous course of life, imagine probably that they are gaining their soul by living in pleasure and effeminacy: whereas certainly they lose it. ”For he that sows, it says, to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.”

But on the other hand, whosoever loses his life shall of a certainty save it. This the blessed martyrs did, enduring conflicts even unto blood and life, and placing on their heads as their crown their true love unto Christ. But those who, from weakness of resolution and mind, denied the faith, and fled from the present death

of the flesh, became their own murderers: for they will go down into hell to suffer the penalties of their wicked cowardice. For the Judge shall descend from heaven: and those who with all their heart have loved Him, and earnestly practised entire virtuousness of life, He will call, saying, ”Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world.” But those who have led careless and dissolute lives, nor maintained the glory of faith in Him, on them will He pass a severe and overwhelming sentence, saying unto them, ”Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire.”

This He teaches us by saying, ”In that night there shall be two men in one bed: one shall be taken, and one shall be left. Two women shall be grinding at a mill together, the one shall be taken, and the other left.” Now by the two who are in one bed, He seems to hint at those who live in rest and plenty, and are equal to one another, as far as regards their being possessed of worldly affluence: for the bed is the |549 symbol of rest. ”But one of them, He says, shall be taken, and one shall be left.” How, or in what manner? It is because not all those who are possessed of wealth and ease in this world are wicked and merciless. For what if a man be rich, but be gentle and merciful, and not destitute of the praise of compassion upon the poor; if he be ready to share his wealth with others, and affable of address; thoroughly liberal and sober-minded; upright in the faith, and of an urgent zeal for piety; if too, according to the Saviour’s expression, he have made for himself friends by his use of the unrighteous mammon, this man is taken: but the other, who was not thus minded, shall be left.

”Two women, He says, shall be grinding at a mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.” And by these again He seems to mean such as live in poverty and labour: but even in these, He says, there is a certain vast difference. For some have borne the burden of poverty manfully, honouring a sober and virtuous course of life: while others have been of a different character, crafty for every wicked practice, and the contrivers of all baseness. There will be therefore even in their case a full and exact investigation of their manners, and he that is good will be taken, and he that is not so will be left. As Christ however, our common Saviour, had used the expression ”shall be taken,” the disciples usefully and necessarily ask, ”Whither, Lord? And He said unto them, Where the body is, there will also the eagles be gathered.” And what does this mean? By the use of a common and very plain fact, He hints at a great and profound mystery. And what is this? That He shall descend from heaven ”to judge the world in righteousness.” But, as He Himself says, ”He will send His angels, and they shall choose the righteous and the holy from among the sinners, and bring them near unto Him:” but those others they will leave on earth, as doomed to torment and condemned to the punishment which is by fire.

Something to this effect the very wise Paul also declares, where he writes, ”For I say unto you, that we who are left alive shall not arrive before those who have slept.

Suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For it shall sound, and the dead in Christ shall rise incorruptible: and we who are left alive shall be caught up together with them |550 in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Just therefore, He says, as when a dead corpse is exposed, carnivorous birds assemble unto it; so when the Son of man shall appeal', then certainly shall the eagles, even those who fly aloft, and rise superior to earthly and worldly things, hasten to Him. And He calls the time of judgment night, because, as I imagine, of His advent being unknown and unexpected. For we remember also one of the holy prophets crying out to them who love sin, and saying, "Woe unto them that desire the day of the Lord! What will the day of the Lord be unto you? and it is darkness and not light; and thick darkness that has no brightness in it." And again, Christ Himself has somewhere said to the holy apostles: " I must work the works of Him That sent Me while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work." And one also of the holy apostles wrote, "The day of the Lord comes as a thief," that is, without being foreknown.

In order therefore that we may be taken by Christ, let us abandon all earthly anxieties, and devote ourselves to every kind of good work. For so will He accept us, and make us His own, and crown us with honours from on high: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen. |551

SERMON CXIX.

18:1-8. And He spoke a parable to them, to the intent that men ought always to pray, and must not grow weary; saying, There was in a certain city a judge, who feared not God, neither felt shame at man. And there was a widow in that city, and she came to him and said, Avenge me of my adversary. And he would not for a time: but afterwards he said within himself Though I fear not God, and have no reverence for man, yet because this widow wearies me, I will avenge her, lest finally she annoy me by her coming. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge says. And shall not God avenge His elect, who cry unto Him day and night, and He is longsuffering towards them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, shall He find faith upon the earth?

THE fountain of every blessing is Christ; "Who of God was also made unto us wisdom:" for in Him we are made wise, and filled with spiritual gifts. Now any one who is right-minded will affirm that the knowledge of those things by means of which we may prosper in every method of saintly excellence of life, and advance in virtue, is God's gift, and one well worthy of our winning. And we find one who asked it of God, saying, "Show me Your ways, O Lord: and teach me Your paths." Now the paths which lead those onward to an uncorrupt life, who eagerly advance therein, are indeed numerous; but one, which especially benefits those who practise it, is prayer: and the Saviour was Himself careful to teach us by the parable now set before us, that we must make diligent use of it. "For He spoke, it says, a parable unto them, to the intent that men ought always to pray, and must not grow weary."

For it is, I affirm, the duty of those who set apart their lives for His service, not to be sluggish in their prayers, nor again to consider it as a hard and laborious duty: but rather to rejoice, because of the freedom of access granted them by God; for He would have us converse with Him as sons with a |552 father. Is not this then a privilege worthy of being valued by us most highly? For suppose that some one of those possessed of great earthly power were easy of access to us, and were to permit us to converse with him with full license, should we not consider it as a reason for extraordinary rejoicing? What possible doubt can there be of this? When therefore God permits us each one to offer our addresses unto Him for

whatever we wish, and has set before those who fear Him an honour so truly great and worthy of their gaining, let all slothfulness cease that would lead men to an injurious silence therein; and rather let us draw near with praises, and rejoicing that we have been commanded to converse with the Lord and God of all, having Christ as our Mediator, who with God the Father grants us the accomplishment of our supplications. For the blessed Paul somewhere writes, ”Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ. And He somewhere Himself said to the holy apostles, ”Hitherto you have asked nothing in My Name:

ask, and it shall be given unto you. For He is our Mediator, our Propitiation, our Comforter, and the Bestower of every request, it is our duty therefore to ”pray without ceasing,” according to the words of the blessed Paul, as well knowing, and being thoroughly assured, that He Whom we supplicate is able to accomplish all things. ”For let a man, it says, ask in faith, in nothing divided: for he who is divided is like a wave of the sea, troubled and blown about by the wind. For let not, it says, that man think that he will receive anything of the Lord. For he that is divided is really guilty of mockery: for if you do not believe that He will incline unto you, and gladden you, and fulfil your request, do not draw near to Him at all, lest you be found an accuser of the Almighty, in that you foolishly art divided. We must avoid therefore so base a malady.

But that God will incline His ear to those who offer Him their prayers, not carelessly nor negligently, but with earnestness and constancy, the present parable assures us. For if the constant coining of the oppressed widow prevailed upon the unjust judge, who feared not God, neither had any shame at men, so that even against his will he granted her redress, how shall not He Who loves mercy, and hates iniquity, and Who |553 ever gives His helping hand to them that love Him, accept those who draw near to Him day and night, and avenge them as being His elect?

But come now, and let us examine who it is that offend against them: for the examination of this question will beget much that is of profit to all who are well taught. For very many, and those of various classes, offend against the saints. For the holy ministers and teachers, who rightly divide the word of truth, are assailed by all who are the truth’s enemies; men ignorant of the sacred doctrines, and estranged from all uprightness, who walk in the crooked path, remote from the straight and royal road. Such are the impure and polluted gangs of heretics, whom one may justly call the gates of destruction, the snares of hell, the pitfalls of the devil, the slough of destruction. These bring persecutions and distresses upon such as walk uprightly in the faith; and just as men drunk with wine, and unable to stand, take hold often of those near them, that they may not fall to the earth alone, so also those, as being lame and halt, often bring to ruin with them those who are not steadfast. Against such men must all who are known of God make supplications, imitating the holy apostles, who, calling out against the wickedness of the Jews,

said, ”And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto Your servants that with freedom of speech they may declare Your word.”

But perchance some one will say, ’But lo! Christ somewhere said to the holy apostles, ”Love your enemies: pray for them who use you despitefully:” how then can we cry out against them, without despising the divine command?’ To this we answer, Shall we then pray that boldness and power may be given them by God, that they may more strenuously attack those who praise His doings, not permitting them to teach, and resisting the glory of Him to Whom we address the supplication? But how would not this be thorough folly? Whenever therefore offences are committed by any against us personally, let us immediately even count it our glory to be forgiving towards them, and full of mutual love; and imitating the holy fathers, even though they smite and scorn us, yes, even though they inflict violence upon us of every kind, let us free them from all blame, and be superior both to wrath |554 and vexation. Such glorying becomes the saints, and is pleasing to God.

But when any sin against the glory of God, heaping up wars and distresses against those who are the ministers of the divine message, then indeed let us at once draw near unto God, beseeching His aid, and crying out against those who resist His glory: just as also the mighty Moses did; for he said, ”Arise, O Lord, and let Your enemies be scattered, and let all those who hate Your Name flee away.” And the prayer also uttered by the holy apostles shows, that it is not without advantage for the success of the divine message for the hand, so to speak, of the persecutors to be weakened. ”For behold, they say, their threatenings,” that is, prove their opposition to be in vain, and grant unto ”Your servants, that with freedom of speech they may speak Your word.” But that men would make merchandize of the word of uprightness, and prevail on many to abandon a sound faith, involving them in the inventions of devilish error, and ”belching forth, as Scripture says, things out of their own hearts, and not out of the mouth of the Lord,” He foretold, saying, ”When the Son of man comes, shall He find faith upon the earth?” It escaped not His knowledge: how could it, seeing that He is God Who knows all things? He tells us then, to use his own words, that ”the love of many will grow cold,” and that ”in the latter times some shall depart from a correct and blameless faith, going after seducing spirits, and giving heed to the false words of men who are seared in mind.” Against whom we draw near unto God as faithful servants, praying Him that their wickedness, and their attempts against His glory, may be brought to no effect.

And others also there are who wrong the servants of God, and whom we may without sin attack in prayer. And who again are these? They are the evil and opposing powers, and Satan the adversary of us all, who fiercely resists those who would live well; who casts into the pitfalls of wickedness whoever slumbers; who plants in us the seeds of every sin. For with his satellites he presses upon us furiously.

And on this account the Psalmist called out against them, saying, ”How long set you yourselves against man? and you slay all of you, as it were a leaning wall, and a bowing fence.” For just as a |555 wall that already leans on one side, and a fence that bows over as having been loosened, readily fall when any one pushes against them, so also the mind of man, by reason of its own great inclination of itself to the love of worldly pleasures, readily falls into them whenever any one draws and entices it thereto. And this is Satan’s business: and therefore we say in our prayers to Him Who is able to save, and to drive away from us that wicked being, ”Avenge me of my adversary.” And this the Only-begotten Word of God has indeed done by having become Man: for He has ejected from his tyranny over us the ruler of this world, and has delivered and saved us, and put us under the yoke of His kingdom.

Excellent therefore is it to make request by constant prayer; for Christ will receive our supplications, and fulfil our petitions: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen. |556

SERMON CXX.

18:9-14. And He spoke also this parable unto certain who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others. Two men went up unto the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. And the Pharisee stood and prayed thus to himself: God, I thank You that 1 am not like the rest of mankind, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or as this publican. I fast twice in the week: I pay tithe of all that I gain. But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up even his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful unto me the sinner. I tell you that this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For every one that exalts himself shall be abased, and he that abases himself shall be exalted. You who love instruction, and are eager to listen, receive once again the sacred words: delight yourselves in the honey of wisdom; for so it is written, ”Good words are honeycombs, and their sweetness is the healing of the soul.” For the labour of the bees is very sweet, and benefits in many ways the soul of man: but the divine and saving (honey) makes those in whom it dwells skilful in every good work, and teaches them the ways of (spiritual) improvement. Let us therefore, as I said, receive again in mind and heart the Saviour’s words. For He teaches us in what manner we ought to make our requests unto Him, in order that the act may not prove unrewarded to them who practise it; and that no one may anger God, the bestower of gifts from on high, by means of those very things by which he imagines that he shall gain some benefit. For it is written. ”There is a righteous man, who perishes in his righteousness.”

For see, I pray, an instance of this clearly painted, so to speak, in the parable set before us. One who prayed is condemned because he did not offer his prayer wisely. ”For two men, it says, went up unto the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.” And here we must |557 admire the wise arrangement of Christ our common Saviour, in all things whatsoever He does and says. For by the parable previously read to us, He called us to diligence, and to the duty of offering prayer constantly: for the Evangelist said, ”And He spoke unto them also a parable, to the intent that men ought always to pray, and must not grow weary.” Having then urged them to diligence in constant prayer, yet, as I said, lest by doing so sedulously but without discretion, we should enrage Him Whom we supplicate, He very excellently

shows us in what way we ought to be diligent in prayer. ”Two men then, He says, went up unto the temple to pray.” Observe here, I pray, the impartiality and entire fairness of the unerring Nature: for He calls those who were praying men, since He looks not so much at wealth or power; but regarding their natural equality, He considers all those who dwell upon earth as men, and as in no respect different from one another.

And what then was the manner of their prayer? ”The Pharisee, it says, prayed thus to himself. God, I thank You that I am not like the rest of mankind, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or as this publican.” Many at once are the faults of the Pharisee: for first of all he is boastful, and without sense; for he praises himself, although the sacred Scripture cries aloud, ”Let a neighbour praise you, and not your own mouth: a stranger and not your own lips.” But, O excellent sir, one may well say to him, Behold, those who live in the practice of good and holy actions, as any one may see, are not very ready to listen to the words of flatterers: yes, and even if men extol them, they often are covered with shame, and drop their eyes to the ground, and beg silence of those that praise them. But this shameless Pharisee praises and extols himself because he is better than extortioners, and the unjust, and adulterers. But how did it escape your notice, that a man’s being better than the bad does not necessarily and of course prove him to be worthy of admiration: but that to vie with those who habitually excel, is a noble and honourable thing, and admits a man into the number of those who are justly praised.

Our virtue therefore must not be contaminated with fault, but must be single-minded and blameless, and free from all that can bring reproach. For what profit is there in fasting |558 twice in the week, if your so doing serve only as a pretext for ignorance and vanity, and make you supercilious and haughty, and selfish? You tithe your possessions, and make a boast thereof: but you in another way provoke God’s anger, by condemning men generally on this account, and accusing others; and you are yourself puffed up, though not crowned by the divine decree for righteousness, but heap, on the contrary, praises upon yourself. ”For I am not, he says, as the rest of mankind. Moderate yourself, O Pharisee: ”put a door to your tongue, and a lock. You speak to God Who knows all things. Await the decree of the Judge. None of those skilled in the practice of wrestling ever crowns himself: nor does any man receive the crown of himself, but awaits the summons of the arbiter. Lower your pride: for arrogance is both accursed and hated by God. Although therefore you fast with puffed up mind, your so doing will not avail you: your labour will be unrewarded; for you have mingled dung with your perfume. Even according to the law of Moses a sacrifice that had a blemish was not capable of being offered to God: for it was said unto him, ”Of sheep, and ox, that is offered for sacrifice, there must be no blemish therein.

Since therefore your fasting is accompanied by pride, you must expect to hear God saying, ”This is not the fast that I have chosen, says the Lord. You offer tithes: but you wrong in another way Him Who is honoured by you, in that you condemn men generally. This is an act foreign to the mind that fears God: for Christ even said, ”Judge not, and you shall not be judged: condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. And one also of His disciples said, ”There is one Lawgiver, and Judge: why then do you judge your neighbour? No man because he is in health ridicules one who is sick for being laid up and bedridden: rather he is afraid, lest perchance he become himself the victim of similar sufferings. Nor does any man in battle, because another has fallen, praise himself for having escaped from misfortune. For the infirmity of others is not a fit subject for praise for those who are in health: nay, even if any one be found of more than usually vigorous health, even then scarcely does he gain glory thereby. Such then was the state of the self-loving Pharisee. |559

But what of the publican? He stood, it says, ”afar off,” not even venturing, so to speak, to raise up his eyes on high. You see him abstaining from all boldness of speech, as having no right thereto, and smitten by the reproaches of conscience: for he was afraid of being even seen by God, as one who had been careless of His laws, and had led an unchaste and dissolute life. You see also that by his external manner, he accuses his own depravity. For the foolish Pharisee stood there bold and broad, lifting up his eyes without scruple, bearing witness of himself, and boastful. But the other feels shame at his conduct: he is afraid of his Judge, he smites upon his breast, he confesses his offences, he shows his malady as to the Physician, he prays that he may have mercy. And what is the result? Let us hear what the Judge says, ”This man, He says, went down to his house justified rather than the other.”

Let us therefore ”pray without ceasing,” according to the expression of the blessed Paul: but let us be careful to do so aright. The love of self is displeasing to God, and He rejects empty haughtiness and a proud look, puffed up often on account of that which is by no means excellent. And even if a man be good and sober, let him not on this account suffer himself to fall away into shameful pride: but rather let him remember Christ, Who says to the holy apostles, ”When you have done all those things, those namely which have been commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.” For we owe unto God over all, as from the yoke of necessity, the service of slaves, and ready obedience in all things. Yes, though you lead an excellent and elect life, don’t exact wages from the Lord; but rather ask of Him a gift. As being good, He will promise it you: as a loving Father, He will aid you. Restrain not yourself then from saying, ”God be merciful to me the sinner.” Remember Him Who says by the voice of Isaiah, ”Declare you your sins first, that you may be justified:” remember too that He rebukes those who will not do so, and says, ”Behold, I have a judgment against you, because you say |560 ’I have not sinned’.” Examine the words of the saints: for one says, ”The righteous

is the accuser of himself in the beginning of his words." And another again, "I said, I will confess against myself my transgression unto the Lord: and you forgave the iniquity of my heart."

What answer then will those make to this, who embrace the new tenets of Novatus, and say of themselves that they are pure? Whose prayer do they praise? That of the Pharisee, who acquitted himself, or that of the Publican, who accused himself? If they say that of the Pharisee, they resist the divine sentence; for he was condemned as being boastful: but if that of the Publican, why do they refuse to acknowledge their own impurity? Certainly God justifies those who know well their transgressions, and are willing to confess them: but these men will have the portion of the Pharisee. We then say, that in many things we "all of us offend," and that no man is pure from uncleanness, even though his life upon earth be but one day. Let us ask then of God mercy; which if we do, Christ will justify us: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen. |561

SERMON CXXI.

18:15-17. And they brought also unto Him infants, that He should touch them: but when the disciples saw them, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them and said, Suffer little children to come unto Me, and hinder them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein. EVERY manner of benefit does Christ weave for us, and opens wide the pathways of salvation. For His purpose is to save the dwellers upon earth, and produce in them a knowledge of the pursuits of piety, and make them skilful in all virtue, that they may be acceptable, being filled with spiritual fruitfulness. Let us see therefore what benefit He begets in us by what has just been read. For you have heard the holy Evangelist saying, "That they brought unto Him infants that He should touch them: and when the disciples prevented them, He took them and said, Suffer them to come unto Me, and hinder them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." It was their mothers who brought the babes, desiring His blessing, and begging for their infants the touch of His holy hand. But the blessed disciples rebuked them for so doing, not because they envied the babes, but rather as paying to Him as their teacher a due respect, and preventing, so to speak, unnecessary fatigues, and as setting much value upon order.

And infants even to the present time are brought near and blessed by Christ by means of consecrated hands: and the pattern of the act continues even until this day, and descends unto us from the custom of Christ as its fountain. Only the bringing near of infants takes not place now in an unbecoming or disorderly manner, but with proper order, and sobriety and fear. |562

Since then Christ has said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and hinder them not; for of such is the kingdom of God," come then, yes come, and let us carefully examine, what sort of persons those must be, who desire eternal life, and are enamoured of the kingdom of heaven. For some one forsooth may say, 'What is there in babes that is worthy of emulation? Is it their want of firmness and intelligence? And how then is it not incredible, to affirm or imagine anything of the kind?' Christ however does not wish us to be without understanding, but would have us perfectly know every thing that is useful and necessary for our salvation.

For wisdom even promises that she will give ”to them that are simple, craftiness, and to the young the beginning of sense and understanding.” And she is found also in the book of Proverbs like one that raises her voice on high and says, ”You, O men, do I beseech, and utter my voice unto the sons of men: understand, O you simple ones craftiness, and you fools, put a heart within you.” It follows therefore, that the fool has no heart, and is deficient in craftiness; not in that which is blamable, how could that be? but in that which is praiseworthy. But how a man may at once be both simple and crafty, the Saviour Himself elsewhere explains to us, saying, ”Be you crafty as serpents, and simple as doves.” And similarly the blessed Paul also writes, ”My brethren, be you not children in your minds: but in wickedness be you babes, and in your minds grown men.”

It is necessary however to examine, what is the meaning of being babes in wickedness, and how a man becomes so, but in mind a grown man. A babe then, as knowing either very little, or nothing at all, is justly acquitted of the charge of depravity and wickedness: and so it is also our duty to endeavour to be like them in the very same way, by putting entirely away from us habits of wickedness, that we too may be regarded as men who do not even know the pathway which leads unto guile, but who, unconscious of malice and fraud, live in a simple and innocent manner, practising gentleness, and a priceless humility, and readily forbearing from wrath and |563 spitefulness. For such we affirm are the qualities found in those who are still babes.

But while such is our character in simplicity and innocence, we must be perfect in mind; having our understanding firmly established in the clear knowledge of Him Who by nature and in truth is the Creator of the Universe, and God and Lord: acknowledging along with Him no other God whatsoever, new, and falsely so named: and avoiding as that which would bring upon us perdition, the being seduced into the abandonment of Him by the adoption of the customs of the heathen. Our mind then must be firmly fixed, so to speak, and safe, and unwavering in holding unto the living and true God: and we must further also flee far away from other pitfalls, and withdraw from the stumbling-blocks of the devil; for such those men are, who corrupt the orthodox doctrine respecting God, and falsify the truth, and lift up their horn on high, and speak wickedly against God. For they belch forth things out of their own heart, and lead astray the souls of the simple, warring against the glory of the Only-begotten Son of God, and saying that He is to be numbered among things created, whereas it was by Him that they all were brought into existence. And bringing down severe and inevitable condemnation upon their own heady, they fear not to say the very same things also against the Holy Spirit. Whosoever then says of them that they are the gates of hell, errs not from the mark. And the wise Paul also protests unto us, that we must turn away our faces from such, men: ”For if, he says, any one preach unto you other than that you have received, let him be accursed.”

The chief perfection therefore of the mind is to be established in the faith, and for our understanding to be uncorrupted therein: and the second, which neighbours upon this chief perfection, and is akin to it, and its constant companion, is the clear knowledge of that way of conduct which pleases God, and is taught us in the Gospel, and is perfect and blameless. Those who travel thereon lead a life of simplicity |564 and innocence, while nevertheless they know what opinions they ought to hold, and what acts are right for them to do. These enter in by the narrow gate, refusing neither those labours which piety unto God requires, nor such as are necessary for leading a glorious life. And so they duly advance into the broadness of the abundance which is in God, and rejoice in His gifts, and win for themselves the kingdom of heaven by Christ; by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen. |565

SERMON CXXII.

18:18-27. And a certain ruler asked Him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why do you call Me good? No-one is good, but one, God. You know the commandments: You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear witness falsely; honour your father and your mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth. And when Jesus heard these things, He said unto him; You still lack one thing: sell all that you have, and distribute to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And Jesus seeing it said, How hardly shall they that have gold enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to enter in through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, And who can live? And He said, The things which are impossible with men, are possible with God.

THOSE who believe that the Word, Who shone forth from the very substance of God the Father, is by nature and truly God, draw near to Him as unto an omniscient God, Who, as the Psalmist says, ”tries the hearts and reins;” and sees all that passes in us: ”for all things are naked, and spread out before His eyes,” according to the expression of the blessed Paul. But we do not find the Jewish multitudes thus disposed: for they with their princes and teachers were in error, and saw not with the eyes of their mind the glory of Christ. Rather they looked upon Him as one like unto us: as a mere man, I mean; and not as God rather, Who had become man. They approached Him therefore to make trial of Him, and lay for Him the nets of their craftiness.

And this you may learn by what has now been read. For a ruler, it says, asked Him, saying, ”Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said unto him, |566 ”Why do you call Me good? None is good but one, God.” Now he, who is here called a Ruler, and who fancied himself to be learned in the law, and supposed that he had been accurately taught therein, imagined that he could convict Christ of dishonouring the commandment spoken by the most wise Moses, and of introducing laws of His own. For it was the object of the Jews to prove

that Christ opposed and resisted the former commandments, to establish, as I said, new laws, of His own authority, in opposition to those previously existing, that their wicked conduct towards Him might have a specious pretext, he draws near therefore, and makes pretence of speaking kindly: for he calls Him Teacher, and styles Him Good, and professes himself desirous of being a disciple. For "what, he says, shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Observe therefore how he mixes up flattery with fraud and deceit, like one who mingles wormwood with honey: for he supposed that he could in this way deceive Him. Of such men one of the holy prophets said, "Their tongue is a piercing lance: the words of their mouth are deceitful. To his neighbour he speaks peacefully: but there is enmity in his soul." And again the wise Psalmist also thus speaks of them: "Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." And again, "Their words are smoother than oil: and yet are they spears."

He therefore flatters Jesus, and attempts to deceive Him, making pretence of being well-disposed to Him. And what does the Omniscient reply, "Who, as it is written, takes the wise in their craftiness? "Why do you call Me good? None is good but one, God," You see how He proved at once that he was neither wise nor learned, though the ruler of a synagogue of the Jews. For if, He says, you did not believe that I am God, and the clothing of the flesh has led you astray, why did you apply to Me epithets suitable to the supreme nature alone, while still you supposed Me to be a mere man like unto yourself, and not superior to the limits of human nature? In the nature that transcends all, even in God only, is found the attribute of being by nature, and unchangeably good: but the angels, and we upon earth, are good by resembling Him, or rather by participation of Him. For as He is what He is, and this is His Name, and His everlasting memorial for all generations; but we exist and |567 come into being by being made partakers of Him Who really exists: so He indeed is good, or the good absolutely, but angels and men are good, only by being made, as I said, partakers of the good God. Let therefore the being good be set apart as the special property of God over all alone, essentially attached to His nature, and His peculiar attribute.

If, however, He says, I do not seem to you to be truly God, then you have ignorantly and foolishly applied to Me the properties and virtues of the divine nature, at the very time when you imagine me to be a mere man, one that is who never is invested with goodness, the property of the unchangeable nature, but only gains it by the assent of the divine will. And such then was the purport of what Christ spoke.

But those perchance will not assent to the correctness of this explanation, whose minds are perverted by sharing in the wickedness of Arius. For they make the Son inferior to the supremacy and glory of God the Father: or rather, they contend that He is not the Son; for they both eject Him from being by nature and truly God, and thrust Him away from having really been born, lest men should believe that He is also equal in substance to Him Who begat Him. For they assert, as though

they had obtained a reason for their blasphemy from the passage now before us, 'Behold, He has clearly and expressly denied that He is good, and set it apart as something appropriate to God the Father only: but truly had He been equal to Him in substance, and sprung from Him by nature, how would not He also be good as being God?'

Let this then be our reply to our opponents. Since all correct and exact reasoning acknowledges a son to be consubstantial with the father, how is He not good, as being God? For He cannot but be God, if He be consubstantial with Him Who is by nature God. For surely they will not affirm, however extreme may be the audacity into which they have fallen, that from a good father a son has sprung who is not good. For to this we have the Saviour's own testimony, Who thus speaks; "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruits." How from a good root has there shot forth an evil sprout? Or how from a sweet fountain can there How a bitter river? Was there ever a time when there was no Father, seeing that He is the Father eternally? But He is the Father, because He has begotten, and |568 this is the reason why He bears this name, and not as being one who borrows the title by resemblance to some other person. For from Him all paternity in heaven and earth is named. We conclude therefore that the fruit of the good God is the good Son.

And in another way: as most wise Paul, says, "He is the image of the invisible God:" and the image, because He displays in His own nature the beauty of Him Who fathered Him. How therefore can we see in the Son, Who is not good, the Father, Who is by nature and truly good? "He is the brightness and likeness of His person:" but if He be not good, as the senseless heretic asserts, but the Father is by nature good, it is a brightness different in nature, and that possesses not the splendour of Him Who bade it shine. And the likeness too is counterfeit, or rather is now no likeness at all: for it represents not Him Whose likeness it is, if, as all must allow, that which is not good is the contrary of that which is good. And much more might one say in opposition to them upon this point: but that our discourse may not extend to an unreasonable length, and be burdensome to any, we will say no more at present, and hold in as with a bridle our earnestness in this matter; but at our next meeting we will continue our explanation of the meaning of this passage from the Gospel, should Christ once again assemble us here: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen. |569

SERMON CXXIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. I PERCEIVE you assembled here with great earnestness and zeal; and, as I suppose, you have come to exact a debt. I then, for my part, acknowledge that I promised at our last meeting to complete what was wanting to my discourse: and I have come to pay it as unto children, praying Christ, our common Saviour, to impart to my mind His divine light, and give utterance to my tongue, that I may benefit both you and myself. For Paul has somewhere written, ”The husbandman who labours must first eat of the fruits.” Let me then bring back to your remembrance first of all what has already been considered, and then we will proceed to what remains. The blessed Evangelist therefore said, ”And a certain ruler asked Him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And He said unto him, Why do you call Me good? No-one is good, but one, God:” and so on with the rest of the lesson. Now we have already explained what is the meaning of this passage in the Gospel, and enough has been said to you upon that point: for we showed both that by nature and truly the Son is good as also He is Who begat Him; and that the answer, ”Why do you call Me good? No-one is good, but one, God,” was spoken relatively to the questioner. Let us therefore direct our inquiry to the Scriptures which follow.

What then says this chief of the synagogue of the Jews? ”What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He does not ask with a view to learn; for then his question would have been worthy of all praise: but his object was to prove, that Christ did not permit them to retain the Mosaic commandments, but led rather His disciples and followers unto new laws enacted by Himself. For on this pretext they rebuked the people under their charge, saying of Christ, our common Saviour, ”He has a devil, and is mad: why hear you Him?” For |570 they said that He had a devil, and was mad, on the supposition that He had set up his own laws against those which had been given from above, from God. True rather would it be to affirm of them that they had a devil, and were utterly mad, for resisting the Lord of the law, Who had come not so much to destroy the commandment which had been given of old, and of which Moses was the minister, as to fulfil it, according to His own words: for He transformed the shadow into the truth.

The chief of the synagogue therefore expected to hear Christ say, Cease, O man, from the writings of Moses; abandon the shadow; they were but types, and nothing more; draw near therefore rather to My commandments, which you have in the Gospel: but He did not so answer, because He discerned by His godlike knowledge the object of him who tempted Him. As though then He had no other commandments, but those only given by Moses, He sends the man unto them, and says, "You know the commandments." And lest he should say, that He referred to His own commandments, He enumerates those contained in the law, and says; "You shall not kill: you shall not commit adultery: neither shall you bear false witness." And what reply does this cunning schemer in wickedness make, or rather this very ignorant and senseless person? For he thought that even though He Whom he asked was God, yet nevertheless he could easily cajole Him into answering whatever he chose. But as the sacred Scripture says, "The prey falls not to the lot of the crafty."

For though he had shot wide of his mark, and missed his prey, he yet ventures to bait for Him another snare: for he said, "All these have I kept from my youth." He might therefore well hear from us in answer, O foolish Pharisee, "you bear witness of yourself; your witness is not true." But omitting now this argument, let us see in what way Christ repelled His bitter and malignant foe. For while He might have said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom |571 of heaven: blessed are the meek: blessed are the pure in heart:" He tells him nothing of this kind, but because he was fond of lucre and very rich, He proceeds at once to that which would grieve him, and says, "Sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me," This was torture to the heart of that covetous man, who so prided himself upon his keeping of the law. It proved him at once both frail and weak, and altogether unfit for the reception of the new message of the gospel. And we too learn how true that is wdiich Christ spoke; "No man puts new wine into old wine-skins; else the skins burst, and the wine is spilt: but new wine is put into new wine-skins." For the chief of the synagogue of the Jews proves to be but an old wine-skin, that cannot hold the new wine, but bursts and becomes useless. For he was saddened, although he had received a lesson that would have won for him eternal life.

But those who have received in them by faith Him Who makes all things new, even Christ, are not rent asunder by receiving from Him the new wine. For when they have but newly received from Him the word of the gospel message, which gladdens the heart of man, they become superior to wealth and the love of lucre: their mind is established in courage: they set no value on temporal things, but thirst rather after things eternal: they honour a voluntary poverty, and are earnest in love to the brethren. For, as it is written in the Acts of the holy Apostles, "As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every one according to his need," As the ruler therefore was too infirm of purpose, and

could not be prevailed upon even to listen to the advice of selling his possessions, although it would have been good for him, and full of reward, our Lord lays bare the malady which has its lair in the rich, thus saying, ”How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And I say unto you, that it is easier for a camel to enter in through the eye of a needle, than a rich man into the kingdom of God.” Now by a camel He means not the animal of that name, but a thick cable |572 rather: for it is the custom of those well versed in navigation to call the thicker cables ”camels.”

Observe however, that He does not altogether cut away the hope of the rich, but reserves for them a place and way of salvation. For He did not say that it is impossible for a rich man to enter in, but that he does so with difficulty. When the blessed disciples heard these words, they objected, saying, ”And who can live?” And their plea was for those who had wealth and possessions. For we know, they say, that no one will ever be persuaded to abandon his wealth and riches: ”Who then can be saved?” But what does the Lord reply? ”The things that are impossible with men, are possible with God.” He has reserved therefore for those who possess wealth the possibility of being counted worthy, if they will, of the kingdom of God: for even though they refuse entirely to abandon what they have, yet it is possible for them in another way to attain unto honour. And the Saviour has Himself showed us how and in what way this can happen, saying, ”Make to yourselves friends of the unrighteous mammon: that when it has failed, they may receive you into eternal tabernacles.” For there is nothing to prevent the rich, if they will, from making the poor partakers and sharers of the abundance which they possess. What hinders him who has plentiful possessions from being affable of address, and ready to communicate to others, easily prevailed upon to give, and compassionate, and full of that generous pity which is well-pleasing to God. Not unrewarded, nor unprofitable shall we find carefulness in this respect; for ”mercy boasts over judgment,” as it is written.

By every argument therefore, and in every way does our common Saviour and Lord benefit us: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen. 1. The Catenist adds, ”as was done in the case of Job.” 2. The following passage is found in MS. 14,725, but is acknowledged neither by the principal MS. nor the Greek; besides the late date of the MS., which is on paper of the thirteenth century, I have little doubt of its spuriousness, from, first, its extremely rhetorical style; secondly, the strangeness of several of its words: and thirdly, the difficulties in its grammar. It is however as follows; ”He desired truly to satisfy himself with the morsels which remained over from the rich man’s table, and no one gave unto him. O the meanness of life! For the rich man was set in manifold enjoyments, and the poor man had nothing, and was withering in the woe of poverty: and from the excessiveness of his want his person was exposed to the hailstones. He had no lands nor cornfields to bring

him increase: he had no vineyards nor trees to bear him fruits, but was cast down, exposed to the sun, and day and night his couch was the dunghill. Poor Lazarus was cast down at the rich man's door: he was not cast down at a distance, but close by, lest, were he removed far away, some excuse might be found for the rich man's cruelty."

3. Of the extracts gathered by Mai, the first is the only one not recognised by the Syriac. It starts the question, whether this parable, expressly mentioning Lazarus by name, and thereby giving some colour to the tradition, that he was an actual person, may be taken as a proof, that the retribution of men's good or evil deeds takes place immediately after death. This Cyril answers in the negative, showing from Scripture that the judgment does not take place till after the resurrection. This Mai says requires "a somewhat more accurate explanation on account of the fatal error of the Greeks, that the reward of human actions is delayed until after the resurrection." But his explanation is in fact an attempt at a refutation of S. Cyril's doctrine: for the extract really is S. Cyril's, being the sixteenth chapter against the Anthropomorphitae. 4. The rest of the translation is from the Cod. 14,725, referred to above. It is a volume of miscellaneous sermons, containing of S. Cyril's only the two upon this parable, made up into one, and ending with the latter portion of Sermon XCI, beginning with the words, "Withdraw your attention from these temporal things." Cf. p. 421. In the main MS. the rest of this sermon, and the whole of the four following, have perished.

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SERMON CXXIV.

18:28-30. And Peter said, Lo we have left all, and followed You. And He said to them. Verily I say to you. There is no man that has left house, or wife, or brethren, or parents, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come eternal life. HE Who is the fountain of sacred doctrines causes here also a healthful stream to flow for us, and the very season, as it seems, bids us say to those who search into the divine words, "You who thirst, come to the waters." For there is set before you that you may partake thereof "the torrent of pleasure," even Christ. For by this name the prophet David makes mention of Him, saying to God the Father in heaven; "But the sons of men shall trust in the protection of Your wings: they shall be satisfied with the fatness of Your house, and You shall make them drink of the torrent of Your pleasure."

And what the stream is which here gushes forth for us from Him, the purport of the evangelic lessons now set before us clearly teaches: "For Peter, it says, said to Him, Lo! we have left all and followed You." And to this another Evangelist, Matthew, adds, "What then shall we have?" Let us however, before proceeding to any of the other points, first enquire into the occasion which brought the discourse to this present subject.

When therefore our common Saviour Christ said to one of the chiefs of the synagogue of the Jews, "Go, sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven, and come, follow Me," the disciples ask, What they shall have from God who keep this precept: and usefully they take upon themselves, as representing a class, the outline of the matter. But, as I imagine, to this some may reply, 'What after all had the disciples given up? for they were men who gained the necessaries of life by their sweat and labour, being by trade fishermen, who at most perhaps owned somewhere a boat and nets: who had neither well-built houses, nor any other possessions. What therefore had they left, or for what did they ask of Christ a recompense? What therefore do we answer to this? Chiefly, that for this very reason they made this most necessary enquiry. For inasmuch as they possessed nothing but what was trifling and of slight value, they would learn

in what manner God will requite, and gladden with His gifts those who likewise have left but little for the sake of the kingdom of God, for the desire, that is, of being counted worthy of the kingdom of heaven for their love's sake towards Him. For the rich man, as one who has disregarded much, will confidently expect recompense: but he who possessed but little, and abandoned it, how was it not right to ask, what hopes he might entertain? For this reason, as representing those in like condition with themselves, in respect of their having left but little, they say, "Behold, we have left all and followed You."

And it is further necessary to observe this also; that, correctly considered, the pain of abandoning is the same whether it be of much or little. For come let us see the real import of the matter by a trifling example. Supposing that two men had to stand naked, and in so doing the one stripped himself of raiment of great price, while the other put off only what was cheap and easy of acquisition, would not the pain of the nakedness be equal in both cases? What possible doubt can there be upon this point? As far therefore as regards obedience and good-will, those must be placed upon an equal footing with the rich, who though differently circumstanced, yet practised equal readiness, and willingly bore the selling of what they had. And the very wise Paul also takes up their cause, where he thus wrote: "For if there be a ready mind, it is accepted according to what a man has, and not according to what he has not." The enquiry therefore of the holy apostles was not an unreasonable one.

What then said Christ to them, Who does not discriminate between rich and poor? "Verily I say to you, There is no man who has left houses or brethren, or children, or parents, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in that which is to come eternal life." Worthy of God is the declaration, and holy and admirable the decree. For observe how He raises up all who hear to an assured hope, promising not merely the fulness of the bounteous gift which is bestowed upon the saints, but confirming His promise by an oath, by prefixing to His declaration the word Verily, which, so to speak, performs the part of an oath. And not only does He include within His promises those who disregard wealth, but those also, He says, who leave father or mother, or wife or brethren, for the kingdom of God's sake, shall receive manifold more in this world, and in that which is to come eternal life.

But that those who have led a virtuous life necessarily gain the life eternal, there can be no doubt whatsoever: some inquiry is however necessary, in the first place, as to who they are who leave father and mother, and wife, and brethren, and houses: and secondly, a still more exact examination of the way in which those who thus act shall receive manifold more in this world.

Men therefore leave father and mother, and wife and brethren, and oftentimes count for nought the natural affection due to the ties of kindred, for love's sake to

Christ. And in what manner they do so, He teaches us by saying, at one time, ”He that loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me: and at another time again, ”Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I tell you nay, I am not come to send peace, but division: for I am come to divide a man from his father, and the daughter from her mother, and the daughter-in-law from her mother-in-law. For when the divine message of the gospel is catching as in a net the whole world to faith in Him, and raising it up to the light of the true knowledge of God, there are those who would readily enter in, did they not suffer from an injurious shame, as being afraid either on their father’s account, or their mother’s, and taking too much into consideration their anger or their sorrow. For if these are idolaters, they will not consent that their sons or daughters should yield themselves to Christ’s service, and abandon the error in which they have been brought up, and which has become habitual with them.

And often when the sons are unbelieving and ill-disposed, their fathers have not the courage to vex them by hastening to the faith, and seizing the salvation which is by Christ. And the same explanation may be given respecting brethren with brethren, and the daughter-in-law with her mother-in-law, and the latter with the former. But those who are strong in mind, and prefer nothing to the love of Christ, eagerly grasp the faith, and earnestly endeavour to gain admission into His household hy a spiritual relationship, heeding nothing the wars, or rather divisions which will follow, with those who are their kindred according to the flesh. And in this way then men leave house and kindred for Christ’s sake, that they may win His Name, being called Christians; or rather for His glory’s sake, for frequently His Name means His glory.

But next let us see, in what way one who leaves house or father or mother or brethren, or it may be his wife even, receives manifold more in this present time. Shall he become the husband of many wives, or find on earth many fathers instead of one, and thus have his earthly kindred greatly multiplied? This is not what we say, but rather, that abandoning these carnal and temporal things, he shall receive what is far more valuable, and so to speak, manifold times as much as what was disregarded by him. For let us take, if you please, the holy apostles as our examples; and we say then of them, that they were men not distinguished in worldly station, nor skilled in eloquence, nor did they possess a polished tongue, or elegance of words; on the contrary they were untrained in speech, and by trade fishermen, who gathered by their labour the means of life: but whatever they had they left, that they might be the constant attendants and ministers of Christ; nor could any thing hinder them, or draw them away to other occupations, or worldly pursuits. Having left them but little, what did they gain? They were filled with the Holy Spirit: they received power over unclean spirits, to cast them out: they wrought miracles: the shadow of Peter healed those that were sick: they became illustrious among

mankind everywhere: foremost in glory; worthy of emulation, and renowned, both while they were still living, and afterwards as well. For who knows not those who taught the world Christ's mystery? Who wonders not at the crown of glory that was bestowed upon them?

But perchance you say, 'Shall we all of us therefore become like them?' To this we answer, that each one of us also who have believed in Christ and loved His Name, if he have left a house shall receive the mansions that are above: and if he have abandoned a father, shall gain that Father Who is in heaven. If he be abandoned by his brethren, yet will Christ admit him to brotherhood with Him. If he leave a wife, he shall have as the inmate of His house Wisdom who comes down from above, from God. For it is written, "Say to Wisdom that she is your sister, and make Understanding your friend." By her shall you bring forth beautiful spiritual fruits, by means of which you shall be made a partaker of the hope of the saints, and join the company of the angels. And though you leave your mother, you shall find another incomparably more excellent,----even "the Jerusalem that is above, which is free, and our mother." How are not these things manifold times more than those that were left? For they were but transitory, and rapidly do they waste, and lightly fail us utterly! for as the dew, and like a dream, so they pass away. But he who is counted worthy of these things becomes even in this world illustrious and enviable, being adorned with glory both before God and men. Manifold more therefore are these things than all that is earthly and carnal, and the Giver of them is our common Lord and Saviour: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CXXV.

18:31-34. And He took the twelve, and said to them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all those things shall be accomplished which are written in the prophets about the Son of man. For He shall be delivered up to the heathen, and shall be mocked, and shamefully entreated, and spit upon. And when they have scourged Him, they shall put Him to death: and on the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they knew not what was said. THE blessed prophet David has spoken one of those things which are of great importance for our benefit, especially as it refers to what is of constant occurrence, so to speak, to men's minds. "For I was prepared, he says, and was not troubled." For whatever happens unexpectedly, whenever it is of a serious character, exposes even courageous persons to agitation and alarm, and sometimes to unendurable terrors. But when it has been mentioned before that it will happen, its attack is easily averted. And this, I think, is the meaning of, "I was prepared, and was not troubled."

For this reason the divinely-inspired Scripture very fitly says to those who would attain to glory by leading a course of holy conduct, "My son, if you draw near to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for temptation. Direct your heart, and endure." For it does not so speak in order to produce in men an abject slothfulness which will win no reward, but that they may know that by practising patience and endurance, they will overcome the temptations which happen to all who would live virtuously, and prove superior to every thing that could harass them. And so here also the Saviour of all, to prepare beforehand the disciples' minds, tells them that He shall suffer the passion upon the cross, and death in the flesh, as soon as He has gone up to Jerusalem. And he added too. that He should also rise, wiping out the pain, and obliterating the shame of the passion by the greatness of the miracle. For glorious was it, and worthy of God, to be able to sever the bonds of death, and hasten back to life. For testimony is borne Him by the resurrection from the dead, according to the expression of the wise Paul, that He is God and the Son of God.

It is necessary, however, for us to explain what the benefit was which the holy apostles received from having learnt the approach of those things which wore about to

happen. By this means then He cuts away beforehand both unseemly thoughts and all occasion for stumbling. How, you ask, or in what way? The blessed disciples then, I answer, had followed Christ, our common Saviour, in His circuit through Judaea: they had seen that there was nothing, however ineffable, and worthy of all wonder, which He could not accomplish. For He called from their graves the dead when they had already decayed: to the blind He restored sight: and wrought also other works, worthy of God and glorious. They had heard Him say, ”Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them falls to the ground without your Father’s knowledge. And now they who had seen these things, and been emboldened by His words to courageousness, were about to behold Him enduring the ridicule of the Jews, crucified, and made a mock of, and receiving even buffets from the servants. It was possible therefore, that being offended because of these things, they might think thus within themselves, and say: He Who is so great in might, and possesses such godlike authority; Who performs miracles by His nod alone; Whose word is almighty, so that even from their very graves He raises the dead; Who says too that His Father’s providence reaches even to the birds; Who is the Only-begotten, and first-born:

how did He not know what was about to happen? Is He too taken in the nets of the foe, and made the prey of His enemies, Who even promised that He would save us?. Is He then disregarded and despised of that Father, without Whose will not even a tiny bird is taken? These things perchance the holy apostles might have said or thought among themselves. And what would have been the consequence? They too, like the rest of the Jewish multitude, would have become unbelieving, and ignorant of the truth.

That they might therefore be aware both that He foreknew His passion, and though it was in his power easily to escape, that yet of His own will He advanced to meet it, He told them beforehand what would happen. In saying then, ”Behold, we go up to Jerusalem,” He, so to speak, testified urgently and commanded them to remember what had been foretold. And He added necessarily, that all these things had been foretold by the holy prophets. For Isaiah, as in the person of Christ, says; ”I have given My back to scourgings, and My cheeks to buffetings: and My face I have not turned away from the shame of spittings. And again, in another place, He says of Him, ”As a sheep He was led to the slaughter, and was silent, as a lamb before its shearer. And again, ”All we like sheep have gone astray: every one has gone astray in his path: and the Lord has delivered Him up because of our sins. And again the blessed David also in the twenty-first Psalm, painting as it were beforehand the sufferings upon the cross, has set before us Jesus speaking as one that lo! already was hanging upon the tree, ”But I am a worm, and not a man: the reproach of men, and a thing rejected of the people. All those that have seen Me, have derided Me: they have spoken with their lips, and shaken their heads; He trusted in the Lord: let Him deliver Him.

For some of the Jews did shake their wicked heads at Him, deriding Him, and saying, ”If You are the Son of God, come down now from the cross, and we will believe You. And again He said, ”They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture they cast the lot. And again in another place He says of those that crucified Him, ”They gave gall for My food, and for My thirst they made Me drink vinegar.”

Of all therefore that was about to happen to Him, nothing was unforetold, God having so ordered it by His Providence for our use, that when the time came for it to happen, no one might be offended. For it was in the power of one Who knew beforehand what was about to happen, to refuse to suffer altogether. No man then compelled Him by force, nor again were the multitudes of the Jews stronger than His might: but He submitted to suffer, because He knew that His passion would be for the salvation of the whole world. For He endured indeed the death of the flesh, but rose again, having trampled upon corruption, and by His resurrection from the dead, He planted in the bodies of mankind the life that springs from Him. For the whole nature of man in Him hastened back to incorruption. And of this the wise Paul bears witness, saying, at one time, ”For since by man was death, by man was also the resurrection of the dead.” And again. ”For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all live.” Let not those therefore who crucified Him indulge in pride: for He remained not among the dead, seeing that as God He possesses an irresistible might: but rather let them lament for themselves, as being guilty of the crime of murdering the Lord. This the Saviour also is found saying to the women who were weeping for Him, ”Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.” For it was not right that they should lament for Him, Who was about to arise from the dead, destroying thereby corruption, and shaking death’s dominion; but more fitly, on the contrary, would they lament over their own afflictions.

The Saviour of all then declared these things beforehand to the holy apostles: ”but they, it says, understood not what was said, and the word was hidden from them.” For as yet they knew not accurately what had been before proclaimed by the holy prophets. For even He Who was first among the disciples heard the Saviour once say that He should be crucified, and die; and arise: but in that he did not as yet understand the depth of the mystery, he resisted it, saying, ”That be far from You, Lord: this shall not be to You.” But he was rebuked for so speaking: because he as yet knew not the purport of the Scripture inspired of God relating thereunto. But when Christ arose from the dead, He opened their eyes, as another of the holy Evangelists wrote; for they wore enlightened, being enriched with the abundant participation of the Spirit. For they who once understood not the words of the prophets, exhorted those who believed in Christ to study their words, saying, ”We too have a more sure prophetic word, whereunto you do well to look, as to a lamp that shines in a dark place, until the day shine forth, and the light-star arise in your

hearts.” And this has also reached its fulfilment: for we have been enlightened in Christ; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CXXVI.

18:35-43. And it came to pass, that as He drew near to Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: and hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passes by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy upon me. And they who went before rebuked him that he should hold his peace. But he cried out so much the more, Son of David, have mercy upon me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded that they should bring him to Him. And when he drew near, He asked him. What do you want me to do for you? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said to him, Receive your sight: your faith has made you live. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people when they saw it gave glory to God.

WHOSOEVER are yet without understanding, and accept not the faith in Christ, may justly have that said to them which was spoken by the voice of David, ”Come and see the works of God, the miracles that He has put upon earth.” For He wrought miracles after no human fashion, though He was in appearance a man such as we are; but with godlike dignity rather, for He was God in form like to us, since He changed not from being what He was, as the purport of the passage now read from the Gospels proves to us. ”For the Saviour, it says, was passing by. And a blind man cried out, saying, Son of David have mercy on me.” Let us then examine the expression of the man who had lost his sight; for it is not a thing to pass by without enquiry, since possibly the examination of what was said will beget something highly advantageous for our benefit.

In what character then does he address to Him his prayer? Is it as to a mere man, according to the babbling of the Jews, who stoned Him with stones, saying in their utter folly, ”For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; because that You being a man make Thyself God? But must not that blind man have understood that the sight of the blind cannot be restored by human means, but requires, on the contrary, a divine power, and an authority such as God only possesses? for with God nothing whatsoever is impossible. He drew near to Him therefore as to the Omnipotent God; but how then does he call Him the Son of David? What therefore

can one answer to this? The following is perhaps, as I think, the explanation. As he had been brought up in Judaism, and was by birth of that race, the predictions contained in the law and the holy prophets concerning Christ of course had not escaped his knowledge. He had heard them chant that passage in the book of the Psalms: ”The Lord has sworn the truth to David, and will not reject it, that of the fruit of your loins will I set upon your throne. He knew also that the blessed prophet Isaiah had said, ”And there shall spring forth a shoot from the root of Jesse, and from his root shall a flower grow up. And again this as well;

”Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son, and they shall call His Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. As one therefore who already believed that the Word, being God, had of His own will submitted to be born in the flesh of the holy virgin, he draws near to Him as to God, and says, ”Have mercy upon me, Son of David. For Christ bears witness that this was his state of mind in offering his supplication, by saying to him, ”Your faith has saved you.”

Let those then be ashamed who imagine themselves not to be blind, but who, as the wise Peter says, are ”sightless, and have darkness in their mind. For they divide into two the one Lord Jesus Christ: even Him Who is the Word of the Father, [but Who became a man, and was made flesh. For they deny that He Who was born of the seed of David was really the Son of God the Father: for so, they say, to be born is proper to man only, rejecting in their great ignorance His flesh,] and treating with contempt that precious and ineffable dispensation by which we have been redeemed: and even perhaps foolishly speaking against the Only-begotten, because He emptied Himself, and descended to the measure of human nature, and was obedient to the Father even to death, that by His death in the flesh He might abolish death, might wipe out corruption, and put away the sin of the world. Let such imitate this blind man: for he drew near to Christ the Saviour of all as to God, and called Him Lord and Son of the blessed David. He testifies also to His glory by asking of Him an act such as God only can accomplish. Let them wonder also at the constancy wherewith he confessed Him. For there were some who rebuked him when confessing his faith; but he did not give way, nor cease his crying, but bade the ignorance of those who were rebuking him be still. He was justly therefore honoured by Christ:

for he was called by Him, and commanded to draw near. Understand from this, my beloved, that faith sets us also in Christ’s presence, and so brings us to God, as for us to be even counted worthy of His words. For when the blind man was brought to Him, He asked him, saying, ”What do you want me to do for you? Was his request then unknown to Him? For was it not plain that he sought deliverance from the malady that afflicted him? How can there be any doubt of this? He asked him therefore purposely, that those who were standing by, and accompanying Him, might learn, that it was not money he sought, but rather that regarding Him as

God, he asked of Him a divine act, and one appropriate solely to the nature that transcends all.

When then he had declared the nature of his request, saying, ”Lord, that I may receive my sight:” then, yes! then the words that Christ spoke were a rebuke of the unbelief of the Jews: for with supreme authority He said, ”Receive your sight.” Wonderful is the expression! right worthy of God, and transcending the bounds of human nature! Which of the holy prophets ever spoke ought such as this? or used words of so great authority? For observe that He did not ask of another the power to restore vision to him who was deprived of sight, nor did He perform the divine miracle as the effect of prayer to God, but attributed it rather to His own power, and by His almighty will wrought whatever He would. ”Receive, said He, your sight;” and the word was light to him that was blind: for it was the word of Him Who is the true light.

And now that he was delivered from his blindness, did he neglect the duty of loving Christ? Certainly not: ”For he followed Him, it says, offering Him glory as to God.” He was set free therefore from double blindness: for not only did he escape from the blindness of the body, but also as well from that of the mind and heart: for he would not have glorified Him as God, had he not possessed spiritual vision. And further, he became the means of others also giving Him glory, for all the people, it says, gave glory [to God. It is plain therefore from this, that great is the guilt of the scribes and Pharisees; for He rebukes them for refusing to accept Him though working miracles, while the multitude glorified Him as God because of the deeds which He wrought. No such praise is offered on their part: yes, rather] the miracle is made an occasion of insult and accusation; for they said that the Lord wrought it by Beelzebub: and by thus acting they became the cause of the destruction of the people under their rule. Therefore the Lord protested against their wickedness by the voice of the prophet, saying; ”Alas for the shepherds, who destroy and scatter the sheep of My inheritance.” And again; ”The shepherds have become foolish, and have not sought the Lord: therefore did none of the flock understand, and were scattered.”’

Such then was their state: but we are under the rule of the chief Shepherd of all, even Christ: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and over, Amen.

SERMON CXXVII.

19:1-10. [The first half of this Sermon has not survived in the Syriac. The following fragments are from Mai, p. 385. and Cramer, p. 137.] 19:2. Behold a man named Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was chief of the publicans, a man entirely abandoned to covetousness, and whose sole object was the increase of his gains: for such was the practice of the publicans, though Paul calls it "idolatry," possibly as being fit only for those who have no knowledge of God. And as they shamelessly made open profession of this vice, the Lord very justly joined them with the harlots, thus saying to the chiefs of the Jews, "The harlots and the publicans go before you into the kingdom of God." But Zacchaeus continued not among their number, but was counted worthy of mercy at Christ's hands: for He it is Who calls near those who are afar off, and gives light to those who are in darkness.

But come then, and let us see what was the manner of Zacchaeus' conversion. He desired to see Jesus, and climbed therefore into a sycamore tree, and so a seed of salvation sprang up within him. And Christ saw this with the eyes of Deity: and therefore looking up, He saw him also with the eyes of the manhood, and as it was His purpose for all men to be saved, He extends His gentleness to him, and encouraging him, says, "Come down quickly. For he had sought to see Him, but the multitude prevented him, not so much that of the people, as of his sins; and he was little of stature, not merely in a bodily point of view, but also spiritually: and in no other way could he see Him, unless he were raised up from the earth, and climbed into the sycamore, by which Christ was about to pass. Now the story contains in it an enigma: for in no other way can a man see Christ and believe in Him, except by mounting up into the sycamore, by rendering foolish his members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, &c. And Christ, it says, was about to pass by the sycamore: for having taken for His path the conversation which is by the law, that is, the fig tree, He chose the foolish things of the world, that is, the cross and death.

And every one who takes up his cross, and follows Christ's conversation, is saved, performing the law with understanding, which so becomes a fig tree not bearing figs but follies; for the secret conduct of the faithful seems to the Jews to be folly,

consisting as it does in circumcision from vice, and idleness from bad practice, though they be not circumcised in the flesh, nor keep the sabbath. He knew therefore that he was prepared for obedience; and fervent for faith, and ready to change from vice to virtue; wherefore also He calls him, and he will leave (the fig tree) to gain Him. And with haste he came down, and received Him joyfully, not only because he saw Him as he wished, but because he had also been called by Him, and because he received Him (to lodge with him), which he never could have expected.

19:5. Zacchaeus, come down quickly: for to-day I must abide at your house. This was an act of divine foreknowledge; for He well knew what would happen. He saw the man's soul prepared most readily to choose a holy life, and converted him therefore to piety. [The Syriac recommences] The man therefore received Jesus joyfully: and this was the commencement of his turning himself to good, of his departure from his former faults, and of his manfully betaking himself to a better course. But perchance some one possibly may say to our common Saviour Christ, 'What do You, O Lord? Go You to lodge with Zacchaeus? and deign You to abide with the chief of the publicans? He has not yet washed away the stain of his greedy love of lucre: he is still sick with covetousness, the mother of all crimes: still full of the blame of rapine and extortion.' But yes, He says, I indeed know this, in that I am God by nature, and see the ways of every individual upon earth. And more than this, I know also things to come. I have called him to repentance, because he is ready thereto: and though men murmur, and blame My gentleness, facts themselves shall prove that they are wrong. "For Zacchaeus, it says, stood up, and said to the Lord, Behold, the half of whatever I possess I give to the poor, and if I have defrauded any man, I make fourfold restoration."

You behold his repentance; his rapid change to a better course; his haste to piety; the bountifulness of his love for the poor. He who lately was a publican, or rather the chief of the publicans, given up to covetousness, and set upon gain, at once becomes merciful, and devoted to charity. He promises that he will distribute his wealth to those who are in need, that he will make restoration to those who have been defrauded: and he who was the slave of avarice, makes himself poor, and ceases to care for gains. Let not the Jewish multitudes therefore murmur when Christ saves sinners; but let them answer us this. Would they have physicians succeed in effecting cures when they visit the sick? Do they praise them when they are able to deliver men from cruel ulcers, or do they blame them, and praise those who are unskilful in their art? But, as I suppose, they will give the sentence of superiority in favour of those who arc skilful in benefiting such as suffer from diseases. Why therefore do they blame Christ, if when Zacchaeus was, so to say, fallen and buried in spiritual maladies, He raised him from the pitfalls of destruction?

And to teach them this He says, "To-day there is salvation for this house, in that he also is a son of Abraham:" for where Christ enters, there necessarily is also

salvation. May He therefore also be in us: and He is in us when we believe: for He dwells in our hearts by faith, and we are His abode. It would have been better then for the Jews to have rejoiced because Zacchaeus was wonderfully saved, for he too was counted among the sons of Abraham, to whom God promised salvation in Christ by the holy prophets, saying, ”There shall come a Saviour from Zion, and He shall take away iniquities from Jacob, and this is my covenant with them, when I will bear their sins.” Christ therefore arose, to deliver the inhabitants of the earth from their sins, and to seek them that were lost, and to save them that had perished. For this is His office, and, so to say, the fruit of His godlike gentleness. Of this will he also count all those worthy who have believed in Him: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CXXVIII.

19:11-27. And as they hear these things, He added and spoke a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and they thought that the kingdom of God was about immediately to be manifested. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And when he had called ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas , and said to them, Traffic until I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent an embassy after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass that when he had received the kingdom and returned, he commanded them to call to him those servants, to whom he had given the money, that he might know what they had gained by trading. And the first came saying, Lord, your mina has gained ten minas more. And he said to him, Well, you good servant: because you have been faithful in a little, you shall have authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, your mina has gained five minas. And he said also to him, And you shall be over five cities. And the other came, saying, Lord, behold your mina that I had, laid up in a napkin. For I was afraid of you, because you art a hard man; because you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.

And he said to him, Out of your mouth will I judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I am a hard man; that I take up what I did not I lay down, and reap what I did not sow. Why did you not give my money to the table [of the moneychanger], and I on my return should have exacted it with its usury. And he said to those that stood before him, Take from him the mina, and give it to him that has ten minas. And they said to him, Lord, he has ten minas! For I say to you, that to every one that has shall be given; but from him that has not, even that which he has shall be taken away from him. But these my enemies, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me.

APPROACH yet once again, that opening widely the eye of the mind, we may receive the light of the sacred doctrines, which Christ richly sheds on those who love Him. For He also is the true light, 'Who enlightens angels, and principalities, and thrones and dominions, and even the holy seraphim, and also shines into the hearts of those that fear Him. Let us ask therefore the illumination which He be-

stows, that understanding exactly the force of the parable set before us, we may store up in our minds as a spiritual treasure the benefit which it offers us.

The scope therefore of the parable briefly represents the whole purport of the dispensation that was given to us, and of the mystery of Christ from the beginning even to the end. For the Word being God became man: but even though He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and on this account is also called a servant, yet He was and is free born, by His being ineffably begotten of the Father:----yes! and He is God also, transcending all in nature and in glory, and surpassing the things of our estate, or rather even the whole creation, by His incomparable fulness. The man therefore is freeborn, as being the Son of God: and not as we are called to this appellation by His goodness and love to mankind, but because it belongs to Him by nature, both to be of the Father by generation, and also to transcend every thing that is made. When then the Word, Who was in the likeness of, and equal with the Father, was made like to us, "He became obedient to death, and the death of the cross: and therefore, God also, it says, has highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name that is above every name: that at the Name of Jesus Christ every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and of those under the earth; and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, Amen." Did the Father therefore give the Name Which is above every name to the Son as one Who is not God by nature? And how then, if this be true, has there not been a new God manifested to us? And yet the sacred Scripture cries aloud, "There shall no new God be in you: neither shall you worship any strange God." But He would be different and alien from God, were He not of Him by nature.

The Son therefore certainly is God by nature: and how then did the Father give Him that Name which is above every name! To this we say, that when He was flesh, that is, man like to us, He took the name of a servant, and assumed our poverty and low estate: but when He had finished the mystery of the dispensation in the flesh, He was raised to the glory that belonged to Him by nature; not as to something unwonted and strange, and that accrued to Him from without, and was given Him from another, but rather as to that which was His own. For He spoke to God the Father in heaven, "Father, glorify You Me with the glory which I had with You before the world was." For existing before the ages, and before the worlds, as one That was of God, and was God, He was clothed with the glory which belongs to the Godhead; and when He became a man, as I said, He endured neither mutation nor change, but continued rather in that state in which He had constantly existed, and such as the Father was Who begot Him, that is to say, like Him in every thing. For He is also "the image of His person," Who by right of His nature possesses every thing that He is Who fathered Him, by being, I mean, of the selfsame substance, and of an equality admitting of no variation, and of a similarity to Him in every thing. Being therefore by nature God, He is said to have received of the Father the

Name which is above every name, when He had become man, that He might be believed in as God and the King of all, even in the flesh, that was united to Him.

But when He had endured for our sakes the passion upon the cross, and by the resurrection of His body from the dead had abolished death, He ascended to the Father, and became as a man journeying to a far country: for heaven is a different country from earth,----and He ascended that He might receive for Himself a kingdom. Here again remember, I pray, the blessed Paul, who says, ”That we must destroy reasonings, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and lead captive every thought to the obedience of Christ.” For how does He Who reigns over all with the Father ascend to Him to receive a kingdom? I answer, that the Father gives this also to the Son in respect of His having become man. For when He ascended into heaven, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, henceforth expecting until His enemies are put under His feet. For it was said to Him by the Father, ”Sit at My right hand, until I place Your enemies as the footstool for Your feet.”

”But his citizens, it says, hated him.” And similarly Christ reproaches the Jewish multitudes, saying, ”If I had not done among them the works which no one else has done, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.” They would not have Him reign over them: and yet the holy prophets were constantly uttering predictions of Christ as of a King. For one of them even said, ”Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion, for lo! your King comes to you, just, and a Saviour; He is meek, and riding upon an ass, and upon a new foal.” And the blessed Isaiah says of Him and of the holy apostles, ”Behold a just king shall reign, and princes shall rule with judgment.” And again, Christ Himself has somewhere said by the voice of the Psalmist, ”But I have been appointed King by Him upon Zion, His holy mount, and I will declare the commandment of the Lord.”

They then denied His kingdom: for when they drew near to Pilate saying, ”Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him,” he asked them, or rather said to them in derision, ”Shall I crucify your king?” And they answering with wicked words, said, ”We have no king but Caesar.” Having denied therefore the kingdom of Christ, they fell under the dominion of Satan, and brought upon themselves the yoke of sin, which cannot be thrown off. For they would not have their neck free, though Christ invited them thereunto, saying, that ”Every one that does sin is the slave of sin: but the slave does not continue in the house for ever; the Son abides for ever: if therefore the Son make you free, you will become truly free.” And again, ”If you abide in My Word, you are truly My disciples. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.” But Israel in its madness was not open to instruction, and therefore it has continued in slavery, because it refused to know Christ, Who makes free.

And thus far I will proceed on the present occasion, reserving for some other time the consideration of the rest of the parable; lest too long a discourse be found both fatiguing to him who speaks, and wearisome to those who hear. And may He Who is the Bestower and Giver of all good bless you all, even Christ: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CXXIX.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. MEN who are in debt run away from their creditors, because they know them to be importunate. But not so with me; for I have come to pay my debt, and to fulfil what I promised: and I rather pursue after my creditors than am pursued by them. What therefore is that which I promised, or what is the debt? At our last meeting then, a long parable having been read to us, we completed our exposition only of a certain portion of it, and reserved the remainder for this our holy meeting. And the parable was as follows; ”A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And when he had called ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, Traffic until I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent an embassy after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.” And moreover to this He added, that when the nobleman returned after he had received the kingdom, he demanded of those servants to whom he had distributed the talents an account of their trafficking.

Now in our previous exposition we reined in our words, which, so to speak, were at full speed, at the sentence ”but his citizens hated him: and would not have him reign over them.” Now then I shall address you upon those servants who had been entrusted by their Lord with the minas; enquiring both who they were that traded and therefore were honoured; and who, on the other hand, is signified by that indolent and sluggish servant, who hid the talent, and added nothing thereunto, and thereby brought upon himself severe condemnation. The Saviour therefore distributes to those who believe in Him a variety of divine gifts: for this we affirm to be the meaning of the talent. And great indeed is the difference between these [who receive the talents], and those who have even completely denied His kingdom. For they are rebels, who throw off the yoke of His sceptre: while the others arc invested with the glory of serving Him. As faithful servants therefore they are entrusted with their Lord’s wealth, that gaining something by trafficking therewith, they may earn the praises due to faithful service, and also be accounted worthy of those honours which abide for ever.

The manner therefore of the distribution and who the persons are, and what the talents signify which He distributes,----for He continues to distribute even to this day,----the sacred Scripture clearly shows. For the blessed Paul has said; ”There are distributions of gifts, but the same Spirit: and there are distributions of ministries, but the same Lord: and there are distributions of things to be done, but the same God Who works all in every man.” And subsequently, explaining what he said, he further states the kinds of the gifts, as follows; ”For to one is given the word of wisdom: and to another the word of knowledge: and to another faith: and to another gifts of healing:” and so on. The diversity therefore of the gifts is made plain in these words.

But next I think that I ought to mention who they are who have been entrusted by Christ with these gifts, according to the measure of each one’s readiness and disposition. For He knows whatsoever is in us, in that He is very God, Who spies the reins and hearts. Let us notice, however, that another Evangelist is aware of a difference in the amount of the distribution that was made of the talents. ”For to one, he says, He gave five talents; and to another two, and to an-other one” You see that the distribution was made suitably to the measure of each one’s faculties. And as to those who were entrusted with them, come, and let us declare who they are to the best of our ability. They are then those who are ”perfect in mind, to whom also strong meat is fitting, and whose intellectual senses are exercised for the discerning of good and evil. They are those who are skilled in instructing rightly, and acquainted with the sacred doctrines: who know how to direct both themselves and others to every better work: such, in short, as above all others the wise disciples were. And again, next to these come such as succeeded to their ministry, or who hold it at this day, even the holy teachers, who stand at the head of the holy churches: who are the rulers of the nations, and know how to order to every thing that is useful those who arc subject to them.

Upon these the Saviour bestows a diversity of divine gifts, that they may be ”lights in the world, holding the word of life: and they, by admonishing the people under their charge, and giving them such counsel as is useful for life, and rendering them steadfast, and of an upright and blameless faith, gain by traffic to their talent, and seek spiritual increase. Greatly blessed are they, and win the portion that becomes the saints. For when the nobleman, even Christ, shall have returned after he has received the kingdom, they will be accounted worthy of praises, and rejoice in surpassing honours. For having multiplied the talent tenfold, or fivefold, by winning many men, they will be set over ten or five cities; that is, they will again be rulers, not merely over those whom they ruled before, but even also over many others. For on this account we find the saints, by the voice of the Psalmist, extolling and making the praises of their gratitude mount up to Christ, Who crowns them; and saying, ”He has subjected the Gentiles to us, and nations under our feet. And that it is the practice and earnest purpose of the saints to make those who are

taught by them partakers of the grace given them by Christ, any one may learn from the message which the blessed Paul sent to certain, saying, ”For I desired to see you, that I might give you some spiritual gift, that you may be established.

And he testifies also to his disciple Timothy, ”Despise not the gift that is in you, which was given you by the laying on of my hands. For he wished him to excel in his teaching. And the Saviour Himself also somewhere said in another parable, ”Who therefore is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their food at its season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he comes shall find so doing. Verily I say to you, that he will set him over all that he has. And what is the meaning of his giving his follow servants food, except it be the distributing to the people committed to his charge the benefit of spiritual instruction, and the satisfying, so to speak, with spiritual victuals those who hunger after righteousness?

There are honours, therefore, and triumphs, and crowns for those who have laboured, and loved service: but shame for those who have been overcome by sloth. For he who hid his mina in a napkin became liable to a terrible condemnation. He drew near, saying, ”Lo! you have that is yours!” But the purpose, He says, for which you received it, was not that you should keep it in concealment. And if you knew that I am a hard man. that I reap where I have not sowed, and that I gather whence I have not scattered; lo! this very thing, He says, even makes your guilt the heavier, and gives no specious pretext for your slothfulness. For if I am a hard man who reap where I have not sowed, why did you not give the grace that was bestowed upon you;----for this is the meaning of the mina;----to the money-changers: why, that is, did you not lay it out for the happiness or the benefit of those who would well know how to put to the test what they had received from you? ”For so when I came, I should have exacted, that is, should have received back my own with its increase.” For it is the duty of teachers to sow, and plant, as it were, in their hearers beneficial and saving counsel: but to call to obedience those whom they teach, and render their mind very fruitful, is the effect of that power which God bestows. And this is the increase. For when those who have heard the divine words, receive into their mind the benefit of them, and labour with joy in doing good, then do they offer that which was given them with increase.

”Take therefore, he says, from him the mina, and give it to him that has ten minas; for to him that has, there shall more be given: but from him that has not, even that which he seems to have shall be taken away from him.” For that slothful servant was stripped even of the gift which had been bestowed upon him: but those who have advanced in the better course, and proved superior to indolence and sloth, will receive fresh blessings from above, and being filled with divine gifts, will mount up to a glorious and admirable lot. We have seen the honours of the saints: come

and let us examine the torments of the wicked, who would not have that man of noble lineage to rule over them. ” But those, my enemies, He says, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before Me.” This was the fate of the Israelitish race: for having denied the kingdom of Christ, they fell into extreme miseries: being evil, they evilly perished. And the gangs too of wicked heretics deny the kingdom of Christ, and so also do all those, who, disregarding the duty of living uprightly, spend their lives in impurity and sin. And these also suffering a penalty like to that of those mentioned above shall go to perdition.

But over us Christ rules as King, and we have a good hope, that we shall also be counted worthy of the portion of the saints, and twine around our heads the crown that becomes the steadfast; for this also is the gift of Christ our common Saviour; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CXXX.

THIS EXPOSITION IS FIT TO BE READ ON THE HOLY DAY OF HOSANNAS. 19:28-40. And when He had said these things, He went onwards, going up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, that when He was come close to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, saying, Go into the village over against us, in which at your entering you shall find a colt, tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose, and bring it. And if any man ask you, Why loose you it? thus shall you say to him, It is wanted for the Lord. And when they that were sent had gone their way, they found even as He had said to them. And as they loosed the colt, the owners thereof said to them, Why loose you the colt? And they said, It is wanted for the Lord. And they brought it to Jesus: and when they had cast their garments upon the colt, they made Jesus ride thereon: and as He went, they spread their garments before Him in the way. And when He had now arrived at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began with joy to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said to Him, Teacher, rebuke Your disciples. And He answered, and said to them, I tell you, that if these be silent, the stories will cry out.

THE disciples praise Christ the Saviour of all, calling Him King and Lord, and the peace of heaven and earth: and let us also praise Him, taking, so to speak, the Psalmist's harp, and saying; "How great are your works, O Lord: in wisdom have You made them." For there is nothing whatsoever of the works wrought by Him but is in wisdom; for He guides all useful things each in its proper manner, and assigns to his acts that season which suiteth them. As long then as it was fitting that He should traverse the country of the Jews, endeavouring to win by lessons and admonitions superior to the law many to the grace that is by faith, He ceased not so to do: but inasmuch as the time was now at length calling Him to that Passion which was for the salvation of the whole world, to free the inhabitants of the earth from the tyranny of the enemy, and abolish death, and destroy the sin of the world, He goes up to Jerusalem, pointing out first to the Israelites by a plain fact, that a

new people from among the heathen shall be subject to Him, while themselves are rejected as the murderers of the Lord.

What then was the sign? He sat upon a colt, as we have just heard the blessed Evangelist clearly telling us. And yet perchance some one will say, 'that when He traversed the whole of Judaea;----for He taught in their synagogues, adding also to His words the working of miracles;----He had not asked for an animal to ride upon. For when He might have purchased one, He would not, though wearied often by His long journeys by the way. For when traversing Samaria, He was "wearied with His journey," as it is written. Who therefore can make us believe, that when He was going from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, places separated from one another by so short an interval, that He would require a colt? And why, when the colt was accompanied by its dam, did He not rather take the mother, instead of choosing the colt? For that the ass also, that bore the colt, was brought to Him, we learn from the words of Matthew, who says, "that He sent the disciples to a village over against them; and said to them, that you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose and bring them to Me. And they brought, it says, the ass, and the colt with her."' We must consider therefore what is the explanation, and what the benefit which we derive from this occurrence, and how we make Christ's riding upon the colt a type of the calling of the Gentiles.

The God of all then created man upon the earth with a mind capable of wisdom, and possessed of powers of understanding. But Satan deceived him, though made in the image of God, and led him astray even until he had no knowledge of the Creator and Artificer of all. He humbled the dwellers upon earth down to the lowest stage of irrationality and ignorance. And the blessed prophet David knowing this, and even, so to speak, weeping bitterly for it, says, "Man being in honour understood it not: he is to be compared to the beast without understanding, and has become like one." It is probable therefore that that older ass contains the type of the synagogue of the Jews, which, so to speak, had become brutish, because it had paid but small heed to the law given by Moses, and had despised the holy prophets, and had added thereto disobedience to Christ, Who was calling it to faith, and the opening of its eyes. For He said, "I am the light of the world; he that believes in Me shall not walk in darkness, but possesses the light of life."But the darkness which He speaks of is undoubtedly that of the mind, even ignorance and blindness, and the malady of extreme irrationality.

But the colt, which as yet had not been broken in, represents the new people, called from among the heathen. For it also was by nature destitute of reason, having wandered into error. But Christ became its wisdom, "for in Him are all the treasures of wisdom, and the secret things of knowledge." The colt therefore is brought, two disciples having been sent by Christ for this purpose. And what does this signify? It means that Christ calls the heathen, by causing the light of

truth to shine upon them: and there minister to him for this purpose two orders of His subjects, the prophets, namely, and the apostles. For the heathen are won to the faith by means of the preachings of the apostles; and they always add to their words proofs derived from the law and the prophets. For one of them even said to those who have been called by faith to the acknowledgment of the glory of Christ, "And we have the more sure prophetic word, to which you do well to look, as to a torch that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the light-star arise in your hearts." For before the coming of the Saviour, the predictions of the law and the prophets concerning Christ, were as some torch in a dark place. For the mind of the Jews was always gross, and, so to speak, full of thick darkness. For they understood not in the least what was said concerning Christ. But when the day dawned, when the light that is of truth arose, henceforth the prophetic word is no small torch, but resembles rather the bright rays of the morning star.

And next the colt is brought from a village, in order that He may by this means also point out the uncivilized state of mind of the heathen, who, so to speak, had not been educated in the city, nor in lawful habits, but, on the contrary, lived boorishly and rudely. For constantly those who dwell in villages live in this way. But they did not continue in this uncivilized state of mind, but, on the contrary, were changed to peacefulness and wisdom. For they became subject to Christ, Who teaches these things. The ass then was rejected, for Christ rode not thereon, although it had been broken in already, and practised to submit itself to its riders: but He took the colt, although it was untrained and unproved in carrying a rider, and in yielding to the reins. For, as I said, He rejected the synagogue of the Jews, although it had once borne a rider in the law, nor was obedience a thing to which it was untrained: still He refused it as aged, and spoiled, and as having gone astray already into wilful disobedience to God over all: but He accepted the colt, a people, that is, taken from among the Gentiles.

And this is the meaning of the praise rendered by the voice of the Psalmist to Christ the Saviour of all, where he says of those that were in error, "With bridle and bit shall You restrain the jaws of them that draw not close to You." And it is easy to see from sacred Scripture, that the multitude of the Gentiles was also summoned to repentance and obedience by the holy prophets. For God thus spoke in a certain place, "Be assembled and come: take counsel together, you who are saved from among the Gentiles." Christ therefore sits upon the colt: and as He had now come to the descent of the mount of Olives, close, that is, to Jerusalem, the disciples went before Him, praising Him. For they were called to bear witness of the wonderful works which He had wrought, and of His godlike glory and sovereignty. And in like manner we also ought always to praise Him, considering Who and how great He is Who is praised by us.

But another of the holy Evangelists has mentioned, that children also, holding aloft branches of palm trees, ran before Him, and, together with the rest of the disciples, celebrated His glory; so that by their means also we see the new people, gathered from among the heathen, represented as in a painting. For it is written, that "the people that shall be created shall praise the Lord." And the Pharisees indeed murmured because Christ was praised; and drew near and said, "Rebuke your disciples." But what wrong action have they done, O Pharisee? What charge do you bring against the disciples, or how would you have them rebuked? For they have not in any way sinned, but have rather done that which is praiseworthy. For they extol, as King and Lord, Him Whom the law had before pointed out by many figures and types; and Whom the company of the holy prophets had preached of old: but you have despised Him, and grieve Him by your numberless envyings. Your duty rather it was to join the rest in their praises: your duty it was to withdraw far from your innate wickedness, and to change your manner for the better: your duty it was to follow, the sacred Scriptures, and to thirst after the knowledge of the truth. But this you did not do, but transferring your words to the very contrary, you desired that the heralds of the truth might be rebuked. What therefore does Christ answer to these things? "I tell you, that if these be silent, the stones will cry out."

For it is impossible for God not to be glorified, even though those of the race of Israel refuse so to do. For the worshippers of idols were once as stones, and, so to speak, hardened; but they have been delivered from their former error, and rescued from the hand of the enemy. They have escaped from demoniacal darkness; they have been called to the light of truth: they have awakened as from drunkenness: they have acknowledged the Creator. They praise Him not secretly, and in concealment; not in a hidden manner, and, so to speak, silently, but with freedom of speech, and loud voice; diligently, as it were, calling out to one another, and saying, "Come, let us praise the Lord, and sing psalms to God our Saviour." For they have acknowledged, as I said, Christ the Saviour of all; by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON CXXXI.

19:41-44. And as He drew near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, Would that you had known on this day, even you, the things of your peace: but now they are hid from your eyes: that the days shall come upon you, when your enemies shall raise a rampart against you, and encircle you, and keep you in on every side; and shall dash you to the ground, and your children within you, and shall not leave in you stone upon stone, because you knew not the time of your visitation.

THE blessed prophet Jeremiah loudly condemned the ignorance, at once, and pride of the Jews, rebuking them in these words; ”How say you that we are wise, and the word of the Lord is with us? In vain is the lying cord of the scribes. The wise men are ashamed: they trembled, and were taken: what wisdom have they, in that they have rejected the Word of the Lord!” For being neither wise, nor acquainted with the sacred Scriptures, though the scribes and Pharisees falsely assumed to themselves the reputation of being learned in the law, they rejected the Word of God. For when the Only Begotten had become man, they did not receive Him, nor yield their neck obediently to the summons which He addressed to them by the Gospel. Because therefore by their wicked conduct they rejected the Word of God, they were themselves rejected, being condemned by God’s just decree. For He said, by the voice of Jeremiah, ”Call them rejected silver: because the Lord has rejected them.” And again, ”Shave your head, and cast it away, and take lamentation upon your lips, because the Lord has rejected and thrust away the generation that has done these things.” And what these things are, the God of all has Himself declared to us, saying, ”Hear, O earth: behold! I am bringing upon this people evils; the fruit of their turning away; because they regarded not My word, and have rejected My law.” For neither did they keep the commandment that was given to them by Moses, ”teaching for doctrines the commandments of men:” and further, they also rejected the Word of God the Father, having refused to honour by faith Christ, when He called them thereunto. The fruits therefore of their turning away were plainly the calamities which happened to them: for they suffered all misery, as the retribution due for murdering the Lord.

But their falling into this affliction was not in accordance with the good will of God. For He would rather have had them attain to happiness by faith and obedience. But they were disobedient, and arrogant: yet even so, though this was their state of mind, Christ pitied them: for ”He wills that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.” For it even says, that ”when He saw the city, He wept;” that we hereby might learn that He feels grief, if we may so speak of God, Who transcends all. But we could not have known that He pitied them, wicked as they were, had He not made manifest by some human action that sorrow which we could not see. For the tear which drops from the eye is a symbol of grief, or rather, a plain demonstration of it. So He wept also over Lazarus, that we again might understand that it grieved Him that the nature of man had fallen under the power of death. For ”He created all things to incorruption; but by the envy of the devil death entered into the world:” not indeed because the envy of the devil is more powerful than the will of the Creator, but because it was necessary that there should follow, upon the transgression of the divine commandment, a penalty that would humble to corruption whosoever had despised the law of life.

We say therefore that He wept also over Jerusalem for a similar reason: for He desired, as I said, to see it in happiness, by its accepting faith in Him, and welcoming peace with God. For it was to this that the prophet Isaiah also invited them, saying, ”Let us make peace with Him: let us who come make peace.” For that by faith peace is made by us with God, the wise Paul teaches us, where he writes, ”Being justified therefore by faith, we have peace with God by our Lord Jesus Christ.” But they, as I said, having hurried with unbridled violence into arrogancy and contumely, persisted in despising the salvation which is by Christ: and Christ therefore blames them for this very thing, saying, ”Would that you had known, even you, the things of your peace:” the things, that is, useful and necessary for you to make your peace with God. And these were faith, obedience, the abandonment of types, the discontinuance of the legal service, and the choice in preference of that which is in spirit and in truth, even that which is by Christ, of a sweet savour, and admirable, and precious before God. ”For God, He says, is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

”But they are hidden, He says, from your eyes. For they were not worthy to know, or rather to understand, the Scriptures inspired of God, and which speak of the mystery of Christ. For Paul said, ”Seeing then that we have so great a hope, we use great freedom of speech: and not as Moses, who put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel might not behold the glory of his countenance, which was fading away. But their minds were blinded; for even to this day the same veil remains upon the reading of the old covenant: for when Moses is read, the veil is laid upon their hearts, and is not taken off, because it is done away in Christ.” But in what way is the veil done away in Christ? It is because He, as being the reality, makes the shadow cease: for that it is His mystery which is represented by the

shadow of the law, He assures us, saying to the Jews, ”Had you believed Moses, you would have believed also Me: for he wrote of Me. For it was because they had not carefully examined the types of the law, that they did not see the truth. ”For callousness in part has happened to Israel,” as Paul, who was really learned in the law, tells us. But callousness is the certain cause of ignorance and darkness: for so Christ once spoke; ”It is not any thing that goes into the mouth which defiles the man.

And even then the Pharisees again reproached Him, for so speaking, with the breaking of the law, and overthrowing of the commandment given them by Moses. And afterwards the disciples drew near to Him, saying, ”Do you know that the Pharisees, who heard the word, were offended? And He answered them, Every plant that My heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up: let them alone: blind are they, leaders of the blind. The plant therefore which the Father planted not,----for He calls to the acknowledgment of the Son those who shall be accounted worthy of His salvation, ----shall be rooted up.

Far different is the case with those who have believed in Him: how could it be otherwise? For, as the Psalmist says concerning them, ”They are planted in the house of the Lord, and shall flourish in the courts of our God.” For they are the building and workmanship of God, as the sacred Scripture declares. For it is said to God by the voice of David, ”Your sons shall be as the young olive plants round about your table.” But the Israelites, even before the Incarnation, proved themselves unworthy of the salvation which is by Christ, in that they rejected communion with God, and set up for themselves gods falsely so called, and slew the prophets, although they warned them not to depart from the living God, but to hold fast to His sacred commandments. But they would not consent so to do, but grieved Him in many ways, even when He invited them to salvation.

And this the Saviour Himself teaches us, thus saying, ”Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that kills the prophets, and stones them that are sent to her, how often would I have gathered your sons, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not. You see that He indeed often desired to bestow upon them His mercy, but they rejected His aid. And therefore they were condemned by God’s holy decree, and put away from being members of His spiritual household. For He even said by one of the holy prophets to the people of the Jews, ”I have compared your mother to the night: My people is like to him that has no knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest: and because you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your sons. Observe therefore that He compares Jerusalem to the night; for the darkness of ignorance veiled the heart of the Jews, and blinded their eyes: and for this reason they were given over to destruction and slaughter. For the God of all spoke by the voice of Ezechiel: ”As I live, says the Lord, surely inasmuch as you have defiled My holy things with all

your impurities, I will also reject you; My eye shall not spare, nor will I pity. ”They that are in the plain shall die by the sword: and them that are in the city famine and pestilence shall consume.

And those of them that are saved shall be delivered, and shall be upon the mountains as meditative doves. For Israel did not perish from the very roots, nor, so to speak, stock and branch: but a remnant was delivered, of which the foremost and the first-fruits were the blessed disciples, of whom it is that he says, that they were upon the mountains as meditative doves. For they were as heralds throughout the whole world, forth-telling the mystery of Christ, and their office is praise and song, and, so to speak, to cry aloud in psalms, ”My tongue shall meditate on Your righteousness: and all the day on Your praise.”

The means therefore of her peace with God were hidden from Jerusalem: and of these the first and foremost is the faith which justifies the wicked, and unites by holiness and righteousness those who possess it to the all pure God. That the city then, once so holy and illustrious, even Jerusalem, fell into the distresses of war, may be seen from history: but the prophet Isaiah also assures us of it, where he cries aloud to the multitudes of the Jews, ”Your country is desolate: your cities are burnt with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence: and it is desolate as overthrown by foreign nations.” This was the wages of the vainglory of the Jews, the punishment of their disobedience, the torment that was the just penalty of their pride. But we have won the hope of the saints, and are in all happiness, because we have honoured Christ by faith: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON CXXXII.

19:45-48; 20:1-8. And having entered into the temple, He began to cast out those who sold therein, saying to them, It is written that My house is a house of prayer: but you have made it a den of thieves. And he taught daily in the temple: but the chief priests and scribes and rulers of the people sought to destroy Him; and found not what they might do to Him, for all the people were hanging upon Him to hear Him. And it came to pass on one of the days, as He taught the people in the temple, and preached, the chief priests and scribes, with the elders, rose up against Him, and said to Him, Tell us by what authority You do these things? or who it is that gave You this authority? But He answered and said to them, I also will ask you one word, and tell Me: the baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? And they considered with themselves, saying, That if we shall say, From heaven; He will say, Why therefore did you not believe him? But if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they are persuaded, that John is a prophet. And they answered, that they knew not whence it was. And Jesus said to them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

IT is written, that "there is a light always for the righteous; but the light of the wicked shall be put out." For to those who have embraced the righteousness that is in Christ, God the Father imparts the inextinguishable light of the true knowledge of the true vision of God: for He reveals to them the Son; as the Saviour Himself also in a certain place said to the Jews, "Murmur not one with another: no man can come to Me, except the Father Who sent Me draw him." But He draws, of course, by light and knowledge, and the cords of love. But those who are not so disposed in will, but wickedly reject Christ's commandments, from their mind even that light, which they had by the commandment of Moses, vanishes away, and is extinguished, while the darkness of ignorance usurps its place.

And that this is true, and the real state of the case, the blindness of the Jews proves to us. For they were dark, and unable to see the glory of the Word, Who became man for our sakes, although He revealed Himself to them by the working of many miracles, and a godlike authority, an instance of which we have in what happened in the temple. For there was in it a multitude of merchants, and others also, guilty

of the charge of the base love of lucre, moneychangers, I mean, or keepers of exchange tables; sellers of oxen, moreover, and dealers in sheep, and sellers of turtle doves and pigeons; all which things were used for the sacrifices according to the legal ritual. But the time had now come for the shadow to draw to an end, and for the truth, so to speak, to shine forth; even the lovely beauty of Christian conduct, and the glories of the blameless life, and the sweet rational savour of the worship in spirit and in truth.

For this reason very justly did the Truth, even Christ, as One Who with His Father was also honoured in their temple, command that those things that were by the, law should be carried away, even the materials for sacrifices and burning of incense, and that the temple should manifestly be a house of prayer. For His rebuking the dealers, and driving them from the sacred courts, when they were selling what was wanted for sacrifice, means certainly this, as I suppose, and this alone.

We must observe however that another of the holy Evangelists mentions, that not only did the Lord rebuke those dealers by words, but that He also made a scourge of cords, and threatened to inflict stripes upon them; for it was right for those who honoured the legal service after the manifestation of the truth, to know, that by retaining the spirit of bondage, and refusing to be set free, they became subject to stripes, and liable to slavish torture. The Saviour therefore of all, and Lord, manifests to them His glory for their benefit, in order that they may believe in Him. For as one Who possessed authority over the temple, He both took care of it, and also called God His Father. For as that other holy Evangelist wrote, He said to the dealers, ”Make not My Father’s house a house of merchandize. And again, ” It is written, that My house shall be called a house of prayer: but you have made it a den of thieves. It was their duty therefore, I say their duty, rather to worship Him, as One who with God the Father was Lord of the temple. But this in their great folly they did not do: but rather being savagely eager for hatred, they both set up against Him the sharp sting of wickedness, and hastened to murder, the neighbour and brother of envy. For ”they sought, it says, to destroy Him, but could not: for all the people were hanging upon Him to hear Him.

And does not this then make the punishment of the scribes and pharisees, and all the rulers of the Jewish ranks, more heavy? that the whole people, consisting of unlearned persons, hung upon the sacred doctrines, and drank in the saving word as the rain, and were ready to bring forth also the fruits of faith, and place their neck under His commandments: but they whose office it was to urge on their people to this very thing, savagely rebelled, and wickedly sought the opportunity for murder, and with unbridled violence ran upon the rocks, not accepting the faith, and wickedly hindering others also.

And how is not what I have said true? For the Saviour Himself reproached them, saying, ”And to you, lawyers, woe! for you have taken away the key of knowledge:

you enter not in yourselves, and those that are entering in you have hindered. They rise up therefore against Christ as He teaches, and wickedly and abominably call out and say, ”Tell us, by what authority You do these things? Who gave You this authority? ’The law, they say, given by Moses, and the commandment which regulates all these our institutions, enjoined that those only who are of the lineage of Levi should approach these sacred duties: they offer the sacrifices: they regulate whatever is done in the divine temple: to them is given the office of instructing, and the government of the sacred trusts. But You, as being of another tribe,----for You are sprung from Judah, ---- seize upon honours which have been set apart for us. ”Who gave You this authority?”’ O foolish Pharisee, come and let me tell you somewhat you cannot gainsay, pleading to you the cause of Christ our common Saviour. If you were acquainted with the Scriptures, which are inspired by God, and the words and predictions of the holy prophets, you would have remembered perchance the blessed David, who says in the Spirit to Christ the Saviour of all, ”The Lord has sworn, and will not repent, You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek.

Explain, therefore, what Pharisee or Scribe has ministered to God after the order of Melchisedek, who blessed and received tithes of Abraham? And as the very wise Paul writes, ”Without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. The root and commencement therefore of the very existence of Israel, even the patriarch Abraham, was blessed by the priesthood of Melchisedek: but Melchisedek and his priesthood was a type of Christ the Saviour of us all, Who has been made our High Priest and Apostle; not bringing near to God the Father those who believe in Him, by means of bloody sacrifices and offerings of incense, but perfecting them to holiness by a service superior to the law: for ”such a High Priest have we, Who has sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high.”

The difference, however, between the two services is very great: for the Saviour of all offers as a priest to God the Father the confession of our faith, and the ”torrent of the sweet spiritual savour:”----for ”God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.” But the bloody sacrifices which they offer are not well-pleasing to God. For He even said to them, ”I have hated, and have rejected your festivals, and I will not smell at your solemn assemblies. Because even though you bring Me whole burnt offerings and sacrifices, I will not accept them, nor will I regard the salvation of your appearance. Take away from Me the sounding of your praises: nor will I hear the psalmody of your instruments.” Understand therefore that He says, that He hated their festivals, and that as well their praises as their sacrifices were rejected by Him. And yet God rejoices in being praised; but not by impure mouths, nor by a defiled tongue: for it is written in the book of Psalms, ”But to the sinner God has said, Why do you declare My commandments, and take My covenant in your mouth; whereas you have hated instruction, and have cast out My words behind you? And again He said, ”Add no more to tread My court: if you

bring fine wheaten flour, it is in vain: and your spices are an abomination to Me." Why therefore, O Pharisee, do you murmur at those things being expelled from the sacred courts which were employed for the legal sacrifices, when the appointed time now summoned men to a life better than types, and to true justification by faith in Christ, Who is Himself the truth.

But the series of subjects now set before us leads us on to discussions of too great length: and whatever is beyond due limit, is everywhere disagreeable as well to those who hear, as to those who teach. Let then what has been said suffice for the present: and whatever still remains, we will complete when Christ again assembles us here; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CXXXIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. YOU have again assembled, I suppose, to be taught; and I praise your conduct, and count your willingness worthy of all admiration: for it is written, that "wisdom is better than stones of costly price; and all precious things are not comparable to her." For the wisdom that comes from above, from God, is an incomparable blessing; and when we attain to it by means of the holy Scripture, inspired of God, and gain the divine light to dwell in our minds, we then advance without wandering to whatsoever is useful for our spiritual profit. Come therefore, and let us now also scrupulously examine the meaning of the Evangelic lessons which have already been read to us. At our previous meeting then the discourse which we addressed to you was upon the ignorance of the Pharisees, and their utter madness, and base attacks. For they drew near to Christ, the Saviour of us all, saying, "By what authority do You do these things, and who gave You this authority?" For what had Christ done? He had cast out of the temple those who were selling sheep and oxen, turtle doves and pigeons; and overturned the tables of the moneychangers, saying, "Take these things hence: and make not My Father's house a house of merchandize." And again, "My house is a house of prayer: but you make it a den of thieves."

We then spoke of these things as follows; that as the Lord was gathering up the shadow of the law, as a thing already unprofitable and superfluous, He sought to prohibit the sacrifices that were by the shedding of blood, because the time was now close at hand, and present, at which the worship in spirit and in truth must be declared. For He was Himself the truth, and as the truth had now appeared, types necessarily had become superfluous. Yet for this reason those wretched beings furiously attacked the Lord of all. And thus far our discourse had proceeded at our last meeting. We will now show that the chiefs and teachers of the Jewish synagogue in another way also violently attacked Christ. For the Saviour was teaching in the temple, setting forth most certainly for the instruction of His hearers things superior to the law; even the pathway of evangelic conduct. But they, being indignant at this also, wickedly drew near questioning Him, and saying, "Who gave You this authority?" What then again does this mean? 'You are teaching, they say, in the temple, and yet You are sprung from the tribe of Judah, and are not numbered

among those whose office it is to minister as priests in the temple. And why do You teach what is repugnant to the commandment of Moses, and agrees not with the law that was given us of old?'

To those, therefore who thus speak let us say, Does this bite your mind, and provoke you to savage envy? Tell me, do you accuse the Lawgiver of the abrogation of the law? Do you blame Him, and make an outcry, because He does not obey His own laws? Tell me therefore, is God subject to His own law? Was it for us, or for Himself perhaps I suppose, that He enacted the commandments spoken by the holy prophets? But it is certain, even though you don't acknowledge it, that God transcends all law, and that it is we who are under the yoke of His commandments. When therefore any man, such as we are, transgresses the law, blame and condemn him for his transgression: but He Who enacted laws, not for Himself, but rather for us to obey, from time to time changes according to His own good pleasure whatever has been commanded; intending thereby not to humble those who are under the law to any thing evil, but rather to raise them up to that which is better. And so then now the season had arrived for the cessation of those things which were by types, and when that teaching of the law, which was given for the instruction of them of old time must pass away, in order that something better might be revealed, even the instruction given us in the Gospel.

But you say, 'Was this therefore in accordance with the will of Him Who instituted by Moses that former commandment for those of old time? Yes, I answer; and I arrive at this conclusion, not of my own mind, but as having proof thereof in the prophetic Scriptures. For God has somewhere said by the voice of Isaiah, "And the laws of My people shall be made to disappear." How have the laws of the people been made to disappear? Because, as I said, they have been brought to nought by the manifestation of a new and better commandment, which the Son has spoken to us by Himself; and which also He proclaimed of old by the voice of Ezechiel, thus speaking of those of the race of Israel; "Behold, I will gather them from every land whither I have scattered them in My anger, and hot displeasure, and great wrath; and I will make them return to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely, and they shall be to Me a people, and I will be to them a God, and I will give them another way and another heart, that they may fear Mo all their days." Another way therefore has been given them, by the gathering up, as I said, of the legal service, and of the teaching which consisted in writings and types, and the entrance in of that of the Gospel, of which the very beginning and pathway is faith, which by a spiritual service perfects to justification, and raises up to sanctification those who draw near to God.

For that the institutions of Moses were intended to come to an end, and a new law and a new covenant to be given by Christ, any one may easily see, inasmuch as He says plainly; "Behold the days come, says the Lord, that I will appoint a new

covenant for the house of Israel, and for the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I appointed for their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not abide in My covenant, and I despised them, says the Lord." He promises therefore a new covenant: and as the very wise Paul writes, "In that He said, a new, He has made the former one old: but that which is made old, and growing old, is ready for destruction." Inasmuch therefore as the former (covenant) was made old, it was necessary that that which is new should enter in its place: and this was done not by one of the holy prophets, but by Him rather Who is the Lord of the prophets.

Why therefore do you murmur, O Pharisee, at seeing the divinely inspired Scripture fulfilled, and those things which had been spoken of old by the holy prophets attaining also their fulfilment?

When then they asked, "By what authority do You do these things? the Saviour replied, "I also will ask you one word, and tell Me: the baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men? And they, it says, considered with themselves, saying, that if we shall say, From heaven, He will say, Why therefore did you not believe him? but if we say, Of men, all the people will stone us: for they are persuaded that John is a prophet. And they answered, that they knew not whence it was. And Jesus said to them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. Observe the great malice of the Pharisees: they flee from the truth; they refuse the light; they feel no horror at committing sin. For God the Father sent the blessed Baptist as the forerunner of Christ, crying out and saying, "Prepare you the way of the Lord: and make straight the pathways of our God. Of him too the wise evangelist John wrote; "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a testimony to bear witness of the light: he was not the light, but to bear witness of the light; even of Christ. And he bore witness by saying, that "He That sent me to baptize in water. He said to me, that upon Whom you see the Spirit descend from heaven, and abide upon Him, He it is That baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

And I saw and bore witness, that This is the Son of God. The blessed Baptist therefore, as being so great and admirable, is one worthy of our acceptance to move us to faith, and to be a witness concerning Christ. But because it was the custom of the Jews lightly to slander the saints, and to call them false speakers, and to say that they had not been sent of God, but falsely assumed a knowledge of prophecy of their own mind, Christ asked them, what opinion they entertained of the Baptist? was he one who came from above, from God; did they honour him, that is, as one who had been sent to baptize in accordance with the will of God? or according to their custom, did they, from human considerations and wishes, deny that he came for this purpose? And they were afraid indeed to speak the truth, lest they should be told, Why then did you not believe Him? but neither will they accuse the fore-

runner, not however from being afraid of God, but rather of the multitudes. And therefore they hide the truth, and say, ”We know not.”

As not being then worthy to learn the truth, and to see the pathway which leads directly to every good work, Christ answered them, ”And neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.” The Jews therefore knew not the truth: for they were not ”taught by God,” that is, of Christ. But to us who have believed in Him, Christ Himself reveals it, so that we, receiving in mind and heart His divine and adorable mystery, or rather the knowledge of it, and being careful to fulfil those things which are well-pleasing to Him, shall reign with Him: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CXXXIV.

20:9-18. And He began to speak to the people this parable: A man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went on a journey for a long time. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent to them another servant, but they beat him also, and shamefully entreated him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out. And the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: perhaps they will reverence him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. And they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do to them? He shall come and destroy those husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, Heaven forbid. But He looked upon them, and said. What is this then that is written, That the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner? Every one that falls upon this stone shall be broken: but upon whomsoever it shall fall, it will crush him.

CHRIST has somewhere said, ”The kingdom of heaven is like to a treasure hid in a field.” And there is nothing more certain than that those who love lucre, and seek for treasures, most certainly do not find them ready for them, nor placed above ground, but hidden rather and buried out of sight; and only by digging laboriously do they find them, and that with difficulty. Come therefore, and let us seek after the knowledge of the lessons of the Gospel as for some treasure; let us search deep into the thoughts therein contained: for so shall we find what we seek by Christ revealing this also to us: ”for in Him are all the treasures of wisdom, and the hidden things of knowledge;” and He is the Giver of wisdom and understanding to the whole rational creation.

What therefore does He say to the chiefs of the Jews, when setting forth to them those things which are useful for salvation? ”A man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went on a journey for a long time.” Now if any one will examine with the penetrating eyes of the mind the purport of what is here said,

he will find the whole history of the children of Israel briefly summed up in these words. For who the man is who planted the vineyard, and what, in fact, is to be understood by the vineyard which was planted, the Psalmist makes clear, where he says to Christ, the Saviour of all, respecting the Israelites; ”You brought a vine out of Egypt; You removed the nations, and planted it: You made a way before it, and planted its roots, and it filled the land.” And further, the blessed prophet Isaiah also, declaring this very thing, says, ”My beloved had a vineyard on a hill, in a fertile place.” And afterwards he adds thereto, making more evident the force of what had been spoken enigmatically, ”For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the man of Judah. a plant new and beloved.” He therefore Who planted the vineyard is God; Who also went abroad for a long time. And yet God fills every thing, and in no way whatsoever is absent from any thing that exists; how therefore did the Lord of the vineyard go abroad for a long time? It means, that after He had been seen by them in the shape of fire at His descent upon Mount Sinai with Moses, who spoke to them the law as the mediator, He did not again grant them His presence in a visible manner, but, to use a metaphor taken from human affairs, His relation to them was, so to speak, like that of one who had made a long journey abroad.

As I said, then, He went abroad: but plainly He had care for His farm, and kept it in His mind. For He sent faithful servants to them at three different times to receive produce, or fruit, from the tillers of the vineyard. For there was no period in the interval, during which there were not sent by God prophets and righteous men to admonish Israel, and urge it to bring forth as fruits the glories of a life in accordance with the law. But they were wicked, and disobedient, and obdurate, and their heart was hardened against admonition, so that they would in no way listen to the word that would have profited thorn. For even the prophet Isaiah, as one who was, so to speak, fainting under labours and fatigues without avail, says: ”Lord, who has believed our report? By disregarding therefore those who had been sent to thorn, ”they drove them away empty,” as having, that is, nothing good to say of them to God Who sent them. For the prophet Jeremiah also blamed the Jewish multitudes with their rulers because of their excessive arrogance, saying, ”To whom shall I speak, and testify, and he will hear? Behold, their ears are uncircumcised, and they cannot hear; behold the Word of the Lord has become to them a derision: they will not hear it. And in another place He thus spoke of Jerusalem: ”We healed Babel, and she was not healed:

let us leave her, and depart every one to his land, because her judgment has reached to the heaven. And as I said then, he calls Jerusalem Babel, because it differed not from Persia in its disobedience and apostasy, and because it would not submit itself to the sacred laws: or even perhaps because it was reckoned as having no knowledge of God, for having chosen to worship the creature instead of the Creator, and the works of its own hands. For Israel was guilty of the charge both of

apostasy and of idol-worship. And this then was the way in which they shamefully cast out those who were sent to them.

But the lord of the vineyard considers with himself, saying, ”What shall I do? And we must carefully examine in what sense he says this. Does then the householder use these words because he had no more servants? Certainly not: for there were not wanting to Him other ministers of His holy will. But just as if a physician were to say of a sick man, What shall I do? we should understand him to mean, that every resource of medical skill had been tried, but without avail: so we affirm that the lord also of the vineyard, having practised all gentleness and care with his farm, but without in any respect benefiting it, says, What shall I do? And what is the result? He advances to still greater purposes; for ”I will send, He says, My Son, the beloved one. Perhaps they will reverence Him. Observe in this, that after the servants the Son is sent, as One not numbered among the servants, but as a true Son, and therefore the Lord. For even though He put on the form of a servant for the dispensation’s sake, yet even so He was God, and very Son of God the Father, and possessed of natural dominion. Did they then honour Him Who was sent as Son and Lord, and as One Who possesses by inheritance whatsoever belongs to God the Father? By no means. For they slew Him outside the vineyard, having plotted among themselves a purpose foolish and ignorant and full of all wickedness.

For they say, ”Let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours. But tell me, How did you imagine this? For are you also son of God the Father? Does the inheritance descend by right of nature to you? If you remove the heir out of the way, how will you become lord of what you covet? But further, How is not your supposition ridiculous? For the Lord indeed, as being Son, and Heir by right of His substance of the authority of God the Father, having become man, called those who believed in Him to communion and participation of His kingdom: but these men wanted to take possession of the kingdom solely for themselves, without admitting even Him to any participation at all therein, usurping for themselves alone the lordly inheritance. But this was a purpose impossible, and full of ignorance: and therefore the blessed David says of them in the Psalms, ”He that dwells in the heaven shall laugh at them, and the Lord shall deride them.”

The chiefs therefore of the synagoge of the Jews were cast out for resisting the Lord’s will by rendering the vineyard which had been entrusted to them unfruitful. For God has somewhere said, ”Many shepherds have destroyed My vineyard: they have profaned My portion: they have made My desirable inheritance into a pathless wilderness: it has become a desolation of destruction.” And it is also said by the voice of Isaiah, ”But the Lord will immediately arise in judgment: the Lord Himself shall come for judgment with the elders and princes of the people. But you, why have you burnt My vineyard?” As those therefore who had rendered the land sterile,

being evil, they perished evilly. For it was just, most just, that as being slothful, and murderers of the Lord, they should be the prey of extreme miseries.

”And the farm was given to other husbandmen.” And who are they? I answer, the company of the holy apostles, the preachers of the evangelic commandments, the ministers of the new covenant; who were the teachers of a spiritual service, and knew how to instruct men correctly and blamelessly, and to lead them most excellently to every thing whatsoever that is well-pleasing to God. And this you learn by what God says by the voice of Isaiah to the mother of the Jews, that is, the synagogue: ”And I will turn My hand upon you, and, search you to purify you: and those who obey not I will destroy, and I will take out of you all wicked doers, and will humble all that boast: and I will establish your judges as at the first, and your counsellors as in the beginning.” And by these, as I said, are signified the preachers of the new covenant, to whom God somewhere said by the voice of Isaiah; ” But you shall be called the priests of the Lord, and the ministers of God.” But that the farm was given to other husbandmen, and not solely to the holy apostles, but to those also who come after them, even though not of Israelitish blood, the God of all plainly reveals, where He says by the voice of Isaiah to the church of the Gentiles, and to the remnant of Israel; ”And aliens in race shall come; they shall feed your flocks: and aliens in tribe shall be ploughmen and vinedressers.” For many indeed of the Gentiles were called, and holy men of their number became teachers and instructors; and even to this day men of Gentile race hold high place in the churches, sowing the seeds of piety to Christ in the hearts of believers, and rendering the nations entrusted to their charge like beautiful vineyards in the sight of God.

What therefore did the scribes and pharisees say when they heard the parable? ”Heaven forbid,” were their words. And by this one may see, that having understood its profounder signification, they put away from them the impending suffering, and were afraid of the coming danger. But they did not escape, because they could not be restrained from disobedience, nor would they submit to believe in Christ. ”But He, it proceeds, looked upon them, and said, What is this then that is written, That the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner? Every one that falls upon this stone shall be broken: but upon whomsoever it shall fall, it will crush him.” For the Saviour, although He was a chosen stone, was rejected by those whose duty it was to build up the synagogue of the Jews in every thing that was edifying: and yet He became the head of the corner. Now the sacred Scripture compares to a corner the gathering together, or joining of the two people, Israel I mean, and the Gentiles, in sameness of sentiment and faith. ”For the Saviour has built the two people into one new man, by making peace and reconciling the two in one body to the Father.” And the so doing resembles a corner, which unites two walls, and, so to speak, binds them together. And this very corner, or gathering together of the two people into one and the same, the blessed David wondered at, and said; ”The stone which the builders rejected has become

the head of the corner. This----that is the corner----has been done of the Lord, and is marvellous in our eyes." For Christ, as I said, has girded together the two people in the bonds of love, and in sameness as well of sentiment as of faith.

The stone therefore is the safety of the corner which is formed by it: but breaking and destruction to those who have remained apart from this rational and spiritual union. "For he that falls, He says, upon this stone shall be broken: but upon whomsoever it shall fall it will crush him." For when the multitudes of the Jews stumbled at Christ, and fell against Him, they were broken: for they would not hearken to the voice of Isaiah, where he says, "Sanctify the Lord Himself, and He shall be your fear: and you shall not strike against Him as upon a stone of stumbling, nor as a rock of falling." Those therefore who did not believe were broken: but Christ has blessed us who have believed in Him: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON CXXXV.

20:19-26. And the chief priests and scribes sought that same hour to lay hands upon Him; and they feared the people: for they knew that He had spoken this parable concerning them. And having watched for an opportunity, they sent to Him spies, making pretence of being just men, to find occasion against Him in His speech, that they might deliver Him to the rule and authority of the governor. And they asked Him, saying, Teacher, we know that You speak and teach rightly, and don't discriminate in favour of important persons, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not? But He perceived their wickedness, and said to them, Show me a denarius. And they showed one to Him. And He said, Whose is the image upon it and superscription? And they said, Caesar's. And He said to them, Give therefore to Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the things which are God's. And they could not blame the word before the people; and they wondered at His answer, and were silent.

AGAIN is the gang of the Pharisees inflamed with unbridled rage: they draw the bow of their envy; they gnash their teeth at Him Who calls them to life; they savagely attack Him Who seeks to save, and Who humbled Himself from His supreme and godlike glory to our estate; and they plot His death Who became man that He might abolish death. And the sole cause which hindered their shameless audacity, the wise Evangelist shows us by saying, that "they feared the people." He understood therefore that they were restrained by no feeling whatsoever of piety towards God; the commandment given by Moses, which plainly says, "You shall not kill the holy and the just," put no bridle upon their violence: but they had regard to the fear of man far more than to the reverence due to God.

But what was the cause of their giving way to such harsh and unmitigated fury? "They knew, it says, that He had spoken this parable concerning them." And what parable? Plainly that by which He had shown that as being wicked and faithless husbandmen, they had mocked and slain the holy prophets, who had been sent to them by God, to stir them up to honour Him, by bringing forth abundant spiritual fruits: and had similarly treated even the Son Himself, the Lord of the vineyard. For they slew Him also, saying, "This is the heir: come, let us kill Him, that the

inheritance may be ours." But they missed their mark, and provoked God to anger, or rather resisted the decrees from above, and whetted against themselves the divine wrath. For "being evil, they perished evilly;" and were rejected from being husbandmen, and the Lord of the farm gave the vineyard to others. This then was the reason for which they murmured against Christ: and yet, how was it not rather their duty, having been taught what was about to happen, to escape from the danger, and leap over its toils? And the way so to do was straightforward and easy. Let them accept Him Who calls them to salvation: let them honour by faith Him Who justifies the wicked; Who absolves from all guilt; and by His grace, that remembers not evil, saves those who are entangled in sins.

But these bold and obdurate men, being ready for evil only,. entertain no such purpose as this, but with their mind full of the craftiness of the devil, betake themselves to wicked devices. They lay snares for Christ, and contrive a trap for an accusation against Him, and gather pretexts for falsely accusing Him. Already are they meditating, and plotting in their bitterness, the lying words they uttered against Him before Pilate. They suborned men therefore who falsely assumed to themselves the reputation of goodness, like a borrowed mask; while really they were wicked in their characters, and their heart full of gall and error and all false speaking. They made pretence then of being kind and just: they imagined that they could deceive Him Who knows secrets, when having one purpose in mind and heart, they utter words altogether unlike their wicked knaveries. For they perchance forgot God, Who says, "Who is this that hides from Me his purpose? and shuts up his words in his heart, and thinks that from Me he hides them? For, as Solomon says, Hell and destruction are open to the Lord: how therefore must not also the minds of men? But you drew near to Christ the Saviour of all as to a mere man, and therefore you thought that you could deceive Him. This was the cause of your ignorant behaviour: but it had been better to have reflected, that the Word being God was made in fashion like to us;

but was nevertheless proved by divine and ineffable miracles, and by His godlike glory, not to be a mere man only, such as you are, but to be God, as the splendour of His deeds proclaimed. He was in appearance a man like to us, but He gave sight to the blind; He raised the dead from their graves; He commanded those who already had seen corruption to hasten back to life; He rebuked the seas, and appeared to the disciples, walking upon the waves, as they were sailing once upon the sea of Tiberias. It was in their power therefore to have seen from actual facts that He was not a man only, but rather God also as well as man.

But this they would not even admit into their minds: how could they? but drew near, tempting Him; and hiding from Him their fraudulent purpose, they address Him with gentle words, being like savage beasts wrapped in lambs' clothing. Such were they whom the prophet David also rebuked, saying, "Their words are smoother than

oil: and yet are they the points of spears." And again, "Their tongue pierces like the point of a spear: the words of their mouth are deceitful: he speaks peaceably to his neighbour: and there is enmity in his soul." But what do they say? " Teacher, we know that You speak and teach rightly, nor do You discriminate in favour of important persons, but teach the way of God in truth: Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" O what polluted knavery! For the God of all willed indeed for Israel to be exempt from human dominion: but because they trampled under foot the divine laws, and despising utterly the commandment given to them, betook themselves to their own devices, they had fallen under the hand of those who at that time held dominion over them: who also imposed upon them tribute, and tax, and the yoke of an unwonted slavery. For the prophet Jeremiah also lamented over Jerusalem as though she had already suffered this fate, saying, "How has the populous city sat solitary! She that was chief of the countries has become tributary!"

Their object therefore, it says, was to deliver "Him to the authority of the governor:" for they expected that certainly and without doubt they would hear Him say, that it was not lawful to give tribute to Caesar. How therefore did Christ overcome their craftiness? "Show Me, He says, a denarius." And when it was shown Him, again He asks, "Whose is the image upon it and superscription? And they said, Caesar's." And what does Christ reply thereto? "Give to Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the things which are God's." For those whose office it is to govern impose a tribute of money upon their subjects: but God requires of us of things corruptible and transitory even nothing, but rather willing obedience and submission; faith and love; and the sweet savour of good works. These things the Israelites ought to have offered to God: but they were careless and contemptuous, and too ready to betake themselves to every thing that was base.

"They wondered therefore at His answer," and that "before all the people," that is, before many witnesses. And yet, as though they had forgotten these things, when they led Jesus to Pilate, they brought this very accusation against Him: for they said, "We found this man perverting the people, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar." You wonder at His answer; you were unable to deceive Him; you went away ashamed: and how then made you your own wickedness the point of an accusation against Him? What therefore does the Saviour say of them by the voice of the Psalmist? "That without cause have they hid for Me the destruction of their snare: without reason have they reproached My soul. Let a snare come upon them which they know not: and let the net which they hid for Me catch themselves, and let them fall into their own snare." For so verily they did fall; for because they delivered Jesus to Pilate, they were themselves given over to destruction, and the Roman host consumed them with fire and sword, and burnt up all their land, and even the glorious temple that was among them.

Such were the wages of their wicked behaviour against Christ: but let us, carefully avoiding these sins, and honouring by faith the Word of God, Who for our sakes and in our stead became man, be diligent in crowning Him with unceasing praises: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON CXXXVI.

20:27-38. And certain Sadducees drew near, who say there is no resurrection; and they asked Him, saying, Teacher, Moses wrote to us, that if any man's brother die having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother shall take his wife, and raise up seed to his brother. There were therefore seven brethren, and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second and the third took her; and in like manner also the seven: and they died, and left no children. And afterwards the woman died also. Therefore at the resurrection whose wife of them will she be? for the seven had her to wife. And Jesus said to them, The children of this world marry, and are married: but they who have been accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are married; for neither can they die any more; for they are equal with the angels, and are the children of God, in that they are the children of the resurrection. But that the dead rise, even Moses indicated at the bush, saying, The Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: but God is not of the dead, but of the living: for all live to Him.

IGNORANCE is constantly, so to speak, accompanied by rashness, and leads men on to attach great importance to their wretched fancies; and thus those who are the victims of this malady entertain a great idea of themselves, and imagine themselves possessed of such knowledge as no man can gainsay. For they forget, as it seems, Solomon, who says, "Be not wise in your own eyes," that is, according to your own single judgment: and again, that "wisdom not put to the proof goes astray." For we do not necessarily possess true opinions upon every individual doctrine that we hold, but often perhaps abandoning the right path, we err, and fall into that which is not fitting. But I think it right, that exercising an impartial and unprejudiced judgment, and not rendered rash by passion, we should love the truth, and eagerly pursue it.

But the foolish Sadducees had no great regard for such considerations. They were a sect of the Jews, and what was the nature of the opinion which they entertained concerning the resurrection of the dead, Luke has explained to us in the Acts of the Apostles, thus writing, "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection,

neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess all." They draw near therefore to Christ our common Saviour, Who is the Life and Resurrection, and endeavour to disprove the resurrection: and being men contemptuous and unbelieving, they invent a story replete with ignorance, and by a string of frigid suppositions wickedly endeavour violently to shake into nothingness the hope of the whole world. For we affirm, that the hope of the whole world is the resurrection from the dead, of whom Christ was the first-born and first-fruits: and therefore the wise Paul also, making our resurrection to depend upon His, says, "If the dead rise not, neither did Christ rise:" and again adds thereto, as if urging the converse thought to its conclusion, "But if Christ rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection from the dead?" And those who said this were the Sadducees, of whom we are now speaking.

But let us examine, if you will, this senseless fiction of their framing. They say then that there were seven brethren, who successively became the husbands of one wife, according to the requirements of the law of Moses; and she died without children: at the resurrection therefore whose wife will she be? The enquiry however was but a senseless one, nor did the question at all accord with the inspired Scriptures: and the answer of our Saviour amply suffices to prove the folly of their narrative, and make us reject both their fiction, and the idea upon which it was founded.

Still I think it right to convict them plainly of foolishly resisting the inspired Scriptures, and to show that they completely mistook the sense of what the sacred writings teach. For come and let us see what the company of the holy prophets has spoken to us upon this point, and what are the declarations which the Lord of hosts has made by their means. He said therefore of those that sleep, "I will deliver them from the hand of the grave; I will redeem them from death: Where is your condemnation, O death? O grave, where is your sting?" Now what is meant by the condemnation of death, and by its sting also, the blessed Paul has taught us, saying, "But the sting of death is sin: and the strength of sin is the law." For he compares death to a scorpion, the sting of which is sin: for by its poison it slays the soul. And the law, he says, was the strength of sin: for so he himself again elsewhere protests, saying, "I had not known sin but by the law:" "for where there is no law, there is no transgression of the law." For this reason Christ has removed those who believe in Him from the jurisdiction of the law that condemns: and has also abolished the sting of death, even sin: and sin being taken away, death, as a necessary consequence, departed with it; for it was from it, and because of it, that death came into the world.

As God therefore gives the promise, "I will deliver them from the hand of the grave, and from death I will redeem them;" so the blessed prophets also accord with the decrees from on high: for they speak to us, "not of their own heart, nor of the will of man, but from the mouth of God," as it is written; inasmuch as it is the Holy Spirit

which speaking within them declares upon every matter, what is the sentence of God, and His almighty and unalterable will. The prophet Isaiah therefore has said to us, ”Your dead men shall arise: and those in the graves shall be raised; and they who are in the earth shall rejoice: for the dew from You is healing to them.” And by the dew I imagine he means the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, and that influence which abolishes death, as being that of God and of life.

And the blessed David also somewhere in the Psalms says of all those upon earth, ”You take away their spirit, and they die, and return to their dust: You send Your Spirit, and they are created, and You renew the face of the earth.” Do you hear that the working and life-giving grace of the Holy Spirit will renew the face of the earth? And by its face is meant its beauty; and the beauty of human nature is justly understood to be incorruption. ”For it is sown, it says, in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.” For the prophet Isaiah again assures us that death which entered in because of sin does not retain its power over the dwellers upon earth for ever, but is abolished by the resurrection from the dead of Christ, Who renews the universe, and refashions it to that which it was at the beginning----” for God created all things for incorruption,” as it is written; for he says, ”He has swallowed up death, having waxed mighty: and God shall again take away all weeping from every countenance; He shall remove the reproach of the people from the whole earth.” Now sin is what he calls the reproach of the people, and when this has been taken away, death also is extinguished with it, and corruption departs from the midst: and by having brought it to an end, He removes every one’s weeping; and lamentation also is put to silence; for henceforth there is no more cause for men to weep and lament.

And thus much for our own argument in refutation of the infidelity of the Jews: but let us see also what Christ said to them: ”The children indeed of this world,” He says, those, that is, who lead worldly carnal lives, full of fleshly lust, for the procreation of children ”marry and are married:” but those who have maintained an honourable and elect life, full of all excellence, and have therefore been accounted worthy of attaining to a glorious and marvellous resurrection, will be necessarily raised far above the life which men lead in this world; for they will live as becomes saints, who already have been brought near to God. ”For they are equal with the angels, and are the children of God.” As therefore all fleshly lust is taken away, and no place whatsoever is left in them for bodily pleasure, they resemble the holy angels, fulfilling a spiritual and not a material service, such as becomes holy spirits; and are at the same time counted worthy of a glory such as that which the angels enjoy.

But the Saviour also demonstrated the great ignorance of the Sadducees, by bringing forward their own hierophant Moses, as well and clearly acquainted with the

resurrection of the dead. For he has set before us God, He says, as saying in the bush, ”I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” But of whom is He God, if, according to their argument, these have ceased to live? for He is the God of the living: and therefore certainly and altogether they will rise, when His almighty right hand brings them thereunto; and not them only, but also all who are upon the earth. And for men not to believe that this will happen, is worthy perhaps of the ignorance of the Sadducees; but altogether unworthy of those who love Christ. For we believe in Him who says, ”I am the Resurrection and the Life.” For He will raise the dead, ”suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For it shall resound, and the dead in Christ shall rise incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” For Christ, our common Saviour, shall transfer us to incorruption, and to glory, and to a life incorruptible: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for over and ever. Amen.

SERMON CXXXVII.

20:41-47. And He said to them. How say they of Christ that He is David's Son? For David himself says in the book of Psalms, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit You on My right hand until I place Your enemies as a footstool under Your feet. David therefore calls Him Lord; and how is He his Son? And in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in stoles, and love greetings in the marketplaces, and the foremost seats in the synagogues, and the highest part of the couches at feasts: who devour widows' houses, and in pretence prolong their prayers: these shall receive more abundant condemnation. THOSE who love instruction and are fond of hearing receive with joy the profitable word of God, and store it up in the treasure-house of their heart as the seed of life. And what is. the result of their so doing? The divine light rises upon them, and they gain a correct and unerring knowledge of the sacred doctrines. And this quickens them to life, as the Son Himself teaches us, where He says to God the Father in heaven, "And this is life eternal, to know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You have sent."

See therefore, I say, see Him Who is the Giver to us of all wisdom and understanding, even Christ, endeavouring to implant this great and invaluable blessing in those first of all who were the chiefs of the Jews, the scribes, I mean, and Pharisees. For it was right, as they were the pastors and teachers and governors of the people, that His mystery should not he hidden from them: even that which the law of Moses had proclaimed of old, delineating it by type and shadow in manifold ways; and which the great and glorious company also of the holy prophets had preached. For it is for this reason that Christ is called "the accomplishment of the law and the prophets." The Saviour therefore asked them, saying, "How say they of Christ that He is David's Son? For David himself says in the book of Psalms, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit You on My right hand, until I place Your enemies as a footstool under Your feet. David therefore calls Him Lord: and how is He his son?" The beginning of understanding is faith: "for if, He says, you will not believe, neither can you understand:" but the examination also of important truths tends to salvation. Confessedly then Emanuel is both the Son and the Lord of David: but if any one would learn in what manner he is to understand this, he must certainly

betake himself to the exact and blameless examination of His mystery, which was "kept in silence indeed from the foundation of the world, but has been revealed in the latter ages of the world."

The Pharisees however gave no answer to Christ's question: and this they did in malice, or rather against their own selves, lest being pricked by the enquiry, the word of salvation should shine forth in them. For they did not wish to know the truth, but sinfully seizing for themselves the Lord's inheritance, they denied the heir, or rather wickedly slew Him. For from love of rule, and greed of lucre, and for their base gains, they rejected the faith. For once indeed they even stoned Him with stones, and when asked the reason of their violence, they foolishly said, "For a good work we stone You not, but for blasphemy: because that You being a man make Yourself God." And on another occasion they called Him a Samaritan, a drunkard, and a winebibber, and the carpenter's son, meaning that He was an ignoble person, and born of ignoble parents. Nor verily canst you wonder at this, when they ventured even to accuse His birth in the flesh of the holy virgin, saying, darkly and bitterly, "We are not born of harlotry."

To remove therefore from them the habit of thinking and speaking of Him in a derogatory and contemptuous manner, He asked them, saying, "How say they that Christ is David's Son?" But they, as I have already remarked, were silent from malicious motives, and thereby condemned themselves as unworthy of eternal life, and of the knowledge of the truth.

And we too will put to the Pharisees of later days a similar question: Let them, who deny that He Who was born of the holy virgin is very Son of God the Father, and Himself also God, and divide the one Christ into two sons; let them, I say, explain to us, in what manner David's son is his Lord, and that not so much with regard to human lordship as divine. For to sit at all at the right hand of the Father is the assurance and pledge of supreme glory. For those who share the same throne are equal also in dignity: and those who are crowned with equal honours are understood of course to be equal in nature. But to sit by God can signify nothing else than sovereign authority, and the throne declares to us that He possesses empire over every thing, and supremacy by right of His substance. How therefore is the Son of David David's Lord, and seated also at the right hand of God the Father, and on the throne of Deity? Or is it not altogether according to the unerring word of the mystery, that the Word being God, and sprung from the very substance of God the Father, and being in His likeness and on an equality with Him, became flesh, that is, man, perfectly, and yet without departing from the incomparable excellence of the divine dignities, continuing rather in that estate in which He had ever been, and still being God, though He had become flesh and in form like to us. He is David's Lord therefore according to that which belongs to His divine glory and nature and sovereignty: but his son according to the flesh.

It was the duty therefore, the duty, I say, of the chiefs of the Jews, as they prided themselves so much upon their knowledge of the divine laws, not to let the words of the holy prophets escape their notice. For the blessed Isaiah says, ”Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son: and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” But the Word was with us as God, when He took our likeness, and despised not the low estate of human kind, in order that He might save all beneath the heaven. And it is written again, ”And you Bethlehem, the house of Ephrata, are small to be among the thousands of Judah: out of you shall He come forth for Me Who shall be the Head of Israel.” For Bethlehem was indeed small, and in comparison with the general populousness of the Jews, its inhabitants were very few; yet from it came forth Christ, as having been born in it of the holy virgin: not as one subject to the shadows of the law, but rather as ruler both over the law and the prophets.

We therefore follow neither the ignorance nor the newness of the foolish talking of men, lest with them we fall into a reprobate mind: but join ourselves rather to the pure teachings of the holy apostles and evangelists, who every where show that Christ the Saviour of all is at once both the Son and the Lord of David, in the manner we have already described. ”There is therefore one Lord, one faith, one baptism:” one Lord has purchased us, ”not with corruptible things, with silver or with gold, but with His own blood rather,” as it is written, in order that we may serve Him, and by and with Him the Father. For in Him and by Him we have an access (to the Father). But, as I said, the rulers of the Jews had no regard whatsoever for the truth: and if any one would learn the reason of their obdurate dislike of instruction, he shall hear it from me. It was their determination not to depart from their inbred love of praise, nor to abandon their accursed lust of lucre. For the Saviour Himself once rebuked them, saying; ”How can you believe, who receive glory one of another, and wish not for the glory that comes from the one God?” For it was their duty to desire the glory which comes from God, rather than that of men, which is but for a time, and like a dream vanishes away.

Usefully therefore, that He may keep the company of the holy disciples free from faults so disgraceful, He testifies, saying, ”Beware of the Scribes and Pharisees;” that is, expose not yourselves to be the prey of their vices, nor be you partakers of their disregard of God. For what was their custom? To walk in the streets beautifully attired, dragging with them a pompous dignity, to catch thereby the praises of those who saw them. And while they were wicked, and their heart full of all improbity, they falsely assumed to themselves the reputation of piety: and with a gravity of manners not founded on reality, they diligently lengthened out their speaking in their prayers, supposing perchance that unless they expended many words, God would not know what their requests were. But the Saviour of all did not permit His worshippers to act so shamefully, saying, ”When you pray, babble not as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking:”

but He commanded them to be humble, and not lovers of boasting, nor to pay any regard to the desire of vain glory, but rather to seek the honour that comes from above, from God. In such He deposits the knowledge of His mystery: such He appoints instructors of others, as possessing an exact and blameless knowledge of the sacred doctrines: such He makes to know how David's Son is also David's Lord: with whom we also will range ourselves, God the Father illuminating us with divine light in Christ: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CXXXVIII.

21:1-4. And as He looked He saw the rich casting their gifts into the treasury: and He saw also a certain poor widow who cast in thither two farthings: and He said, Of a truth I say to you, that this poor widow has cast in more than they all. For they all of their superabundance have cast in to the offerings; but she of her want has cast in all the substance that she had. TO-DAY opens to us the sight of a spectacle of piety, with Christ as the exhibitor of the games, Who by just decree distributes the honours to those who are called to the course. And the men whom these games bring forward and offer to our admiration, are neither trillers of harps, nor skilful wrestlers, nor again such as are accustomed to gain glory by the tuneful sounds of pipes; but such rather as the Saviour of all deigns to regard because He loves virtue: and of these the most honoured class, preferred before all others, are those who are kind and merciful, and of whom the Saviour Himself bears witness, saying, ”Blessed are the merciful: for upon them shall be shown mercy.”

These Christ watches as they cast their offerings into the treasury: for so we have heard the holy evangelist here declaring to us. But what mouth will suffice for those who would praise God over all! ”The praise of the Lord, as Scripture says, conceals the word.” For it is impossible worthily to praise His surpassing gentleness, and the greatness of His incomparable love to mankind. He counts as offerings, and takes to Himself, what we do for the brethren who are grieved by poverty. For He has said, ”Verily I say to you, that whatsoever you have done to one of these little ones, you have done it to Me.” And it is written, that ”he that is charitable to the poor lends to the Lord.” At this one of the saints very beautifully expressed his admiration, thus saying somewhere to us, or rather to all the sons of men; ”For in that you are righteous, what will you give Him? Or what will He receive at your hand? Your wickedness is to the man that is your equal: and your righteousness to the son of man.” Our deeds then are indeed done, as I said, to those who are our fellows and brethren, but God takes it to Himself, because He is loving to man, and counts it as spiritual fruitfulness, in order that He may have an occasion of showing mercy upon those who habitually thus act, and may free them from all sin. For it is written, that mercy glories against judgment.”

Let us then watch, if you please, the contest of the merciful, and see what is its nature, and to whom the Saviour chiefly assigns His praises by His holy and godlike decree. Some of the rich then drew near, bringing the appointed gifts, and casting their offerings into the treasury: and as being possessed of great wealth, and ample riches, the gifts that each one offered were, as is likely, in themselves large: and yet, on the other hand, small, and not in proportion to the offerers'means. And so after them there came in a woman oppressed by hard and unendurable poverty, and whose whole hope of sustenance lay in the kindness of the compassionate, and who by scraps scarcely and laboriously gathered a scant and miserable provision, barely sufficient for the day. And finally, she offered two farthings: for it was not possible for her to bestow more, but rather, so to speak, she had stripped herself of all that she had, and was leaving the sacred courts with empty hands. Wonderful deed! She who constantly asked alms of others, lends to God, making even poverty itself fruitful to His honour. She therefore vanquishes the rest, and by a just sentence is crowned by God.

But this perchance may vex some among the rich: and therefore we will address a few remarks to them. You delight, O rich man, in the abundance of your possessions: your portion is fertile beyond what your necessities require. You reap fields and districts: you have numerous and broad vineyards, and orchards laden with flavourless delicacies: winepresses, and granaries, and an excessive abundance of cattle: a house beautifully built at great expense, and plentiful stores therein; garments woven in divers colours: and finally you offer not so much in proportion to your means, as merely that which when you givest, you will never miss:----out of great abundance, a little. The woman offered two farthings: but she possessed nothing more than what she offered: she had nothing left: with empty hand, but a hand bountiful of the little she possessed, she went away from the treasury. Did she not therefore justly carry off the crown? Did not the decree of superiority befall her by a holy judgment? Did she not surpass your bountifulness, in regard at least of her readiness?

Something of this sort the wise Paul also writes; "For if the will be ready, a man is accepted according to that he has, and not according to that he has not." Not only may the rich man obtain favour with God by offering fruit to the brethren:----for the Saviour of all will accept his sacrifice:----but even he who possesses but very little may also obtain favour by offering his little; nor will he suffer any loss on this account. For the Omniscient will praise his readiness, and accept his intention, and make him equal with the rich: or rather, will crown him with more distinguished honour. And this further deserves both our regard and admiration: that multitudes were going up to the temple, some of whom were offering fatted oxen; and some sheep; and frankincense, and other things besides, indispensable for the duo performance of the sacrifices commanded by the law: but the Saviour's look was not fixed upon these so much as upon those who were making their offerings to the

treasury: on those, that is, who were kind and charitable. For He accepts the sweet savour of the spiritual service, but turns away His eyes from what is done in types and shadows. For He knew that types profit not, and that the shadow is weak. He therefore honours charity to the poor; and knowing this, one of the holy apostles wrote; ”that a pure and undefiled sacrifice before God the Father is this; to visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and that a man should keep himself unspotted from the world.”

And we find also that the commandment given by Moses urges us to love for the poor, and arouses us to charity. For it was not one God Who of old appointed the commandment by Moses, and another Who set before us the pathway of Gospel conduct; but rather it was One and the Same, inasmuch as He does not change. For by one of the holy prophets He has said, ”I that speak to you am near.” He therefore thus spoke by Moses; ”But if there be among you a poor man of your brethren in one of your cities in the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not turn away your heart, nor shut your hand from your brother that is in need. You shall open your hands wide to him; lend him readily whatsoever he needeth, and according to that which he lacks.” You hear him call their almsgiving a loan; for it is God that receives, and requites it, not with equal, but rather with overflowing measure. ”For good measure, He says, pressed down, and running over, shall they pour into your bosom.” And as the very wise Paul says, ”God loves a cheerful giver.” And that it is right to be compassionate to the brethren, not niggardly, nor as a matter of necessity, but of love rather without respect of persons, and blameless mutual affection, even the law of old made clear by saying, ”And you shall not be grieved in your heart when you give to him: for therefore the Lord your God shall bless you in all your works, in whatsoever you put thereto your hand.” As therefore Paul says, ”He that gives, (let him do so) with bountifulness: he that holds preeminence with earnestness: he that has compassion, with cheerfulness.” For love shown to poverty is not unfruitful, but is a debt that will be largely repaid.

We ought therefore to be diligent in fulfilling this duty, as being well assured, that if we distribute with bountiful hand, we shall benefit ourselves: for so the blessed Paul again teaches us. saying, ”But this,----he that sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly: and he that sows with blessings shall also reap in blessings: every man as he is prepared in his heart.” And, as if to cut away the slothfulness of our good exertions, immediately he adds these words; ”And God is able to make all grace abound in you, that in every thing always possessing every sufficiency you may abound in every good work. As it is written, He has dispersed and given to the poor: his righteousness abides for ever.” For he who shows mercy to the poor, shall never be forsaken, but shall be counted worthy rather of indulgence from Christ, the Saviour of us all; by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON CXXXIX.

21:5-13. And as some spoke of the temple, that it was adorned with goodly stones and offerings, He said; As for these things that you behold, the days will come in which there shall not be left here stone upon stone which shall not be thrown down. And they asked Him, saying, Teacher, when therefore shall these things be, and what is the sign when these things are about to happen? But He said, Look! Be not deceived: for many shall come in My name, saying, That I am He: and the time is near. Go you therefore not after them. And when you have heard of wars and commotions, be not troubled: for these things must first happen; but the end is not immediately. Then said He to them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: great earthquakes shall be in all places, and famines, and pestilences: and terrors from, heaven, and there shall be great signs. But before all these things they shall lay their hands upon you, and persecute you, delivering you up to synagogues and prisons, and bringing you before kings and rulers for My name sake: but this shall prove to you a witnessing.

FROM Christ we have received the knowledge of things about to happen: for it is even He Who ”reveals the deep things out of darkness,” and knows those that are hidden: and ”in Him are all the treasures of wisdom, and the hidden things of knowledge.’” He changes times and seasons: and refashions the creation to that which it was at the beginning. For it was by His means that when it existed not, it was brought into existence according to the will of God the Father: for He is His living and personal power and wisdom: and again by His means it will easily be changed into that which is better. For as His disciple says, ”We expect new heavens, and a new earth, and His promises.” Now the cause of this digression has been in part the question put to our common Saviour Christ respecting the temple, and the things therein, and partly the answer He made thereto. For some of them showed Him the mighty works that were in the temple, and the beauty of the offerings; expecting that He would admire as they did the spectacle, though He is God, and heaven is His throne. But He deigned, so to speak, no regard whatsoever to these earthly buildings, trifling as they are, and absolutely nothing, compared I mean to the mansions that are above; and dismissing the conversation respecting them, turned Himself rather to that which was necessary for their use.

For He forewarned them, that however worthy the temple might be accounted by them of all admiration, yet at its season it would be destroyed from its foundations, being thrown down by the power of the Romans, and all Jerusalem burnt with fire, and retribution exacted of Israel for the slaughter of the Lord. For after the Saviour's crucifixion, such were the things which it was their lot to suffer.

They however understood not the meaning of what was said, but rather imagined that the words He spoke referred to the consummation of the world. They asked therefore, "When shall these things be? and what is the sign when they are about to happen? What therefore is Christ's answer? He meets the view of those who put to Him the enquiry, and omitting for the present what He was saying about the capture of Jerusalem, He explains what will happen at the consummation of the world, and, so to speak, warns them and testifies, saying, "Look! Be not deceived: for many shall come in My Name, saying, that I am He, and the time is near. Go you not after them.'" For before the advent of Christ the Saviour of us all from heaven, various false Christs and false prophets will appear preceding Him, falsely assuming to themselves His person, and coming into the world like eddies of smoke springing up from a fire about to break forth. "But follow them not," He says. For the Only-begotten Word of God consented to take upon Him our likeness, and to endure the birth in the flesh of a woman, in order that He might save all under heaven. And this to Him was an emptying of Himself, and a humiliation. For what is the measure of humanity compared with the divine and supreme majesty and glory?

As one therefore Who had humbled Himself to emptiness, He deigned to remain unknown, even charging the holy apostles before His precious cross that they should not reveal Him. For it was necessary that the manner of His dispensation in the flesh should remain hid, that by enduring as a man for our sakes even the precious cross, He might abolish death, and drive away Satan from his tyranny over us all. For, as Paul says; "The wisdom that was in Christ, by which is meant that which is by Christ, none of the rulers of this world knew: for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. It was necessary therefore that He should remain unknown during the time that preceded His passion: but His second advent from heaven will not happen secretly as did His coming at first, but will be illustrious and terrible. For He shall descend with the holy angels guarding Him, and in the glory of God the Father, to judge the world in righteousness. And therefore He says, "when there arise false Christs and false prophets, go you not after them.'"

And He gives them clear and evident signs of the time when the consummation of the world is now near. "For there shall be wars, He says, and tumults: and famines and pestilences everywhere: and terrors from heaven, and great signs." For, as another evangelist says, "all the stars shall fall: and the heaven be rolled up like a

scroll, and its powers shall be shaken." But in the middle the Saviour places what refers to the capture of Jerusalem: for He mixes the accounts together in both parts of the narrative. "For before all these things, He says, they shall lay their hands upon you, and persecute you, delivering you up to synagogues and to prisons, and bringing you before kings and rulers for My Name's sake. But this shall prove to you a witnessing." For before the times of consummation the land of the Jews was taken captive, being overrun by the Roman host; the temple was burnt, their national government overthrown, the means for the legal worship ceased;----for they no longer had sacrifices, now that the temple was destroyed,----and, as I said, the country of the Jews, together with Jerusalem itself, was utterly laid waste. And before those things happened, the blessed disciples were persecuted by them. They were imprisoned: had part in unendurable trials: were brought before judges: were sent to kings; for Paul was sent to Rome to Caesar. But these things that were brought upon them were to them for a witnessing, even to win for them the glory of martyrdom.

And He testifies to them, 'Meditate not beforehand what defence you will make: for you shall receive of Me wisdom and a tongue which all those who stand against you shall not be able to resist or to speak against.' And cutting away the grounds of human pusillanimity, He tells them, 'that they shall be delivered up by brethren and friends and kinsfolk:' but He promises that certainly and altogether He will deliver them, saying, that "a hair of your head shall not perish." And, to make His prediction yet again more clear, and more plainly to mark the time of its capture, He says, "When you have seen Jerusalem girt about with armies, then know that its destruction is nigh." And afterwards again He transfers His words from this subject to the time of the consummation, and says; "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity: from the sound of the sea, and its surging, as the souls of men depart: from fear and expectation of the things which are coming upon the world: for the hosts of heaven shall be shaken." For inasmuch as creation begins, so to speak, to be changed, and brings unendurable terrors upon the inhabitants of earth, there will be a certain fearful tribulation, and a departing of souls to death. For the unendurable fear of those things that are coming will suffice for the destruction of many.

"Then, He says, they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Christ therefore will come not secretly nor obscurely, but as God and Lord, in glory such as becomes Deity; and will transform all things for the better. For He will renew creation, and refashion the nature of man to that which it was at the beginning. "For when these things, He says, come to pass, lift up your heads, and look upwards: for your redemption is near." For the dead shall rise, and this earthly and infirm body shall put off corruption, and shall clothe itself with incorruption by Christ's gift, Who grants to those that believe in Him to be

conformed to the likeness of His glorious body. As therefore His disciple says, ”The day of the Lord will come as a thief; in which the heavens indeed shall suddenly pass away, and the elements being on fire shall be dissolved, and the earth and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up.” And further, he adds thereunto, ”Since therefore all these things are being dissolved, what sort of persons ought we to be, that we may be found holy, and without blame, and unreproved before Him?” And Christ also Himself says, ”Be you therefore always watching, supplicating that you may be able to escape from all those things that are about to happen, and to stand before the Son of Man.” ”For we shall all stand before His judgment seat,” to give an account of those things that we have done. But in that He is good and loving to mankind, Christ will show mercy on those that love Him; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CXL.

This Exposition is fit to be read on the Thursday of the Mystery. 21:37-22:6. And by day He was teaching in the temple, and at night He went out and abode in the mount called of Olives: and all the people came early to Him in the temple to hear Him. And the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover, and the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill Him: for they feared the people. But Satan entered into Judah, surnamed Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve, and He went and spoke to the chief priests and captains, how he might deliver Him to them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money: and he promised, and sought a fitting season when he could deliver Him to them without the multitude.

THE throng of the Jews, together with their ruler, stood up against the glory of Christ, and contended with the Lord of all. But any one may perceive that it was against their own souls that they prepared their snare, for they dug for themselves pitfalls of destruction, and, as the Psalmist says, ”The heathen are taken in the snare which they have made: in the trap which they have laid is their foot taken.’” For the Saviour and Lord of all, though His right hand is almighty, and His power overthrows both corruption and death, yet submitted Himself of His own accord by becoming flesh to the tasting of death for the life of all, in order that He might make corruption cease, and do away with the sin of the world, and deliver those that were under the hand of the enemy from his unendurable tyranny. But that rebellious serpent perhaps imagined that He had prevailed even over Him, in that He suffered, as I said, death in the flesh for our sakes, as the dispensation required: but the wretched being was disappointed of his expectation.

Let us then see how he missed his game, and shot wide of his mark, when he made Christ his prey, and delivered Him into the hands of those murderers. It says then, that ”by day He taught in the temple, but lodged during the nights in the mount called of olives.” Now plainly what He taught were things which surpass the legal service: for the time had come when the shadow must be changed into the reality. And they heard Him gladly; for oftentimes they had wondered at Him, ”because His word was with power.” For He did not, like one of the holy prophets, or as the

hierophant Moses, call out to men, ”These things says the Lord:” but as Himself being He Who of old spoke by Moses and the prophets, and the Lord of all, He transferred with godlike authority to a spiritual worship what had been prefigured in types, and the weakness of the letter: ”for the law made nothing perfect.”

And He lodged during the nights, as I said, in the Mount of Olives, avoiding the uproars there were in the city, that He might in this also be a pattern to us. For it is the duty of those who would lead a life quiet and calm, and, so to speak, full of rest, to avoid as far as possible the crowd and tumult.

But let us see the course of the devil’s malice, and what was the result of his crafty designs against Him. He had then implanted in the chiefs of the synagogue of the Jews envy against Christ, which proceeded even to murder. For always, so to speak, this malady tends to the guilt of murder. Such, at least, is the natural course of this vice: so it was with Cain and Abel; so plainly it was in the case of Joseph and his brethren; and therefore the divine Paul also very clearly makes these sins neighbours, so to speak, of one another, and akin: for he spoke of some as ”full of envy, murder. They sought therefore to slay Jesus, at the instigation of Satan, who had implanted this wickedness in them, and who also was their captain in their wicked enterprises. For he is himself the inventor of murder, and the root of sin, and the fountain of all wickedness. And what was the contrivance of this many-headed serpent? ”He entered, it says, into Judah Iscariot, who was one of the twelve. Why not rather into the blessed Peter, or into James, or John, or some other of the rest of the apostles, but into Judah Iscariot? What place did Satan find in him? Of all whom we have here mentioned he could approach none, because their heart was steadfast, and their love to Christ immoveable; but there was a place for him in the traitor.

For the bitter malady of covetousness, which the blessed Paul says is ”the root of all evil,” had overpowered him. For once also when a woman had poured ointment upon the Saviour, he alone of all rebuked her, saying, ”To what purpose is this waste? For it could have been sold for much, and given to the poor. But the wise Evangelist rose, so to speak, against his feigned words: for immediately he adds: ”But this he spoke, not because he had forethought for the poor, but because he was a thief, and carried the purse, and whatever fell therein, he was the bearer of. And Satan, being crafty in working evil, whenever he would gain possession of any man’s soul, does not attack him by means of vice generally, but searches out rather that particular passion which has power over him, and by its means makes him his prey. As he knew therefore that he was covetous, he leads him to the Pharisees and captains; and to them he promised that he would betray his teacher. And they purchase the treachery, or rather their own destruction, with sacred money. Oh! what tears could suffice, either for him who betrayed Jesus for hire, or for those who hired him, and purchased with consecrated money a guilty murder! What

darkness had come upon the soul of him who received the bribe! For a little silver, he lost heaven;

he missed the crown of immortality, and the desirable honour of the apostleship, and to be numbered among the twelve, to whom Christ somewhere said, ”You are the light of the world. He cared not to be a light of the world: he forgot Christ, Who says, ”You who have followed Me in My temptations, when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. But he wanted not to reign with Christ. What a confusion too of error blinded the mind of that covetous man! He delivered to death Him Who is greater than death. Did you not know that Lazarus was raised on the fourth day from the grave, and that at His nod the widow’s son also revived, and the daughter of the chief of the synagogue? Did you not hear Him say to the Jews concerning His body, ”Destroy this temple: and in three days I will raise it up again? Did you forget His words, ”I am the resurrection and the life? What therefore was the cause of such utter frenzy? The Evangelist tells us, where he says, ”Satan entered into him,” having obtained as his pathway and door the passion of avarice. And yet ”the fear of God with a sufficiency is great gain: and, as the sacred Scripture says, ”We neither brought anything into the world, nor can we carry [anything] out.

And ”those who seek to be rich, fall into numerous and unprofitable lusts, which sink men in pitfalls and destruction. And of this the disciple who became a traitor is a manifest proof: for he perished for the sake of a few wretched shekels.

And what shall one say of those who hired him? That they fell into the very same pitfalls with him. Plainly they were the victims of a like intoxication, even though they had the reputation of being well acquainted with the law and the words of the holy prophets. It was their duty to have known the meaning of what had been spoken of old, as being before decreed by God concerning them. For among others are words like these, ”My wrath is kindled against the shepherds, and I will visit the lambs.” For the wicked shepherds perished miserably: while the calling of those who were obedient to salvation was a kind of visitation; for a remnant of Israel was saved. And, as if already, so to speak, they had fallen into ruin and destruction, and were wailing and weeping on this account, the prophet hoard, he says, ”the voice of shepherds wailing, because their might was brought low: the voice of lions roaring, because the pride of Jordan was spoiled.” He calls the lions the pride of Jordan, by whom wore figured the chiefs of the Jewish synagogue: who, in just requital of their wickedness against Christ, wailed with their fathers and children, being consumed as with fire and sword, while the temple at Jerusalem was also burnt, and the cities throughout all Judaea abandoned to utter desolation.

Such then was their fate: but Christ saves us by His merciful will; by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON CXLI.

This Exposition is fit to be read on Thursday in the week of the Mystery. 22:7-16. Then came the day of unleavened bread, on which it was fitting for the passover to be sacrificed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare for us the passover, that we may eat. And they said to Him, Where will You that we prepare? And He said to them, Behold, when you have entered into the city, there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water: follow him to the house into which he enters. And say to the master of the house, The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest-chamber, where I may eat the passover with My disciples? And he will show you a large upper room, provided with couches; there make ready. And they went, and found as He said to them; and they made ready the passover. And when the time was come, He lay down to meat, and the twelve apostles with Him. And He said to them, I have desired a desire to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for 1 say to you, that henceforth I twill not eat of it, until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

THE law by its shadows prefigured from of old the mystery of Christ: and of this He is Himself the witness where He said to the Jews, ”If you had believed Moses, you would have believed also Me: for he wrote concerning Me.” For everywhere He is set forth, by means of shadows and types, both as slain for us, as the Lamb without blame and true; and as sanctifying us by His life-giving blood. And we further find the words of the holy prophets in complete accordance with those of most wise Moses. But when ”the fulness of time was come,” as Paul says, in which the Only-begotten Word of God was about to submit to the emptying of Himself, and to endure the birth in the flesh of a woman, and subjection also to the law, according to the measure that was fitting for human nature, then He was also sacrificed for us, as the lamb without blame and true, on the fourteenth day of the first month. And this feast-time was called Phasek, a word belonging to the Hebrew language, and signifying the passing over: for so they explain it, and say that this is its meaning.

We must explain then what it is from which we pass over, and on our journey to what country, and in what manner we effect it. As then Israel was delivered from the tyranny of the Egyptians, and having loosed its neck from the yoke of bondage,

was now free; and fleeing from the violence of the tyrant passed with dry foot in a manner wonderful and beyond the power of language to describe through the midst of the sea, and journeyed onwards to the promised land: so must we too, who have accepted the salvation that is in Christ, be willing no longer to abide in our former faults, nor continue in our evil ways, but manfully cross over the sea, as it were, of the vain trouble of this world, and the tempest of affairs that is therein. We pass over therefore from the love of the flesh to temperance; from our former ignorance to the true knowledge of God; from wickedness to virtue: and in hope at least, from the blame of sin to the glories of righteousness, and from death to incorruption. The name therefore of the feast on which Emmanuel bore for us the saving cross, was the Passover.

But let us behold Him Who is the Truth still honouring the types, and Him Who was represented therein still permitting the shadows to hold good. ”For when the day, it says, had come, on which it was fitting for the passover to be sacrificed, He sent to the city two men chosen from the holy apostles, Peter namely and John, saying, that there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water: follow him to the house into which he enters; and say to the master of the house, The Teacher says to you, where is the guest-chamber, where I may eat the passover with My disciples?” ’But why, some one perchance may say, did He not plainly mention the man to those whom He sent? For He did not say, Having gone to such and such a person, whoever it might be, there prepare for us at his house the passover: but simply gave them a sign,----a man bearing a pitcher of water.’ To this then what do we reply? That lo! already Judas the traitor had promised the Jews to deliver Him to them, and was continuing in His company watching for an opportunity; and while still making profession of the love that was the duty of a disciple, he had admitted Satan into his heart, and was travailing with the crime of murder against our common Saviour Christ. He gives a sign therefore, to prevent him from learning who the man was, and running to tell those who had hired him. ”For there shall meet you, He says, a man carrying a pitcher of water.”

Or even perchance He so speaks signifying something mystical and necessary thereby. For whither the waters enter, even those of holy baptism, there lodges Christ. How, or in what manner? In that they free us from all impurity, and we are washed by them from the stains of sin, that we may also become a holy temple of God, and partakers of His divine nature, by participation of the Holy Spirit. In order therefore that Christ may rest and lodge in us, let us receive the saving waters, confessing moreover the faith that justifies the wicked, and raises us aloft so as for us to be accounted ”an upper room.” For those in whom Christ dwells by faith have a mind raised aloft, unwilling to creep upon the dust, and refusing, so to speak, to be set upon the earth, and everywhere seeking that which is exalted in virtue. For it is written, that ”the mighty ones of God are raised high above the earth.” ”For here they have no abiding city, but seek that which is to come:” and while walking

upon earth, their thoughts are set upon those things which are above, and ”their dwelling is in heaven.”

We may also notice something true, but wonderful, that happens, so to speak, constantly among us: namely that those who prize their carnal life are often puffed up, and have their heart full of pride accursed and hated of God; but yet perhaps they are brought to humiliation even upon earth: while those who are poor in spirit obtain exaltation by the honour and glory which comes from God. For as the disciple of Christ writes, ”Let the humble brother glory in his exaltation, but ”the rich in suffering humiliation: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.” He therefore would not miss the truth, who should say that the soul of every saint is ”an upper room.” When then the disciples had prepared the passover, Christ ate it with them, being long-suffering towards the traitor, and deigning to admit him to the table from His infinite loving-kindness: for he was already a traitor, because Satan was lodging within him. And what did Christ also say to the holy apostles? ”I have desired a desire to eat this passover with you.” Let us examine the deep purport of this expression: let us search out the meaning concealed therein, and what it is which the Saviour intends.

As then I have already said that covetous disciple was seeking an opportunity to betray Him: and, that he might not deliver Him to His murderers before the feast of the passover, the Saviour did not declare either the house or the person with whom He would celebrate the feast. To explain therefore to them the cause of His unwillingness openly to tell them with whom He would lodge, He says, ”I have desired a desire to eat with you this passover:” apparently meaning, I have used all diligence to enable me to escape the wickedness of the traitor, that I might not endure My passion before the time.

”But I will not eat of this passover until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” And in this again Christ utters a profound and mysterious truth, of which He Himself, however, reveals to us the meaning. For it is His custom to give the name of ”the kingdom of heaven” to justification by faith, to the cleansing that is by holy baptism and the participation of the Holy Spirit, and to the offering of spiritual service, now rendered possible by the entering in of the gospel laws. But these things are the means of our being made partakers of the promises, and of our reigning together with Christ: and therefore He says, ”I will no more draw near to such a passover as this,” one namely that consisted in the typical eating,----for a lamb of the flock was slain to be the type of the true Lamb,----”until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God:” that is, until the time has appeared in which the kingdom of heaven is preached. For this is fulfilled in us, who honour the worship that is superior to the law, even the true passover; nor is it a lamb of the flock which sanctifies those who are in Christ, but Himself rather, being made a holy sacrifice for us, by the offering of bloodless oblations, and the mystical giving of thanks, in which we are blessed and

quickened with life. For He became for us ”the living bread that came down from heaven, and gives life to the world:” by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON CXLII.

22:17-22. And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it with one another: for I say to you, that I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God is fulfilled. And He took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave to them, saying, This is My body, which is given for you: do this in remembrance of Me. In like manner also the cup, after He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you. But, behold! the hand of him that betrays Me is with Me at the table. And the Son of man indeed goes, according to that which was determined: but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed! TO be made partakers of Christ, both intellectually and by our senses, fills us with every blessing. For He dwells in us, first, by the Holy Spirit, and we are His abode, according to that which was said of old by one of the holy prophets. ”For I will dwell in them, He says,. and lead them: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people.”

But He is also within us in another way by means of our partaking in the oblation of bloodless offerings, which we celebrate in the churches, having received from Him the saving pattern of the rite, as the blessed Evangelist plainly shows us in the passage which has just been read. For He tells us that ”He took a cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it with one another.” Now by His giving thanks, by which is meant His speaking to God the Father in the manner of prayer, He signified to us that He, so to speak, shares and takes part in His good pleasure in granting us the life-giving blessing which was then bestowed upon us: for every grace, and every perfect gift comes to us from the Father by the Son in the Holy Spirit. And this act then was a pattern for our use of the prayer which ought to be offered, whenever the grace of the mystical and life-giving oblation is about to be spread before Him by us: and so accordingly we are wont to do. For first offering up our thanksgivings, and joining in our praises to God the Father both the Son and the Holy Spirit, we so draw near to the holy tables, believing that we receive life and blessing both spiritually and corporeally: for we receive in us the Word of the Father, Who for our sakes became man, and Who is Life, and the Giver of life.

Let us then enquire, to the best of our ability, what is the view held among us of this mystery: for it is our duty to be ”ready to give an answer concerning the hope that is in us,” as the wise Peter says. ”The God of all therefore created all things for immortality, and the beginnings of the world were life; but by the envy of the devil death entered the world:” for it was that rebel serpent who led the first man to the transgression of the commandment, and to disobedience, by means of which he fell under the divine curse, and into the net of death: for it was said to him, ”Earth you are, and to the earth you shall return.” Was it then right that one who was created for life and immortality should be made mortal, and condemned to death without power of escape? Must the envy of the devil be more unassailable and enduring than the will of God? Not so: for it has been brought to nought; and the clemency of the Creator has transcended the evil effects of his malignity. He has given aid to those upon earth. And what then was the manner in which He aided them? One truly great, and admirable, and worthy of God; yes, worthy in the very highest degree of the supreme Mind. For God the Father is by His own nature Life; and as alone being so, He caused the Son to shine forth Who also Himself is Life: for it could not be otherwise with Him Who is the Word That proceeded substantially from the Life: for He must, I say must, also Himself be Life, as being One Who sprang forth from Life, from Him Who begat Him.

God the Father therefore gives life to all things by the Son in the Holy Spirit: and every thing that exists and breathes in heaven and on earth, its existence and life is from God the Father by the Son in the Holy Spirit. Neither therefore the nature of angels, nor any thing else whatsoever that was made, nor aught that from non-existence was brought into being, possesses life as the fruit of its own nature: but, on the contrary, life proceeds, as I said, from the Substance which transcends all: and to it only it belongs, and is possible that it can give life, because it is by nature life.

In what manner therefore can man upon earth, clothed as he is with mortality, return to incorruption? I answer, that this dying flesh must be made partaker of the life-giving power which comes from God. But the life-giving power of God the Father is the Only-begotten Word: and Him He sent to us as a Saviour and Deliverer. And how He sent Him, the blessed John the Evangelist clearly tells us, saying, ”And the Word became flesh, and dwelt in us. But He became flesh, not by having undergone any change or alteration into what He had not been, nor again by having ceased to be the Word;----for He knows not what it is to suffer the shadow of a change;----but rather by having been born in the flesh of a woman, and taken to Himself that body which He received from her, in order that, having implanted Himself in us by an inseparable union, He might raise us above the power both of death and corruption. And Paul is our witness, where he says of Him and of us, ”For inasmuch as the children are partakers of blood and flesh, so He in like manner was partaker of the same, that by death He might bring him to nought who

has dominion over death, that is, the devil; and deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For He does not take hold of angels, ”but He took hold of the seed of Abraham:

for which reason it was right for Him in all things to be made like to His brethren: that is, to us. For He was made in our likeness, and clothed Himself in our flesh, that by raising it from the dead He might prepare a way henceforth, by which the flesh which had been humbled to death might return anew to incorrupt-ion. For we are united to Him just as also we were united to Adam, when he brought upon himself the penalty of death. And Paul testifies thereunto, thus writing on one occasion, ”For because by man is death, by man is also the resurrection of the dead: and again upon another, ”For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all live. The Word therefore, by having united to Himself that flesh which was subject to death, as being God and Life drove away from it corruption, and made it also to be the source of life: for such must the body of (Him Who is) the Life be.

And do not disbelieve what I have said, but rather accept the word in faith, having gathered proofs thereof from a few examples. When you cast a piece of bread into wine or oil, or any other liquid, you find that it becomes charged with the quality of that particular thing. When iron is brought into contact with fire, it becomes full of its activity; and while it is by nature iron, it exerts the power of fire. And so the life-giving Word of God, having united Himself to His own flesh in a way known to Himself, endowed it with the power of giving life. And of this He certifies us Himself, saying, ”Verily, I say to you, he that believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life.” And again, ”I am the living bread, that came down from heaven; if a man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I shall give is My flesh for the life of the world. Verily, I say to you, that if you eat not the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He that eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father; so He that eats Me shall also live because of Me.” When therefore we eat the holy flesh of Christ, the Saviour of us all, and drink His precious blood, we have life in us, being made as it were, one with Him, and abiding in Him, and possessing Him also in us.

And let none of those whose wont it is to disbelieve say, ’Since therefore the Word of God, being by nature life, dwells in us also, is the body of each one of us too endowed with the power of giving life?’ Rather let him know that it is a perfectly different thing for the Son to be in us by a relative participation, and for Himself to become flesh, that is, to make that body His own which was taken from the blessed Virgin. For He is not said to become incarnate and be made flesh by being in us: but rather this happened once for all when He became man without ceasing to be

God. The body therefore of the Word was that assumed by Him from the holy virgin, and made one with Him; but how, or in what manner this was done, we cannot tell: for it is incapable of explanation, and altogether beyond the powers of the mind, and to Himself alone is the manner of the union known.

It was titling therefore for Him to be in us both divinely by the Holy Spirit, and also, so to speak, to be mingled with our bodies by His holy flesh and precious blood: which things also we possess as a life-giving eucharist, in the form of bread and wine. For lest we should be terrified by seeing (actual) flesh and blood placed upon the holy tables of our churches, God, humbling Himself to our infirmities, infuses into the things set before us the power of life, and transforms them into the efficacy of His flesh, that we may have them for a life-giving participation, and that the body of (Him Who is the) Life may be found in us as a life-producing seed. And do not doubt that this is true, since Himself plainly says, ”This is My body: ”This is My blood: but rather receive in faith the Saviour’s word; for He, being the Truth, cannot lie. And so will you honour Him; for as the very wise John says, ”He that receives His witness has set his seal that God is true. For He Whom God sent speaks the words of God. For the words of God are of course true, and in no manner whatsoever can they be false: for even though we understand not in what way God works acts such as these, yet He Himself knows the way of His works. For when Nicodemus could not understand His words concerning holy baptism, and foolishly said, ”How can those things be?

he heard Christ in answer say, ”Verily I say to you, that we speak that which we know, and testify that which we see, and you receive not our testimony. If I have spoken to you the earthly things, and you believe not, how will you believe if I tell you the heavenly things? For how indeed can a man learn those things which transcend the powers of our mind and reason? Let therefore this our divine mystery be honoured by faith.

But Judas the traitor, who was eating with Him, was reproved in those words which Christ spoke, ”But behold the hand of him who betrays Me is with Me at the table.” For he imagined perchance in his great senselessness, or rather as being filled with the haughtiness of the devil, that he could deceive Christ, though He be God. But, as I said, he was convicted of being altogether wicked, and hateful to God, and traitorous: and yet admission was deigned him to the table, and he was counted worthy of the divine gentleness even to the end: but thereby is his punishment made the more severe. For Christ has somewhere said of him by the Psalmist’s voice, ”That if an enemy had reproached Me, I had borne it: and if he that hated Me had spoken against Me proud things, I had hid myself from him. But it was you, My like in soul, My neighbour and My acquaintance, who in My company had sweetened for Me meats, and we went to the house of the Lord in concord.” Woe therefore to him, according to the Saviour’s word! For He indeed, according to the

good will of God the Father, gave Himself in our stead, that He might deliver us from all evil: but the man who betrayed into the hands of murderers the Saviour and Deliverer of all, will have for his inheritance the condemnation which is the devil's fitting punishment. For his guilt was not against one such as we are, but against the Lord of all: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CXLIII.

22:24-30. And there was also a strife among them, Which of them seems to be the most important. And He said to them, The kings of the Gentiles are their lords: and they who rule over them are called benefactors. But with you it is not so; but he who is great among you, let him be as the youngest : and let him who governs be as he that serves. For which is the chief he that reclines at table, or he that serves? Is not he that reclines? But I am in the midst of you as he that serves. But you are they who have remained with Me in My temptations: and I will make a covenant with you, as My Father has appointed for Me a kingdom, that you shall eat and drink at My table in My kingdom: and you shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

”AWAKE you, and watch,” is the summons to us of one of the holy apostles: for every where the net of sin is spread, and Satan makes us his prey in various ways, seizing hold of us by many passions, and so leading us on to a reprobate mind. Those therefore must be awake who would not willingly be subject to his power: for thereby they will gain the victory by Christ’s help, Who cares for our souls, and delivers them from every passion, that so with sound and vigorous mind they may run along the praiseworthy and gainful pathway of that mode of life which is pleasing to Him. For how great His mercy is towards us, the purport of the lessons set before us once again declares. For the disciples had given way to a human infirmity, and were contending with one another, who of them is the chief, and superior to the rest; for those perchance who held the second rank among them were not willing to give way to those who held the first. But even this arose, and was recorded for our benefit, that that which happened to the holy apostles may prove a reason for humility in us. For Christ immediately rebukes the malady, and like a vigorous physician cut away, by an earnest and deep-reaching commandment, the passion which had sprung up among them.

Now it was from an unprofitable love of glory, the root of which is pride, that this vain and senseless ambition had, so to speak, shot up. For the very fact of wishing at all to be sot over others, and to strive for this end, renders a man liable to be justly blamed: though, on the other hand, it is not absolutely destitute of that which

may fitly be praised. For to be exalted in virtue is worthy of all estimation: but those who would attain to it must be of modest mind, and possess such humbleness of feeling as to abandon out of love to the brethren all idea of preeminence. And such the blessed Paul would also have us be, thus writing, ”Consider as regards your companions, that in honour they are better than you.” For so to feel is highly worthy of the saints, and renders them glorious, and makes our piety to God more worthy of honour: it tears the net of the devil’s malice, and breaks his manifold snares, and rescues us from the pitfalls of depravity: and finally, it perfects us in the likeness of Christ the Saviour of us all. For listen how He sets Himself before us as the pattern of a humble mind, and of a will not set on vainglory: for ”Learn, He says, of Me, Who am meek and lowly in heart.”

Here, however, in the passage which, has just been read He says, ”For which is the chief, he that reclines at table, or he that serves? Is not he that reclines? But I am in the midst of you as he that serves.” And when Christ thus speaks, who can be so obdurate and unyielding as not to cast away all vaingloriousness, and banish from his mind the love of empty honour? For He Who is ministered to by the whole creation of rational and holy beings; Who is lauded by the seraphim; Who is tended by the services of the universe; He Who is the equal of God the Father in His throne and kingdom; taking a servant’s place, washed the holy apostlesfeet. And in another way moreover He holds the post of servitude, by reason of the dispensation in the flesh. And of this the blessed Paul bears witness, where he writes; ”For I say that Christ was a minister of the circumcision to fulfil the promises of the fathers; and the Gentiles shall praise God for mercy.” He therefore Who is ministered to became a minister; and the Lord of glory made Himself poor, ”leaving us an example,” as it is written.

Let us therefore avoid the love of vainglory, and deliver ourselves from the blame attached to the desire of chieftainship. For so to act makes us like to Him Who submitted to empty Himself for our sakes: while superciliousness and haughtiness of mind make us plainly resemble the princes of the Gentiles, to whom an arrogant bearing is ever, so to speak, dear, or even perhaps fitting. ”For they are called, He says, benefactors,” that is, are flattered as such by their inferiors. Be it so then, that they, as not being within the pale of the sacred laws, nor obedient to the Lord’s will, are the victims of these maladies: but let it not be so with us; rather let our exaltation consist in humility, and our glorying in not loving glory; and let our desire be set upon those things which are well-pleasing to God, while we bear in mind what the wise man says to us, ”The greater you are, humble yourself the more, and you shall find grace before the Lord.” For He rejects the proud, and counts the boastful as His enemies, but crowns with honours the meek and lowly in mind.

The Saviour therefore drives away from the holy apostles the malady of vainglori-ousness: but they perchance might think among themselves, and even say, 'What therefore will be the reward of fidelity? or what advantage shall they receive, who have laboured in attendance upon Him, when temptations from time to time be-fall? In order therefore that being confirmed by the hope of the blessings that are in store, they may cast away from their minds all slothfulness in virtuous pursuits, and choose rather with earnest mind to follow Him, and take pleasure in labours for His sake, and count the doing so a cause of gain, and the pathway of joy, and the means of eternal glory, He necessarily says, "You are they who have remained with Me in My temptations: and I will make a covenant with you, as My Father has appointed for Me a kingdom, that you shall eat and drink at My table in My kingdom: and you shall also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Observe, I pray, that He does not yet quit the limits of humanity, but for the present confines Himself within them, because He had not as yet endured the precious cross; for He speaks as one of us: but after the resurrection from the dead He revealed His glory, the season calling Him thereto: for He said, "All power has been given Me in heaven and in earth.

He speaks therefore, as I said, in human fashion, as not having yet mounted above the measure of His humiliation. For this reason He says, that "as My Father has made with Me a covenant of a kingdom, so I also will make a covenant with you, that you shall eat and drink constantly at My table in My kingdom. Is it the case then, that even after the resurrection from the dead, when the time has come in which we shall be with Christ, and He will endow us with the likeness of His glorified body; even after we have thus put on incorruption, is it, I say, the case, that we shall again be in need of food and of tables? Or is it not then utterly foolish to say or wish to imagine anything of the sort? For when we have put off corruption, of what bodily refreshment shall we henceforth be in need? And if so, what is the meaning of the expression, "You shall eat at My table in "My kingdom? I answer, that once again from the ordinary matters of life He declares to us things spiritual. For those who enjoy the foremost honours with earthly kings banquet with them, and eat in their company: and this is counted by them the summit of glory. And there are too others, esteemed worthy of honour by those in power, who nevertheless are not permitted to draw near to the same table with them.

To show then that they will enjoy the highest honours with Him, He uses an example taken from ordinary life, and says, "I will make a covenant with you, that you shall eat and drink at My table in My kingdom: and you shall sit also upon twelve thrones judging Israel."

How or in what manner? It means that the disciples being of Israelitish race, ob-tained the foremost honours with Christ, the Saviour of all, because by faith and constancy they seized upon the gift: whom may we also endeavour to imitate, for

so will He Who is the Saviour and Lord of all receive us into His kingdom: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CXLIV.

22:31-34. Simeon, Simeon, behold Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you that your faith fail not: and do you also hereafter when converted strengthen your brethren. And he said to Him, Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death. But He said, I tell you, Peter, that the cock shall not crow to-day until you have thrice denied that You know Me. THE prophet Isaiah bids those who embrace a life of piety towards Christ to go to the proclamations of the Gospel, saying, ”You who thirst, go to the waters.” But these waters are not the material waters of earth, but rather are divine and spiritual, poured forth for us by Christ Himself. For He is the river of peace, and the torrent of pleasure, and the fountain of life. And so we have heard Himself plainly saying, ”Whosoever thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.” Come therefore, that here also we may delight ourselves in the sacred and divine streams which now from Him: for what says He to Peter? ”Simeon, Simeon, behold Satan has asked for you to sift you like wheat: but I have prayed for you that your faith fail not.”

Now it is, I think, both necessary and profitable for us to know what the occasion was which led our Saviour’s words to this point. The blessed disciples then had been disputing with one another, ”which of them was the great one:” but the Saviour of all, as the means whereby they obtained whatsoever was useful and necessary for their good, delivered them from the guilt of ambition, by putting away from them the striving after objects such as this, and persuading them to escape from the lust of preeminence, as from a pitfall of the devil. For He said, ”he who is great among you, let him be as the youngest, and he who governs as he that serves.” And He further taught them that the season of honour is not so much this present time as that which is to be at the coming of His kingdom. For there they shall receive the rewards of their fidelity, and be partakers of His eternal glory, and wear a crown of surpassing honour, eating at His table, and sitting also upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

But lo! He also offers them a third assistance, as we read in the lessons before us. For He teaches us, that we must think humbly of ourselves, as being nothing, both as regards the nature of man and the readiness of our mind to fall away into

sin, and as strengthened and being what we are only through Him and of Him. If therefore it is from Him that we borrow both our salvation, and our seeming to be something in virtue and piety, what reason have we for proud thoughts? For all we have is from Him, and of ourselves we have nothing. ”For what have you that you did not receive? But if you also received it, why do you glory, as though you did not receive it?” So spoke the very wise Paul: and further, the blessed David also at one time says, ”In God we shall make strength:” and at another again, ”Our God is our house of refuge and our strength.” And the prophet Jeremiah also has somewhere said, ”O Lord, my strength and my house of refuge, and my help in the days of trouble.” And the blessed Paul also may be brought forward, who says with great clearness, ”I can do all things through Christ, Who strengthens me.” Yes, Christ Himself also somewhere says to us, ”Without Me you can do nothing.

Let us then glory not in ourselves, but rather in His gifts. And if this be the state of any one’s mind, what place can the desire of being set above other men find in him, when thus we are all both partakers of the same one grace, and also have the same Lord of hosts as the Giver both of our existence and of our ability to do well. To humble therefore our tendency to superciliousness, and to repress ambitious feelings, Christ shows that even he who seemed to be great is nothing and infirm. He therefore passes by the other disciples, and turns to him who is the foremost, and set at the head of the company, and says; ”that Satan has many times desired to sift you as wheat:” that is, to search and try you, and expose you to intolerable blows. For it is Satan’s wont to attack men of more than ordinary excellence, and, like some fierce and arrogant barbarian, he challenges to single combat those of chief repute in the ways of piety. So he challenged Job, but was defeated by his patience, and the boaster fell, being vanquished by the endurance of that triumphant hero. But human nature he makes his prey, for it is infirm, and easy to be overcome: while he is harsh and pitiless and unappeasable in heart. For, as the sacred Scripture says of him, ”His heart is hard as a stone: and he stands like an anvil that cannot be beaten out .” Yet he is placed under the feet of the saints by Christ’s might: for He has said, ”Behold, I have given you to tread on serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.” ”Satan therefore, He says, has desired to sift you like wheat: but I have offered supplication in your behalf, that your faith fail not.”

See again, He humbles Himself to us, and speaks according to the limits of man’s estate, and yet He is God by nature, even though He became flesh. For though He is the power of the Father, by Whom all things are preserved, and from Whom they obtain the ability to continue in well-being, He yet says that He offers supplication as a man. For it was necessary, yes necessary, for Him Who, for the dispensation’s sake, became like to us, to use also our words, when the occasion called Him thereto in accordance with what the dispensation itself required. ”I have supplicated therefore, He says, that your faith fail not.” Now by this then He shows, that

if he had been yielded up to Satan to be tempted, he would have proved altogether unfaithful: since, even when not so yielded up, he proved weak from human feebleness, being unable to bear the fear of death. For he denied Christ, when a young girl troubled him in the high priest's palace by saying, "And you also are one of His disciples."

The Saviour then forewarned him what would have been the result had he been yielded up to Satan's temptation: but at the same time He offers him the word of consolation, and says, "And do you also hereafter, when converted, strengthen your brethren:" that is, be the support, and instructor and teacher of those who draw near to Me by faith. And moreover, admire the beautiful skill of the passage, and the surpassing greatness of the divine gentleness! For, lest his impending fall should lead the disciple to desperation, as though he would be expelled from the glories of the apostleship, and his former following (of Christ) lose its reward, because of his proving unable to bear the fear of death, and denying Him, at once Christ fills him with good hope, and grants him the confident assurance that he shall be counted worthy of the promised blessings, and gather the fruits of steadfastness. For He says, "And do you also, when converted, strengthen your brethren." O what great and incomparable kindness! The disciple had not yet sickened with the malady of faithlessness, and already he has received the medicine of forgiveness: not yet had the sin been committed, and he receives pardon: not yet had he fallen, and the saving hand is held out: not yet had he faltered, and he is confirmed: for "do you, He says, when converted, strengthen your brethren." So to speak belongs to One Who pardons, and restores him again to apostolic powers.

But Peter, in the ardour of his zeal, made profession of steadfastness and endurance to the last extremity, saying that he would manfully resist the terrors of death, and count nothing of bonds; but in so doing he erred from what was right. For he ought not, when the Saviour told him that he would prove weak to have contradicted Him, loudly protesting the contrary; for the Truth could not lie: but rather he ought to have asked strength of Him, that either he might not suffer this, or be rescued immediately from harm. But, as I have already said, being fervent in spirit, and warm in his love towards Christ, and of unrestrainable zeal in rightly performing those duties which become a disciple in his attendance upon his Master, he declares that he will endure to the last extremity: but he was rebuked for foolishly speaking against what was foreknown, and for his unreasonable haste in contradicting the Saviour's words. For this reason He says, "Verily I tell you, that the cock shall not crow to-night, until you have thrice denied Me." And this proved true. Let us not therefore think highly of ourselves, even if we see ourselves greatly distinguished for our virtues: rather let us offer up the praises of our thanksgivings to Christ Who redeems us, and Who also it is that grants us even the desire to be able to act rightly: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for over and ever, Amen.

SERMON CXLV.

22:35-38. And He said to them, When I sent you without purse and without bag and shoes, lacked you anything? And they said, Nothing. And He said to them, But now, he that has a purse, let him take it: and in like manner also a bag: and he that has not one, let him sell his garment, and buy a sword. For I say to you, that this that is written must be accomplished in Me, that he was numbered also with the transgressors. For that which concerns Me has an end. And they said, Lord, behold here are two swords. And He said to them, It is enough. THE blessed Moses impressed the fear of God upon the Israelites by saying, ”It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God: for our God is a consuming fire.” And another holy prophet has also said concerning Him, ”His wrath consumes the princes, and the rocks are melted at Him.” Moreover the blessed David says of Him somewhere in the Psalms, ”You are to be feared, and who shall rise up before You at Your wrath?” For what power of man, or of ought whatsoever that is created, can stand against the irresistible force of Almighty God? But His wrath does not descend upon any righteous man whatsoever;----for God does not commit injustice;----but upon those rather whose sins are numerous and intolerable, and their wickedness beyond bounds.

And as an example of what we have said, take that which happened to the Jewish multitudes after Christ rose from the dead, and ascended up to heaven. For God the Father sent to them His Son, inviting them to a service superior to the law, and to the knowledge of all good: He sent Him to free them from all guilt, and deliver them from the stains of sin; to bring them to the adoption of sons, to glory, to honour, and to the communion of the Holy Spirit; to life incorruptible; to never-ending glory; and to the kingdom of heaven. But though they ought eagerly to have hastened to this grace, and with grateful praises have honoured Him Who came to aid them, and joyfully have accepted the grace that is by faith, they did verily nothing of the kind, but betook themselves to the very reverse: for they rose up against Him, setting Him at nought by their disobedience, reviling even His divine signs, and after doing and saying every thing that was abominable, finally they crucified Him. And so it became their lot to suffer those things which the company also of the holy prophets had before proclaimed. For one of them said,

”God shall put them far away, because they did not hear Him, and they shall be wanderers among the nations. And again, ”Because Jerusalem is forsaken, and Judah is fallen, and their tongues are with iniquity; they disobey the Lord;

therefore now is their glory brought low, and the shame of their faces has stood up against them. And in another place they are thus addressed as in the person of God over all; ” And now, because you have done all these works, and I spoke to you and you did not hear, and I called to you and you answered not: therefore will I do to this house, on which My name is called, and wherein you trust; and to this place which I have given to you and to your fathers as I did to Shilom: and I will cast you from before My face, as I cast away your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim. For they were delivered up, as I have said, to desolation, and were dispersed over all the earth, their temple being consumed with fire, and all Judaea taken captive.

That this would be the case Christ had before announced to the disciples, the occasion which caused Him to speak upon this subject being some such as follows: He had forewarned the admirable Peter, that he would thrice deny Him, at the time namely of His seizure, when the band of Pilate’s soldiers with the officers of the Jews brought Him to the chief priests for judgment: for there Peter denied Him. And inasmuch as mention had now once been made of His seizure, and of his being taken before Caiaphas, there naturally followed upon this allusion a reference to that also which was next to come to pass, even His passion upon the cross: and then it was that He foretold the war about to burst upon the Jews, and which with unendurable violence spread like some river over all their land. On this account He says; ”When I sent you without purse and without bag and shoes, lacked you anything? And they said, No. For the Saviour sent the holy apostles, with the command to preach to the inhabitants of every village and city the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, and to heal every grief and every sickness among the people. And on their journey He bade them not to occupy themselves with things that concern the body, but rather without baggage and unencumbered, and resting all their hope of sustenance on Him, so to traverse the land: and this they also did, making themselves an example of praiseworthy and apostolic conduct.

”But now, He says, he that has a purse, let him take it, and a bag in like manner. Tell me then, was this because on second thoughts a more serviceable plan was devised? Would it have been better on the former occasion also to have had bag and purse? Or if not, what was the cause of so sudden a change? What need had the holy apostles of purse and bag? What answer must we give to this? That the saying in appearance had reference to them, but in reality applied to the person of every Jew: for they it rather was. whom Christ addressed. For He did not say that the holy apostles must get purse and bag, but that ”whosoever has a purse, let him take it,” meaning thereby, that whosoever had property in the Jewish territories,

should collect all that he had together, and flee, so that if he could any how save himself, he might do so. But any one who had not the means of equipping himself for travel, and who from extreme poverty must continue in the land, let even such one, He says, sell his cloak, and buy a sword: for henceforth the question with all those who continue in the land will not be whether they possess anything or not, but whether they can exist and preserve their lives. For war shall befal them with such unendurable impetuosity, that nothing shall be able to stand against it.

And next He tells them the cause of the evil, and of a tribulation so severe and irremediable befalling them, saying, ”that He is about according to the Scriptures to be numbered with the transgressors,” plainly referring to His being hung upon the cross with the thieves who were crucified with Him, and so enduring a transgressor’s punishment: ”and the dispensation, having come to this, will now have an end.” For He endured indeed for our sakes His saving passion, and thus far the daring wickedness of the Jews proceeded, and this was the consummation of their unbridled fury: but after the passion upon the cross every hand was powerless, ”for the enemy had no advantage over Him, and the Son of wickedness could no more hurt Him.’” For He arose, having trampled upon the grave; He ascended up into heaven, He sat down on the right hand of God the Father; and hereafter He shall come, not in mean estate, as of old, nor in the measure of human nature, but in the glory of the Father, with the holy angels as His body-guard; and He shall sit also upon the throne of His glory, ”judging the world in righteousness,” as it is written. Then, as the prophet says, ”they shall look on Him Whom they pierced:” and Him Whom these wretched beings ridiculed, as they saw Him hang on the precious cross, they shall behold crowned with godlike glory, and in just retribution of their wickedness towards Him, shall fall into the pit of destruction. ”What therefore, He says, concerns Me, has an end,” as far, that is, as relates to My suffering death in the flesh. And then shall those things which were foretold by the holy prophets in old time, happen to those who slew Him.

And in foretelling these things, the Lord was speaking of what was about to happen to the country of the Jews. But the divine disciples did not understand the deep meaning of what was said, but supposed rather that He meant that swords were necessary, because of the attack about to be made upon Him by the disciple who betrayed Him, and by those who were assembled to seize Him. For this reason they say, ”Lord, behold, here are two swords. And what is the Saviour’s reply? ”It is enough. Observe how, so to say, He even ridicules their speech, well knowing that the disciples not having understood the force of what was said, thought that swords were required, because of the attack about to be made upon Himself. Fixing His look therefore upon those things which happened to the Jews because of their wicked conduct towards Him, the Saviour, as I said, ridicules their speech, and says, ”It is enough: yes, forsooth, two swords are enough to bear the brunt of the war about to come upon them, to meet which many thousand swords were of

no avail. For a mighty resistance was made by the pride of the Jews against the forces of Augustus Caesar: but they availed nothing; for they were besieged with overpowering might, and suffered all misery. For as the prophet Isaiah says, ”That which the holy God purposes, who shall bring to nought? and His hand, when lifted up, who shall turn aside? Let us beware therefore of provoking God to anger:

for it is a fearful thing to fall into His hands. But to those who believe in Christ He is merciful; even to those who praise Him; who call Him their Redeemer and Deliverer; who minister to Him with spiritual service, and by all virtuous conduct: for if so we act and speak, Christ will make us His own; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CXLVI.

22:39-42,45,46. And He came out and went, as He was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. And when He was at the place, He said to them, Pray that you enter not into temptation. And He went apart from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, Father, if You will, put away this cup from Me: but not My will, but Yours be done. And He rose up from prayer, and went to the disciples, and found them asleep from sorrow. And He said to them, Why sleep you? Arise, pray that you enter not into temptation. OUR Lord Jesus Christ requires those who love Him to be accurate investigators of whatsoever is written concerning Him: for He has said, "that the kingdom of heaven is like to a treasure hid in a field." For the mystery of Christ is deposited, so to speak, at a great depth, nor is it plain to the many: but he who uncovers it by means of an accurate knowledge, finds the riches which are therein, and resembles that wise woman, even Mary, of whom Christ said, that "she had chosen the good part, that should not be taken away from her." For these earthly and temporal things fade away with the flesh: but those which are divine and intellectual, and that benefit the life of the soul, are firmly established, and their possession cannot be shaken. Let us look therefore into the meaning of the lessons set before us. "By day then the Saviour abode in Jerusalem," instructing evidently the Israelites, and revealing to them the way of the kingdom of heaven; but when the evening came, He continued with the holy disciples on the Mount of Olives at a spot called Gethsemane: for so the wise Evangelist Matthew tells us.

When therefore Christ came thither, as the same Matthew again somewhere says, "He took Peter and James and John, and began to be grieved and sore distressed; and to say to them, My soul is sorrowful even to death. And again, having gone a little forward, He kneeled and prayed, saying, Father, if You will, put away from Me this cup; but not My will, but Yours be done. Behold here, I pray, the profoundness of the dispensation in the flesh, and the height of that wisdom which no words can tell: fix upon it the penetrating eye of the mind: and if you can see the beautiful art of the mystery, you also will say, "O! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out. "He began, it says, to be grieved, and sore distressed. For what reason, O

Lord? Were You also terrified at death? Did You being seized with fear draw back from suffering? And yet did not You teach the holy apostles to make no account of the terrors of death, saying, ”Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. And if too any one were to say that the grace of spiritual fortitude is Your gift to the elect, he would not err from the truth: for all strength is from You, and all confidence and heartiness of mind in every more excellent encounter.

You are by nature Life, and the cause of life. You we look for as a Saviour and Deliverer, and the Destroyer of corruption. From You all receive their life and being. You have made every thing that breathes. The angels are for You, and from You, and by You, and so is the whole rational creation. Unto You the blessed David spoke concerning us, ”You send Your Spirit, and they are created: and You renew the face of the ground. How therefore are You grieved, and sore distressed, and sorrowful, even to death? For plainly You knew, in that You are God by nature, and know whatsoever is about to happen, that by enduring death in the flesh You would free from death the inhabitants of all the earth, and bring Satan to shame:----that You would set up a trophy of victory over every evil and opposing power: that You would be known by every one, and worshipped as the God and Creator of all. You knew that You would plunder hell:----that You would deliver those that are therein, from bonds that had endured for many ages: that You wouldst turn to You all that is under heaven. These things You did Yourself announce to us of old by the holy prophets. We have heard You clearly saying, when You were like to us, ”Now is the judgment of this world: now will the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men to Me.

”Verily I say to you, that if a grain of wheat fall not into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit. For what reason therefore are You grieved and sore distressed? Yes, He says, not unbefittingly am I found thus in anguish. For I know indeed that by consenting to suffer the passion upon the cross, I shall deliver all beneath the heaven from every evil, and be the cause of unending blessings to the inhabitants of the whole earth. I am not unaware of the unloosing of death, and the abolition of corporeal corruption, and the overthrow of the tyranny of the devil, and the remission of sin. But all the same it grieves Me for Israel the firstborn, that henceforth He is not even among the servants. The portion of the Lord, and the cord of My inheritance, will be ”the portion of foxes,” as it is written. He Who was the beloved one is greatly hated: he who had the promises is utterly stripped of My gifts: the pleasant vineyard with its rich grapes henceforth will be a desert land, a place dried up, and without water. ”For I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. ”I will break through its hedge, and it shall be a spoil: and I will beat down its wall, and it shall be trampled under foot. And tell me then, what husbandman, when his vineyard is desert and waste, will feel no anguish for it?

What shepherd would be so harsh and stern as, when his flock was perishing, to suffer nothing on its account? These are the causes of My grief: for these things I am sorrowful. For I am God, gentle, and that loves to spare. ”I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his evil way and live. Right therefore is it, most right, that as being good and merciful, I should not only be glad at what is joyful, but also should feel sorrow at whatsoever is grievous.

But that He pitied Jerusalem, as being well aware of what was about to happen, and that it would have to endure all misery because of its crimes against Him, you may learn even from this. For He went up from Judaea to Jerusalem, and, as the Evangelist says, ”When He beheld the city, He wept over it, and said, Would that you, even you, had known the things of your peace; but now they are hid from your eyes.” For as He wept over Lazarus, in pity for the whole race of mankind, which had become the prey of corruption and of death; so we say that He was grieved at seeing Jerusalem all but involved in extreme miseries, and in calamities for which there was no cure. And that we might learn what was His wish concerning Israel, He told the disciples, that He is in grief and anguish. For it would have been impossible for them to have learnt what was hidden within Him, if He had not revealed by words what His feelings were.

And this too I think it necessary to add to what has been said: that the passion of grief, or malady, as we may call it, of sore distress, cannot have reference to the divine and impassive nature of the Word; for that is impossible, inasmuch as It transcends all passion: but we say that the Incarnate Word willed also to submit Himself to the measure of human nature, by being supposed to suffer what belongs to it. As therefore He is said to have hungered, although He is Life and the cause of life, and the living bread; and was weary also from a long journey, although He is the Lord of powers; so also it is said that He was grieved, and seemed to be capable of anguish. For it would not have been fitting for Him Who submitted Himself to emptiness, and stood in the measure of human nature, to have seemed unwilling to endure human things. The Word therefore of God the Father is altogether free from all passion: but wisely and for the dispensation’s sake He submitted Himself to the infirmities of mankind, in order that He might not seem to refuse that which the dispensation required: yes, He even yielded obedience to human customs and laws, only, as I said, He did not bear ought of this in His own nature.

There is however much, yes, very much, to be added to what has been said; but for the present we hold in our narration, and reserve what is wanting for another meeting, should Christ our common Saviour gather us here once again: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON CXLVII.

UPON THE SAME SUBJECT. ONCE again I am come to pay you what I promised, and to add a fitting conclusion to my discourse concerning Christ. For on all occasions it is dangerous to be guilty of untruth; but when any thing of the kind is committed in those things which are important for our edification, well may we then fear lest we bring down upon us condemnation from on high, and also become an object of general ridicule.

We said therefore at our last meeting, that Christ the Saviour of all was with the holy disciples upon the mount of Olives, while that many-headed serpent, even Satan, was preparing for Him the snare of death; and the chiefs of the Jewish synagogue and the disciple that betrayed Him were, so to speak, leaving nothing undone to gain possession of His person, and had already gathered those who were to seize Him, and who consisted of a band of the soldiers of Pilate, and a multitude of wicked officers. Just therefore as the attempt was about to be made, He was sorrowful, and admonished the disciples to act in like manner suitably to the season, saying, "Watch and pray, that you fall not into temptation. And that He might not benefit them by words only, but be Himself an example of what they should do, "having gone apart a little, about a stone's throw, He knelt down, it says, and prayed, saying, Father, if You be willing, remove this cup from Me. Now some one perhaps may ask, 'Why did He not pray with the holy disciples, but having gone apart from the rest, prayed by Himself?' It was that we might learn the pattern of that mode of prayer which is well pleasing to God.

For it is not right when we pray that we should expose ourselves to the public gaze, nor seek to be beheld of many, lest perchance, sinking ourselves in the mire of endeavours after pleasing men, we make the labour of our prayers altogether unprofitable. Of this fault the scribes and Pharisees were guilty; for our Lord even once rebuked them for loving to pray in the corners of the streets, and for the long supplications which they offered in the synagogues, that they might be seen of men. But for those whose purpose it is to live uprightly, and who are anxious to hold fast by their love to Him, He lays down the law of prayers in these words: "But you, when you pray, enter your chamber, and close your door, and pray to your Father

Who is in secret, and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you. Every where therefore we find Him praying alone, that you also may learn that we ought to hold converse with God over all with a quiet mind, and a heart calm and free from all disturbance. For the wise Paul writes, ”I will therefore that men pray, lifting up pious hands, without wrath and doubtings.”

He was praying therefore, when already those who were to seize Him were at the door. And let no man of understanding say, that He offered these supplications as being in need of strength or help from another:----for He is Himself the Father’s almighty strength and power:----but it was that we might hereby learn, ever to put away from us carelessness when temptation harasses, and persecution presses upon us, and perfidy contrives for us its snare, and makes ready the net of death. For it is the very means of our salvation to watch and fall upon our knees, and make constant supplications, and ask for the aid that comes from above, lest perchance it be our lot to grow weak, and suffer a most terrible shipwreck. For spiritual bravery is indeed a thing right worthy of the saints: but those who would resist the violence of temptations must, I tell you, have a determined and, so to speak, an unflinching mind: for it is the act of utter ignorance to be over confident in conflicts, nor is a man free from the charge of boastfulness, who is thus disposed: we must therefore, I repeat, unite courage and patience with humbleness of mind; and should any temptation then happen, our mind will be prepared bravely to resist it. Yet let us ask of God the ability to endure manfully: for we are commanded in our prayers to say, ”Lead us not into temptation: but deliver us from evil.”

Behold then, yes, see, the pattern for your conduct depicted for thee in Christ the Saviour of us all: and let us also observe the manner of His prayer. ”Father, He says, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me.” Do you see that Christ made His prayer against temptation with a reverence befitting man? ”For if You be willing, He says, remove it.” And here too remember what the blessed Paul wrote concerning Him; ”He Who in the days of His flesh offered up prayers and supplications to Him Who was able to save Him from death, with strong crying and tears, and was heard because of His reverence, even though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by what He suffered, and being made perfect became the cause of eternal life to all them that obey Him.” For as though one of us, He assigns to His Father’s will the carrying out of whatever was about to be done. And if therefore it happen that we also at any time fall into unexpected troubles, and have to endure any mental conflict, let us beseech God not so much that it may end according to our will, but rather let us ask that whatever He knows to be fit and expedient for the benefit of our souls may be brought to pass. ”For we know not what to pray for as we ought:” but He is a treasure house of every thing, and to those who love Him He gives whatever is suitable for them.

Now what I have said is, I trust, useful for the benefit of you all; but if we must further contrive some other explanation for the prayer, we may also say, that it rebukes the wickedness of the Jews: and in what way let us now explain. You have heard Christ say, "Father, if You will, remove this cup from Me." Was then His passion an involuntary act? and was the necessity for Him to suffer, or rather the violence of those who plotted against Him, stronger than His own will? Not so, we say. For His passion was not an involuntary act, though yet in another respect it was grievous, because it implied the rejection and destruction of the synagogue of the Jews. For it was not His will that Israel should be the murderer of its Lord, because by so doing it would be exposed to utter condemnation, and become reprobate, and rejected from having part in His gifts, and in the hope prepared for the saints, whereas once it had been His people, and His only one, and His elect, and adopted heir. For Moses said to them, "Behold, the heavens and the earth are the Lord's your God: and you has the Lord chosen out of all nations to be His people." It was right therefore that we should clearly know, that through pity for Israel He would have put from Him the necessity to suffer: but as it was not possible for Him not to endure the passion, He submitted to it also, because God the Father so willed it with Him.

But come and let us examine further this also. 'Did the decree of God the Father, and the will of the Son Himself, call Him as of necessity to His passion? And if so, and what I have said be true, was it not a matter of necessity for some one to be the traitor, and for the Israelites to proceed to such a pitch of daring as to reject Christ, and put Him to shame in manifold ways, and contrive for Him also the death upon the cross?' But if this were so, how would He be found saying, "Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: good had it been for him if he had not been born? And what just cause would there have been for Israel to perish, and be condemned to the miseries of war? For how could it oppose God's decree, and His irresistible purposes? God is not unjust, but weighs what we do with holy judgment. How therefore can He treat as voluntary that which was involuntary? For God the Father had pity upon the dwellers upon earth, who were in misery, caught in the snares of sin, and liable to death and corruption; bowed also beneath a tyrant's hand, and enslaved to herds of devils. He sent from heaven His Son to be a Saviour and Deliverer: Who also was made in form like to us.

But even though He foreknew what He would suffer, and the shame of His passion was not the fruit of His own will, yet He consented to undergo it that He might save the earth, God the Father so willing it with Him, from His great kindness and love to mankind. "For He so loved the world, that He gave even His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. As regards therefore the ignominy of His passion, He willed not to suffer: but as it was not possible for Him not to suffer, because of the cruelty of the Jews, and their disobedience, and unbridled violence, "He endured the cross, despising the

shame," "and was obedient to the Father, even to death, and that the death of the cross. But God, it says, has greatly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus Christ every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and of things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

SERMON CXLVIII.

22:47-53. While He was speaking, behold a multitude; and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. For he had given them this sign, Whomsoever I kiss is He. But Jesus said to him, Judas, do you betray the Son of man with a kiss? But when they that were with Him saw what was about to be done, they said, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them struck the servant of the chief priest, and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered, and said, Let alone thus far. And He touched his ear and healed him. And Jesus said to those who had come out against Him, and who were the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and elders, Are you come out as against a thief with swords and staves to take Me? When I was daily with you in the temple, you stretched not out your hands against Me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

MANY and bitter passions wage war with the soul of man, and, attacking it with unendurable violence, humble it to unseemly deeds: but worse than all the rest is that root of all evil, the love of money, into whose inextricable nets that traitorous disciple so fell, that he even consented to become the minister of the devil's guile, and the instrument of the wicked chiefs of the synagogue of the Jews in their iniquity against Christ. And this the purport of the evangelic lessons again plainly shows. For the Saviour had forewarned the holy apostles that He should be seized, and endure by the hand of sinners His passion upon the cross. And with this He also commanded, that when temptation pressed upon them they must not be weary, nor sleep at an unseasonable time, but rather must watch and be constant in prayers. When then He was still speaking of these things, "Behold, it says, a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them." Do you see that the blessed Evangelist grieves, and, so to speak, even faints? For he does not permit himself even to retain in his remembrance the disciple who was so easily bought: he refuses even to name that wicked one: for he says, "he that was called Judas." For what? did he not know that the man was numbered with the elect, and counted in the company of the holy apostles? But, as I have already said, he hated even his name, and therefore the expression, "he that was called Judas."

To this, however, he adds, that he was one of the twelve: and this also is a matter of great importance to demonstrate more fully the guilt of the traitor's crime. For he who had been equally honoured with the rest, and adorned with apostolic dignities; he, the elect and beloved, deigned admittance to the holy table, and the highest honours, became the pathway and the means for the murderers of Christ. What lamentation can suffice for him, or what floods of tears must not each shed from his eyes, when he considers from what happiness that wretched being fell into such utter misery! For the sake of worthless pence he ceased to be with Christ, and lost his hope toward God, and the honour, and crowns, and life, and glory prepared for Christ's true followers, and the right of reigning with Him.

It will be worth while, however, to see what the nature was of his artifice. He had given then those murderers a sign, saying, "Whomsoever I kiss is He. Completely had he forgotten the glory of Christ, and in his utter folly imagined perhaps that he could remain undetected when offering indeed a kiss, which is the type of love, but with his heart full of bitter and iniquitous deceit. And yet even when he was accompanying Christ our common Saviour in His journeys with the other apostles, he often had heard Him foretelling what was about to happen: for, as being God by nature, He knew all things, and expressly told him of his treachery; for He said to the holy apostles, "Verily I say to you, that one of you betrays Me. How then could his purposes remain unknown? No: but there was the serpent within him struggling against God; he was the dwelling-place of the devil: for one of the holy evangelists has said, that as he was reclining at table with the rest of the disciples, the Saviour gave him a piece of bread, having dipped it in the dish: "and after the bread Satan entered into him. He approaches Christ therefore as one beside himself with wine; and though the instrument of fraud and treachery, he makes a show of extraordinary affection: and therefore Christ very justly condemned him with the greater severity, saying, "Judas, do you betray the Son of man with a kiss?

And Matthew says, that when the traitor drew near to Christ, our common Saviour, he both kissed Him, and added thereto, "Hail, Master. Do you say hail to Him Who by your instrumentality is made the prey of death? How could such a word possibly be true? So that we see, that inasmuch as that false one, Satan, was within Him, he used falsehood even in saying, Hail. Because of such deeds the prophet somewhere says, "Their tongue is a piercing spearhead: the words of their mouth are deceitful: to his neighbour he speaks things of peace, but in his soul there is enmity."

But further, we must also call to mind what is written by the divine John respecting this event; for he has related, "that the officers of the Jews drew near to seize Jesus: and He advanced to meet them, saying, Whom seek you? When then the officers said, Jesus of Nazareth, He yielded Himself into the hands of those murderers, saying, I am He. But they, it says, went back; and this happened three times."

What therefore was the purpose of this? and for what reason did the Saviour offer Himself to them, but they fell down when they heard Him say, ”I am He?” It was that they might learn that His passion did not happen to Him without His own will, nor could they have seized Him, had He not consented to be taken. For it was not the effect of their own strength that they took Christ, and brought Him to the wicked rulers, but He yielded Himself up to suffer, as well knowing that His passion upon the cross was for the salvation of the whole world.

And the blessed disciples, pricked with the goading of divine love, drew their swords to repel the attack. But Christ would not permit this to be done, but rebuked Peter, saying, ”Put up your sword into its sheath: for all who have taken swords shall die by swords.” And herein He has given us also a pattern of the manner in which we must hold fast by our love to Him, and of the extent to which the burning zeal of our piety may proceed. For He would not have us use swords wherewith to resist our enemies, but rather employing love and prudence, we so must mightily prevail over those who oppose us. And similarly Paul teaches us, saying, ”Casting down reasonings and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing captive every thought to obedience to Him.” For the war for truth’s sake is spiritual, and the panoply that becomes saints is intellectual, and full of love to God. ”For we must put on the breastplate of righteousness, and the helmet of salvation; and take the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” And so then the Saviour moderates the unmeasured heat of the holy apostles: and by preventing the example of such an act, declares that those who are the chief in His religion have no need in any way whatsoever of swords. And He healed with divine dignity him who had received the blow, so giving to those who came to seize Him this godlike sign also for their condemnation.

But that no one prevailed by force over His power and will, He shows by saying; ”Are you come out as against a thief with swords and staves to take Me? When I was daily with you in the temple, you stretched not out your hands against Me. Does Christ then blame the chiefs of the Jews for not having prematurely contrived for Him the deadly snare? Not such is His meaning, but this rather: when it was easy for you to take Me, as each day I taught in the temple, you seized Me not. And why? Because I did not will as yet to suffer, but rather was waiting for a fitting season for My passion. And this season has now arrived: for be not ignorant that ”this is your hour and the power of darkness: that is, that a short time is granted you during which you have power over Me. But how has it been given you, and in what manner? By the will of the Father consenting thereunto with My will. For I willed that for the salvation and life of the world I should submit Myself to My passion. You have therefore one hour against Me, that is a very short and limited time, being that between the precious cross and the resurrection from the dead.

And this too is the power given to darkness: but darkness is the name of Satan, for he is utter night and darkness, and the blessed Paul also says of him.

”that the God of this world has blinded the minds of those that believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ should shine to them. Power therefore was granted to Satan and the Jews to rise up against Christ: but they dug for themselves the pitfall of destruction. For He indeed saved by means of His passion all under heaven, and rose the third day, having trampled under foot the empire of death: but they brought down upon their own heads inevitable condemnation in company with that traitorous disciple. Let them hear therefore the Holy Spirit, Who says by the voice of the Psalmist, ”Why have the heathen raged, and the nations meditated vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ. But what follows this? ”He that dwells in heaven, it says, shall laugh at them, and the Lord shall deride them. These wretched beings then involved themselves in the crime of murdering their Lord; but we praise as our Saviour and Deliverer our Lord Jesus Christ: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CXLIX.

22:54-62. And they took Him, and led Him away, and brought Him into the high priest's house: and Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the court, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them: and a certain maid beholding him as he sat at the light, looked earnestly at him and said, this man also was with Him. But he denied Him, saying, Woman, 1 know Him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, You also are one of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of an hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this man also was with Him: for he is a Galilaean. But Peter said, Man, I know not what you say. And immediately while he was yet speaking the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter: and Peter remembered the word of the Lord that He had said to him, To-day before the cock crow you shall deny Me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly.

OUR, Lord Jesus Christ, to make us careful in whatever holy occupations we undertake, commanded us to offer up our supplications continually, and to make it a portion of our prayer to say, "Lead us not into temptation. For the violence of temptations is often sufficient to shake even a thoroughly steadfast mind, and to humble to wavering, and expose to extreme terrors even a courageous and strong-hearted man. And this it was the lot of the chosen disciple to experience, by whom I mean the sacred Peter. For he proved weak, and denied Christ the Saviour of all. And this denial he made not once only, but thrice, and with oaths. For Matthew has said, that "he began to curse and to swear, I know not the Man. Now there are some who would have us believe that what the disciple swore was, that he did not know that Jesus was a man: but their argument fails them, though their object was to give the disciple loving help. For if he swore, as they say, that he did not know that Jesus was a man, what else did he than deny Him in thus overturning the mystery of the dispensation in the flesh? For he knew that the Only-begotten Word of God was made like to us, that is, a man: for this he openly confessed, saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Now he did not intend in saying this to affirm, that as being one merely such as we are He is the Son of God, but that though he saw Him standing there in the

limits of human nature,----Him Who is the Word Which transcends everything that is made, and Who sprung forth from the Substance of God the Father,----even so, I say, he did not shrink from acknowledging and confessing that He is the Son of the living God. It is therefore a thing-very absurd to suppose, that though he knew the mystery of the dispensation in the flesh, he yet said that he did not know that Jesus was a man. What therefore is the fact? He was really infirm: for it was not possible for Jesus to speak falsely, Who forewarned him, that "before the cock crow you shall deny Me three times."

Nor verily do we say, that the denial took place in order that Christ's words might come true, but rather that His object was to forewarn the disciple, inasmuch as what was about to happen did not escape His knowledge. The misfortune therefore happened to the disciple from the cowardice of human nature. For as Christ had not yet risen from the dead, nor death as yet been abolished, and corruption wiped away, the fear of undergoing death was a thing past men's endurance. For that this miserable act arose, as I said, from the malady of human cowardice, and that the disciple was condemned by his own conscience, is proved both by his lamentation immediately afterwards, and by his tears upon his repentance, which fell from his eyes as for a grievous sin. "For having gone out, it says, he wept bitterly," after Christ had looked upon him, and recalled to his remembrance what He had said to him.

But next, it is worth our while observing, in what way his sin was forgiven, and how he put away his fault; for the event may prove of no slight benefit to us also ourselves. He did not then defer his repentance, nor was he careless about it: for as rapid as was his descent into sin, so quick were his tears because of it; nor did he merely weep, but wept bitterly; and as one that had fallen, so bravely did he spring up again. For he knew that the merciful God somewhere says by one of the prophets, "Shall not he that falls arise? and he that backslides, shall he not return?" In returning therefore he missed not the mark: for he continued to be what he had been before, a true disciple. For when he was warned that he should thrice deny before the cock crow, even then he won also the hope of forgiveness: for Christ's words to him were, "And do you also, in time to come, when you are converted, strengthen your brethren." Words such as these belong to One Who again appoints and restores him to apostolic powers: for He entrusts him again with the office of strengthening the brethren; a thing which also he did.

And this too we say; that though we are taught the failures of the saints in the sacred Scriptures, it is not that we may be caught in similar snares from disregarding the duty of steadfastness, but that if it do chance that we prove weak in anything that is necessary for salvation, we may not despair of being able once again to mount up to fortitude, and, so to speak, recover our health after an unexpected illness. For the merciful God has provided for the inhabitants of earth repentance

as the medicine of salvation: and this I know not how men endeavour to dispense with, saying of themselves that they are clean, and in their great madness not understanding, that to entertain such an idea of themselves is full of all impurity. For "no man is free from defilement," as it is written. And besides this we say, that it makes God angry for us to imagine that we are free from all impurity: for He is even found saying to one of those who led polluted lives, "Behold I have a lawsuit with you because you say I have not sinned, in that you have acted very contemptuously in repeating your ways." For the repetition of the way to sin is for us, when we are overtaken by offences, to refuse to believe that we are guilty of the defilement which arises from them.

'But yes, verily! they say, the God of all pardons the sins of those who are not as yet baptized, but not so of those who have been already admitted to His grace.' And what do we say to this? That if they lay down laws according to their own fancy, their words do not much concern us. But if they cleave to the divinely-inspired Scriptures, when was the God of all unmerciful? Let them hear Him when He cries aloud, "Tell you your former iniquities, that you may be justified. Let them also call to mind the blessed David, who says in the Psalms, "Shall God forget to be merciful: or shall He gather up His mercies in His wrath? And again, "I said, I will acknowledge against myself my iniquity to the Lord: and You forgave the wickedness of my heart. And besides this, they ought not to forget that before Christ was seized, or Peter denied Him, he had been a partaker of the body of Christ, and of His precious blood. "For He took bread and blessed, and gave to them, saying, This is My body. And in like manner also of the cup, saying, Drink you all of it: for this is My blood of the new covenant. Behold then, manifestly, that after having been a partaker of the mystical eucharist, he fell into sin, and received forgiveness upon his repentance. Let them then not find fault with the gentleness of God:

let them not think scorn of His love to mankind, but call to mind Him Who plainly says, "The wickedness of the wicked shall not hurt him in the day wherein he turns away from his iniquity. And when God thus offers us conversion on whatever day a man be willing to practise it, why do they not rather crown with grateful praises Him Who aids them, instead of foolishly, and, so to say, contumaciously opposing Him? for by so doing they bring condemnation upon their own heads, and call down upon themselves inevitable wrath. For the merciful God does not cease to be so; since, according to the voice of the prophet, "He wills mercy.'" Let us therefore strive with all our might, lest we fall into sin, and lot a steadfast love to Christ be fixed unchangeably in us while we say in the words of the blessed Paul, "Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? But if temptation assail us, and so it chance that we prove but weak, let us weep bitterly; let us ask forgiveness of God: for He heals those that are contrite; He raises up the fallen; He stretches out His

saving hand to those who have gone astray: for He is the Saviour of all, by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

SERMON CL.

22:63-71. And the men who held Him mocked and struck Him: and when they had blindfolded Him, they asked Him, saying, Prophesy, who is he that struck you? And many other things blasphemously spoke they against Him. And when it was day, the council of the elders of the people, composed of the chief priests and scribes, came together, and they led Him into their assembly: and they said, If You are the Christ, tell us. And He said to them, If I tell you, you will not believe: and if I also ask you, you will not return Me an answer. But hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then they all said, Are You therefore the Son of God? And He said to them, You say that I am. And they said, What further need have we of witness? For we ourselves have heard of His mouth.

HERE too let the prophet Jeremiah say of the race of Israel, ”Who will grant for my head to be waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I may weep for this people day and night?” For what lamentation can suffice for those who fell into the pit of destruction because of their wicked conduct to Christ, and for guilt so great, that not with words only did they grieve Him, and mock Him with blasphemous cries, but even laid sinful hands upon Him, and made ready for Him the snare of death? And so contumeliously did they treat him, wickedly making Him their sport, as even to venture to smite Him: for so we have this day heard the holy evangelist say, ”For the men who held Him mocked and struck Him, saying, Prophesy, who is he that struck You?” ”But He, when He was reviled, reviled not again: and when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed His cause to Him that judges righteously.” Well therefore might we utter that which was said of certain men by one of the holy prophets, ”The heavens were astonished thereat, and shuddered very greatly, says the Lord.” For the Lord of earth and heaven, the Creator and Artificer of all, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Who is of such surpassing greatness in glory and majesty, the foundation of everything, and that in which it exists and abides----”for all things exist in Him”----He Who is the breath of all the holy spirits in heaven, is scorned like one of us, and patiently endures buffetings, and submits to the ridicule of the wicked, offering Himself to us as a perfect pattern of longsuffering, or rather manifesting the incomparable greatness of His godlike gentleness.

Or perhaps even He thus endures to rebuke the infirmity of our minds, and show that the things of men fall as far below the divine excellencies as our nature is inferior to His. For we who are of earth, mere corruption and ashes, attack at once those who would molest us, having a heart full of fierceness like savage beasts. But He, Who in nature and glory transcends the limits of our understanding and our powers of speech, patiently endured those officers when they not merely mocked, but even struck Him. ”For when they had blindfolded Him, it says, and afterwards struck Him, they asked Him, Prophesy, who is he that struck You?” They ridicule, as if He were some ignorant person, Him Who is the Giver of all knowledge, and Who even sees what is hidden within us: for He has somewhere said by one of the holy prophets, ”Who is this that hides from Me counsel, and shuts up words in his heart, and thinks that from Me he hides them? He therefore Who tries hearts and reins, and Who is the Giver of all prophecy, how could He not know who it was that struck Him? But as Christ Himself said, ”Darkness has blinded their eyes, and their minds are blinded.” Of them too therefore may one say, ”Woe to them that are drunken, but not with wine!” ”For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and their tendril of Gomorrah.”

But when at the dawn of day their wicked assembly was gathered together, He Who is the Lord of Moses, and the Sender of the prophets, after having been thus lawlessly mocked, was brought into the midst; and they asked if He were the Christ? O senseless Pharisee, if you ask because you know not, surely until you had learnt the truth you ought in no wise to have grieved Him, lest haply you should grieve God: but if you make pretence of ignorance, while really you know well that He is the Christ, you must hear what the sacred Scripture says, ”God is not deceived.”

But tell me, why do you question Him, and wish to learn of Himself, whether He be the Christ? For it is easy enough to obtain the knowledge of Him from the law and the prophets. Search the writings of Moses: you will see Him depicted there in manifold ways. For He was sacrificed as a lamb: He vanquished the destroyer by His blood: and was prefigured also in many other forms. Examine too the writings of the prophets; you will hear them proclaiming His divine and wonderful miracles. ”For then, they say, shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the dumb shall hear: then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be plain.” And again, ”The dead shall arise, and those who are in the graves shall awake: for the dew from You is healing to them.” Since therefore even you yourselves see the perfect clearness of the accomplishment of the prophecies respecting Him, why do you not rather acknowledge Him on the evidence of His divine miracles, and of His ineffable works? And this too Christ Himself said to you; ”The works which My Father gave Me to do, those works bear witness of Me that He sent Me.” And again, ”If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen and hated both Me and

My Father." The rulers therefore of the Jews, together with the people under their charge, were in very truth unbelieving, and thoroughly without understanding.

I think, however, that we ought to examine the words used by Christ: for they were a reproof of the want of love to God of which the Scribes and Pharisees were guilty. When therefore they ask whether He is in truth the Christ, and would learn this very thing, He says, "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask, you will not return an answer." Come therefore, and let me explain to you, as to men glad to be taught, what the occasion was on which they heard, and would not believe; and that on which they were silent when questioned. When Christ then went up to Jerusalem, He found in the temple people selling sheep and oxen and doves, and moneychangers sitting: and having made, it says, a kind of scourge of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, saying, "Take these things hence: and make not My Father's house a house of merchandize." Because therefore He called God His Father, those who were sacrificing in the temple murmured and attacked Him, saying, "By what authority do You do these things? And who gave You this authority?" And to this Christ replied, "I will also ask you a word, which if you tell Me, I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it, from heaven, or from men? And they, it says, reasoned with themselves, saying, If we say, From heaven, He will say to us, Why did you not believe him? But if we say, Of men, we fear the multitude: for all held John as a prophet. And they answered and said, We do not know. And Christ said thereto, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

And on another occasion He asked them, saying, "What say you of Christ? Whose Son is He? And they said, David's. And afterwards the Lord said to them, How therefore does David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit You on My right hand, until I place Your enemies as a footstool under Your feet. If therefore David call Him Lord, how is He his Son?" And to this again they were silent. You see that Christ speaks truly when He says, "And if I ask you, you will not return Me an answer." You shall see too that the other declaration is equally true: and what is this? "If I tell you, you will not believe." For the blessed John the Evangelist writes, that "it was the feast of the dedication at Jerusalem, and it was winter: and Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch. The Jews therefore came round about Him, and said to Him, How long will You lift up our soul? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly. And Jesus answered them, I told you, and you will not believe: the works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me; but you will not believe."

And to make their condemnation more severe, in respect, I mean, of their refusing to believe on Him, He further clearly sets before them His glory, saying, "But hereafter the Son of man shall sit on the right hand of the power of God. When, He says, I was in form like to you, though by nature and in truth the Son of God the Father,

you made no account of Me. And yet how was it not right that the excellent art of the dispensation in the flesh should not escape your notice, inasmuch as you are learned in the law, and nurtured in the writings of Moses, nor are the predictions of the holy prophets unknown to you. But since you have brought yourselves to so great want of knowledge, and being filled with utter ignorance, recognise not the mystery concerning Me, I tell you of necessity that there is granted you but a short and narrow season for your pride and wickedness against Me, even until My precious cross. For immediately after this I clothe Myself in honour: I ascend to the glory which I had from the beginning: I am made even in the flesh the partner of God the Father on His throne, and possess sovereignty over all, even though I have taken upon Me your likeness. When Christ was thus speaking, the troop of Pharisees was inflamed with uncontrollable wrath: they catch at the expression as a pretext for blasphemy, and accuse the truth itself:

they say, that ”no longer need we any testimony,”as being themselves the hearers of His words. And what then had they heard Him say? O vile and senseless men, you wanted to learn whether He were the Christ: He taught you therefore that by nature and in truth He is the Son of God the Father, and with Him shares the throne of Deity. Therefore, as you confessed, henceforth you have no need of testimony, for you have heard Him speak: hence might you best have learnt that He is the Christ: and this would have proved for you the pathway to faith, had you only been one of those who would know the truth. But they, making even the pathway of salvation an occasion for their souls’ ruin, understand not: senselessly they slay Him, keeping but one aim in view in contempt of all law, and utter disregard of the divine commands: for it is written, ”The holy and the just you shall not kill. But they, as I said, paid no regard whatsoever to the sacred commands, but rushed down, as it were, some steep descent, to fall into the snares of destruction.

Such then was their conduct: but we offer our praises to God the Word, Who for our salvation became man; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON CLI.

23:1-5, 18, 19. And the whole multitude arose and led Him to Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, We found this man perverting our people, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying of Himself that He is Christ, a King. And Pilate asked Him, saying, Are You the King of the Jews? And He answered him, and said, You say. Then said Pilate to the chief priests and the multitudes, I find no cause at all in this Man. But they vehemently asserted, that He perverts the people, teaching in all Judaea, and having begun from Galilee even to this place. And they cried out, the whole multitude at once, saying, Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas: who for some sedition made in the city and for murder was cast into prison.

A disgraceful malady, my brethren, is want of understanding and folly of heart, accompanied by the inventions of base thoughts, which lead men on to every thing that is wicked, and often even make us sin against the glory of God. And this we can see was the case with the synagogue of the Jews; for they sinned against Christ, and therefore they have suffered all misery, being condemned by the just sentence of God to that fate to which they brought Him, Who would have raised them up to life. For they led Jesus to Pilate, and were themselves too delivered up to the hosts of the Romans, who took all their land captive, and stormed also their city which previously had been the holy and the noble, and gave those who were dwelling therein as a prey to sword and fire. In them therefore were fulfilled the predictions of the holy prophets: for one says, ”Woe to the wicked: evils shall happen to him, according to the works of his hands.” And another, ”As you have done, so shall it be done to you: your retribution shall be recompensed upon your head.”

But let us see what was the manner of their wickedness, and what also they said to Pilate, when framing their accusations against our common Saviour Christ. ”We found this man perverting our people, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying of Himself that He is Christ a King. And yet, but a short time before He was tried by you, and of questions such as this no point was raised; only He was asked, whether He were the Christ. This it was which you then sought to learn,

and beside it absolutely nothing. And so, meeting your questions, He sought to show both that He is the Christ, and that by nature and truly He is the Son of God the Father. For He said, ”You shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power. And tell me, I pray, whose is it to sit with the Father, but His Who by nature is the Son? For of all that is made nothing whatsoever may boast of sitting on the throne of Deity: for every created being is put under the feet of the divine and supreme nature, Which rules over all, and transcends every thing whatsoever which has been brought into being. God the Father alone is set upon the throne high and lifted up, but He shares His seat with the Son, Who is ever with Him, and sprang by nature from Him. You had obtained therefore for yourselves by your question the full assurance that He is the Christ.

But in your eagerness to accuse of blasphemy Him Who had revealed to you His glory, you said, ”Why need we any further witnesses? for we have heard from His mouth. And how then forgetting all this, or rather in your malice passing by those things for which He was judged by you, make you an array of charges of an entirely different nature, saying, ”We found this man perverting our people? Tell us in what this perversion consisted! What He taught was repentance. Where did He forbid to give tribute to Caesar? In reality you sent certain of your body to Him, with those who are called Herodians, to tempt Him, saying, ”Teacher, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? And thereupon Christ said to them, ”Show me a denarius of the poll tax: and asked, Whose is the image and superscription on the denarius which you have brought? And when they replied; Caesar’s, He said, Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. Where then did He forbid to give tribute to Caesar? But their sole purpose was to bring down to death Him Who was raising them up to life. This was the object of their stratagems, and of the base deeds which they contrived, and of the falsehoods they invented, and the bitter words which ran from their wicked tongue. And yet the law loudly proclaims to you, ”You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

And again, ”The holy and the just you shall not kill.”

At language thus unbridled in its violence God in his anger has somewhere said, by one of the holy prophets, ”But draw you near, you wicked children, you seed of adulterers and the harlot: at Whom made you merry? and against Whom opened you your mouth? and against Whom sent you forth your tongue? Are you not sons of perdition; and an iniquitous seed?” And the prophet David also somewhere describes them in the Psalms, thus addressing God the Father in heaven, ”Scatter them in Your might, and restrain them, O Lord, my helper. The sin of their mouth is the word of their lips, and they shall be taken in their pride.” For having given loose to their unbridled tongue against Christ, and, so to speak, ”lifted up their horn on high, and spoken iniquity against God,” as it is written, they fell in their pride. Surely it was their duty, priding themselves as they did upon their knowledge of

the divine laws, to have remembered that God says, ”The pious and the just you shall not kill:” but they had no regard whatsoever to the respect due to the law, but being led on by an unrestrainable impetuosity into whatsoever pleased themselves alone, without examination of its nature, they invented numerous charges, heaping up against Christ accusations which were neither true nor capable of being proved. But they were convicted of being even more wicked than an idolater. For Pilate, acquitting Jesus of all blame, openly said, ”I find no cause at all in this Man:” and this, not once only, but three times.

”But they vehemently protested, He perverts the people, ”teaching in all Judaea, and having begun from Galilee (continues) even to this place. Again they change from their former accusations, and invent pretexts for laying sins to His charge, and gather fresh opportunities for slandering Him. ”For He perverts, they say, the people, teaching throughout all Galilee even to this place. But while they accuse Him of teaching, they are silent as to what He taught, being afraid, I imagine, lest perhaps even Pilate himself should be found among the number of the believers. For if he had heard Christ unfold His mystery, he might have ceased perhaps from serving henceforth gods falsely so called, as having admitted the light of the true knowledge of God to dwell within him, and possessing in his mind and heart the medicine of that sacred and saving message which is by Christ. For what were the doctrines of Christ? He called to the true knowledge of God them that were in error, and serving the creature in His stead. Whoever drew near to Him He desired should be resplendent with the glories of righteousness; that they should be irreproachable and good; gentle and merciful; wise and holy; of upright and blameless lives. With great cunning therefore they say that He taught, but were silent as to the nature of His doctrines. But even when so speaking, Pilate rebuked them, excusing himself, and saying, ”I find no cause at all in Him.

” For you have brought me, he says, This Man, as one Who upturns the people, and behold, I having tried Him in your presence, have not found in This Man any cause of those things whereof you accuse Him. No, nor yet Herod: for he has sent Him back to us: and, behold, nothing is done by Him worthy of death. Lo! those who know the divine laws, and with haughty countenance say, ”We are Moses’ disciples,” beseech that He may be condemned to death, Who is guilty of no base action, yes, rather Who is the Head and Teacher of all piety, and Who renders those who believe in Him skilful in every virtue: and when he whose duty it was to judge Him acquitted Him, to make their doom of torment more severe, they earnestly beg that He Who was guilty of no base deed might suffer as from them the penalty of death. ” For the whole multitude cried out, saying, Away with this Man: but loose to us Barabbas. Plainly therefore ”they denied the Holy and the Just, and, as the blessed Peter says, asked for a murderer to be granted to them,” that they might be sharers of his lot, and partners in his guilt. And this it was their lot to suffer.

For they were given up to destruction and slaughter, and perished together with their whole race. ”For they cried out, it says, saying, Crucify Him, crucify Him.

And this their unholy cry the Lord blamed, saying, by the voice of Jeremiah, ”I have left My house, I have abandoned My inheritance: I have given My dearly beloved, My soul, into the hand of her enemies. My inheritance has become to Me like a lion in a thicket: it has uttered its voice against Me; therefore I have hated it. It was hated therefore because as a lion it sprang upon Christ, and uttered a cruel and pitiless cry against Him: but we praise Christ, Who for our sakes and in our stead suffered in the flesh: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and over. Amen.

SERMON CLII.

23:24-31. And Pilate gave sentence that their request should be done. And he released him who for sedition and murder was cast into prison, for whom they asked: but he delivered Jesus to their will. And as they led Him away, they laid hold upon Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country; and on him they laid the cross to carry it after Jesus. And there followed Him a great company of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented Him. And Jesus turned Himself to them, and said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and your children. For behold the days come, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave nurture. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall upon us: and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

"THE fear of God is an abomination to evildoers:" and the saying is true; for the sacred Scripture cannot lie. For the desire to live in an upright and holy manner is altogether alien from those who love wickedness: and because the violence of their passions attacks thorn like a savage beast, they will not listen to the words of those who admonish them, but reckon as their enemies whoever would instruct them in the duty of living well. It was this feeling which made the Jewish multitudes hate Christ: and yet what He summoned them to was salvation, and the forgiveness of sin: to a mode of life worthy of admiration: to a righteousness superior to the law; and to a spiritual service higher than types and shadows. They had brought the holy One and the Just to Pilate, uttering against Him language violent and unrestrained, and pouring forth falsely-invented accusations: and so long did they persist in the vehemence wherewith they accused Him, that at length Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they desired, although he had publicly said, "I find no wickedness in this man." But they, it says, cried out, "Away with Him, crucify Him." For this very cry, unmerciful and unlawful, the Lord had reproved them by the voice of the prophet Isaiah; for thus it is written, "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, a plant new and beloved, is the man of Judah: and I looked that he should do justice, but he wrought iniquity: and not righteousness, but a cry." And in another place He said of them, "Woe to them, in that they have gone far from Me: wretched are they, for they have sinned against Me: but I redeemed them, and they spoke falsely against

Me." And again, "Their princes shall fall by the sword, because of the rudeness of their tongue."

Pilate therefore, it says, gave sentence that what they desired should be done: but better for them had it been, if the will of Pilate had prevailed, and the sentence had been, to set the Lord free from all fault, and to deliver the Innocent and the Just from His bonds. But they resisted, and vehemently opposed, and so gained a victory that was the mother of their undoing; that prepared for them the snare; that was the nurse of their ruin; and affianced them to severe and inevitable misery.

Yet here behold, I pray, that rebellious serpent driven from his empire over us all, and digging for himself and the wicked hosts that serve him the pit of destruction. For as the Psalmist says, "The heathen are caught in the destruction they have made: in the snare which they set is their own foot taken. The Lord is known as executing judgments: in the works of his hands is the sinner taken. For the works of his hands proved his snare, and "he fell into the pit that he had made: and his labour returned upon his head, and his iniquity descended upon his own pate: for he was driven away, as I said, from his pride over us. And this the Saviour has taught us: for when He was about to endure for us His saving passion, He said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now is the prince of this world cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men to Me," He led Jesus therefore to the cross, that being lifted up He might draw all men to Him, and that thus he might be left stripped of his worshippers, who in the height of his pride had ventured to say, "The whole world will I hold in my hand as a nest, and as eggs that are left will I take it up, and there is no one shall escape from me, or speak against me.

You did not expect then that any one would rise up against you when you were seizing what was not your own. The prophets however dared to do so, though by your instigations the Israelites were incited continually to violence and foul murders. Then there rose up against you and spoke against you the Lord of all, having taken the form of a slave; appearing in prophetic measure, though the Giver of all prophecy and knowledge; in lowliness of glory, though high and transcending all; in weakness such as ours, though the Lord of hosts. And you did not recognise the Saviour, and as the prophet Jeremiah says, "You were found and caught, because you stood up against the Lord. And how were you caught? In that those who were in darkness and the ignorance which you caused received light; those who wandered in error were brought into the right way; your harsh and overbearing dominion fell; the sting of sin was done away; and death was slain by Christ's death. Such are the benefits wrought for us by the Redeemer's passion. Lead therefore, yes, lead Jesus to the cross that shall be your ruin: pile up for yourself the inextinguishable flame: dig the pit into which you shall be cast, being trampled under foot of those that fear Him. If you behold Him crucified and hung upon a tree, and

laugh therefore; you shall see Him, and that soon, risen from the dead, and then shall you wail for death because it has fallen.

Weep without restraint at the sight of destruction overthrown: weep as He refashions man's nature to life; as He reduces sin into subjection which with you had savagely tyrannized over us: and henceforth no more accuse any one who is weak; "for it is God That justifies: who is he that condemns? and as the Psalmist says, "All iniquity shall stop its mouth."

The Redeemer therefore was led to His saving passion: but they laid His cross, it says, upon Simon the Cyrenian. Another holy evangelist, however, tells us that the Lord Himself carried, the tree: and necessarily both the one and the other are true. For the Saviour indeed bore the cross, but in the middle of the way perhaps the Cyrenian met them, and they seized him, and made him carry it instead. And there is an important reason for the fact, that Christ the Saviour of all did carry the cross: for it is said of Him by the voice of Isaiah, that "to us a Child is born: a Son also is given us, Whose government is upon His shoulder." For His government was the cross, by which He became King over the world, if so be that it is true that " He became obedient to the Father to death, even the death of the cross: for this reason God also has greatly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus Christ every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and of things under the earth: and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

And this also, I think, it is important here to observe, that when the blessed Abraham went up to the mountain that had been shown him, that there he might sacrifice Isaac, according to God's command, he laid the wood upon the lad; and he was a type of Christ carrying His own cross upon His shoulders, and going up to the glory of His passion. For that His passion was Christ's glory, He has Himself taught us, saying, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him, If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall immediately glorify Him." He was going therefore to the place of crucifixion: and there followed Him women weeping, as well as many others. For constantly, so to speak, the female sex is given to tears, and of a disposition ready to sink at the approach of aught that is sorrowful. 'But, O daughters of Jerusalem, He says, stay those tears on My account: cease your wailings: and weep rather for yourselves, and your children: for the days, He says, shall come, in which barrenness shall be preferable to women than to have borne children." How, or in what manner? Because when the war fell upon the country of the Jews, they all perished utterly, small and great: and infants with their mothers, and sons with their fathers, were destroyed without distinction. Then, He says, shall men count it above all price to be crushed under hills and mountains; for in extreme miseries those misfortunes which are

less severely cruel become, so to speak, desirable. ”For if, says He, they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?”

But it is worth our while to see what the Saviour’s meaning is in these words. For the saying is shaped in the form of a parable, or an example rather, but is pregnant with a spiritual signification: and it intends, I think, to suggest perhaps what follows. He calls Himself the green tree, that namely which has leaves and fruit and flowers. But His fruits were doctrines and exhortations and the manifestation of a godlike power in His divine and ineffable miracles. For which of His works is not more than our admiration can equal? He raised the dead to life, He cleansed lepers, He healed the blind, and the other deeds He wrought are such as arouse in us the most perfect praise. But though these were His works, yet did the Roman officers, or rather Pilate who condemned Him, and passed upon Him an unjust sentence, inflict upon Him these cruel mockeries. When therefore, He says, the Roman commanders have inflicted upon Me such things, though they see Me adorned with such great glory and praise, what will they do to Israel, perceiving him to be a dry and fruitless stock? For in him they will behold nothing admirable, for the sake of which he might perchance have been counted by them worthy of honour and mercy. Plainly they will burn him with fire, without showing him mercy, yes rather he will suffer the cruelties prompted by savage rage. For such were the miseries into which the Israelites fell, when God, Who judges righteously, exacted of them the punishment of their wickedness against Christ. But upon us, who have believed in Him, Christ bestows grace and blessing; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON CLIII.

23:32-43. And there were led also two others, who were malefactors, to be put to death with Him. And when they came to the place which is called a skull, there they crucified Him and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left. And dividing His garments, they cast lots. And the people stood looking on. And the rulers also derided Him, saying. He saved others; let Him save Himself if This is the Christ the elect of God. And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him, and offering Him vinegar, and saying, If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself And there was also a writing written over Him, This is the King of the Jews. And one of the malefactors which were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us. But the other answered rebuking him, and said, Do you not fear God, seeing you are in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due retribution of our deeds: but this man has done nothing that is hateful. And he said, Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom. And Jesus said to him, Verily I say to you, To-day shall you be with Me in paradise.

THE blessed Paul counts the mystery of the incarnation of the Only-begotten worthy of all admiration, and, so to speak, is in amaze at the wisdom and excellence of the plan of salvation, saying, ”O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God.” For consider how the Saviour of all and Lord, by Whom the Father brought all things into existence, refashions man’s nature, restoring it to that which it was in the beginning by becoming Himself like to us, and bearing our sufferings for our sakes. For the first man was indeed in the beginning in the paradise of delight, being ennobled by the absence both of suffering and of corruption: but when he despised the commandment that had been given him, and fell under a curse and condemnation, and into the snare of death, by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, Christ, as I said, by the very same thing restores him again to his original con-dition. For He became the fruit of the tree by having endured the precious cross for our sakes, that He might destroy death, which by means of the tree had invaded the bodies of mankind. He bore suffering that He might deliver us from sufferings: ”He was despised and not esteemed,” as it is written, that He might make us honourable: He did no sin, that He might crown our nature with similar glory: He Who for our sakes was man submitted also to our lot; and He

Who gives life to the world submitted to death in the flesh. Is not therefore the mystery profound? Must we not own that the dispensation is more than language can describe? What doubt can there be of this? Let us therefore, as we offer Him our praise, repeat that which was sung by the Psalmist's harp; "How great are Your works, O Lord! in wisdom have You made them all."

When therefore He hung upon the precious cross, two thieves were hung with Him. And what follows from this? It was verily mockery as far as regards the object of the Jews; but the commemoration of prophecy: for it is written, that "He was also numbered with the transgressors. For our sakes He became a curse, that is, accursed: for it is written again, that "Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree. But this act of His did away with the curse that was upon us: for we with Him and because of Him are blessed. And knowing this, the blessed David says: "Blessed are we of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth: for by His sufferings blessings descend to us. He in our stead paid our debts: He bore our sins; and as it is written, "in our stead He was stricken. "He took them up in His own body on the tree: for it is true that "by His bruises we are healed. He too was sick because of our sins, and we are delivered from the sicknesses of the soul. He bore derision, and mockeries, and spittings: for the rulers of the synagogue of the Jews scoffed Him, shaking their polluted heads, and pouring out upon Him bitter laughter, as they said, "He saved others: let Him save Himself, if He is the Christ. But if you did not really believe that He was the Christ, why did you kill Him as the heir? Why did you wish to seize His inheritance?

If He saved others, and you know that this indeed was so, how could He want the power to save Himself from your hands? You heard in the temple those whose office it was to sing and recite in chorus constantly chanting; "They pierced My hands and My feet: they counted all My bones: and themselves watched and gazed at Me. They divided My garments among them, and on My clothing did they cast the lot. And again, "They gave gall for My eating, and for My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink. Since then you were learned in the law,----for such you considered yourself to be,----how came you to leave prophecy, and what had been foretold concerning these things unexamined? It was your duty to have enquired Who it was That spoke these things; to Whose person, I mean, you should have referred these verses. You heard your great chieftain Moses foretelling the savageness of your attacks: for he said, that "you shall see your Life hanging upon a tree: you shall see, that is, Him Who is the cause of life, or rather Life Itself, hung upon a tree. And how then did you entirely disregard the prophecy of Moses, of whom you made so great boast? For we have heard you expressly declaring, "We are Moses'disciples. Tell me what you mean by shaking your head at Him? Is it the meek endurance of the Sufferer that you despise? or is it to prove the stony hardness of your mind?

Are you eager to subject the Prince of Life to the death of the flesh? Why meddle you with holy cares? Why purpose you a counsel that you will not be able to establish? "He that dwells in heaven shall laugh at them: and the Lord shall deride them," as it is written.

Two thieves therefore were hanged with Him, as I said, in mockery even of the passion which brings salvation to the whole world: but of these, the one, it says, resembled in his conduct the impiety of the Jews, belching forth the same words as they did, and giving free utterance to blasphemous expressions. "For if, says he, You be the Christ, save Yourself, and us." But the other, following a different course, is justly worthy of our admiration: for he believed in Him: and while suffering so bitter a punishment, he rebuked the vehement outcries of the Jews, and the words of him who was hanging with him. He "confessed his sin, that he might be justified:" he became the accuser of his own wicked ways, that God might remit his guilt; for it is written, "I said that I will confess of myself my iniquity to the Lord, and You forgave the wickedness of my heart." He bore to Christ a blameless testimony, and reproved the Jewish want of love to God, and condemned the sentence of Pilate: "for This Man, he says, has done nothing that is hateful." O how beautiful is this confession! how wise the reasonings, and how excellent the thoughts! He became the confessor of the Saviour's glory, and the accuser of the pride of those who crucified Him. What reward therefore did he receive? Of what honours was he counted worthy? Or what benefit did the thief gain who was the first to profess faith? He lit upon a treasure worth the having: he became rich unexpectedly, and possessed of every blessing: he won the inheritance of the saints, and to have his name written above, in heaven: he was in the book of life who was bearing the sentence of death, and is numbered with the dwellers in the city that is above.

And let us look at his most beautiful confession of faith. "Jesus, he says, remember me when You come in Your kingdom." You see Him crucified, and call Him a king: Him Who was bearing scorn and suffering, you expect to come in godlike glory: you see Him surrounded by a multitude of the Jews, and the wicked gang of the Pharisees, and Pilate's band of soldiers,----all these were mocking Him, and no single one of them confessed … [Here the Syriac finally stops altogether. A table of contents prefixed to part 2 of the Syriac indicates that there were originally only three more sermons in the manuscript: namely, Sermon CLIV. on 23:44 ff.; Serm. CLV. on 23:54 ff.; and Serm. CLVI. on c. 24:36 ff. S. Cyril therefore must have passed over most of the circumstances of Christ's resurrection and ascension, or have referred to them very briefly. The fragments that follow are taken from Mai, though probably some portion of it does not belong to the Commentary.]

Fragments of sermons CLIV, CLV and CLVI.

23:44. There was darkness over all the land. He who excels all created things, and shares the Father's throne, humbled Himself to emptying, and took the form of a

slave, and endured the limits of human nature, that He might fulfil the promise made of God to the forefathers of the Jews: but they were so obdurate and disobedient as even to rise up against their Master. For they made it their business to deliver the Prince of life to death, and crucified the Lord of glory. But when they had affixed to the cross the Lord of all, the sun over their heads withdrew, and the light at midday was wrapped in darkness, as the divine Amos had foretold. For there was ”darkness from the sixth hour until the ninth hour:” and this was a plain sign to the Jews, that the minds of those who crucified Him were wrapped in spiritual darkness, for ”blindness in part has happened to Israel.” And David in his love to God even curses them, saying, ”Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see.”

Yes! creation itself bewailed its Lord: for the sun was darkened, and the rocks were rent, and the very temple assumed the garb of mourners, for its ”veil was rent from the top to the bottom.” And this is what God signified to us by the voice of Isaiah, saying, ”And I will clothe the heaven with darkness, and wrap it around with sackcloth.” 23:47. And when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God. Again observe, I pray, that no sooner had He endured the passion upon the cross for our sakes, than He began to win many to a knowledge of the truth: ”for the centurion, it says, when he saw what had happened, glorified God, saying, that truly This Man was righteous.” And certain Jews also struck upon their breasts, being pricked doubtless by their consciences, and looking up with the eyes of their mind to the Lord, and it may he perhaps clearing themselves of their impious conduct against Christ by crying out against those who crucified Him, even though they dared not do so openly, because of the impiety of the rulers. With truth therefore did our Lord say, ”When I have been lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to Me.”

23:55. And women also followed, who had come with Him from Galilee. Wise women followed our common Saviour Christ, gathering whatever was both useful and necessary for faith in Him. And when He gave His flesh as a ransom for the life of us all, they wisely betook themselves to tend His body: for they supposed that the corpse would continue in the grave. 24:4. It came to pass, as they were perplexed at this. THE women came to the sepulchre, and when they could not find the body of Christ,----for He had risen,----they were much perplexed. And what followed? For their love’s sake to Christ, and their earnest zeal thereunto, they were counted worthy of seeing holy angels, who even told them the joyful tidings, and became the heralds of the resurrection, saying, ”Why seek you the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.” For the Word of God ever lives, and is by His own nature Life: but when He humbled Himself to emptying, and submitted to be made like to us, He tasted death. But this proved to be the death of death: for He arose from the dead, to be the way whereby not Himself so much but we rather return to incorruption. And let no one seek Him Who ever lives among the dead; for

He is not here, with mortality, that is, and in the tomb: but where rather is He? in heaven plainly, and in godlike glory. And more firmly to settle the faith of the women in these things, they recall to their minds what Christ had said, that ”He must necessarily be given up into the hands of sinners, and suffer, and the third day rise again.”

Angels too brought the joyful tidings of the nativity to the shepherds in Bethlehem, and now they tell His resurrection: and heaven yields its service to proclaim Him, and the hosts of the spirits which are above attend the Son as God, even when He had become flesh. 24:9. And they returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. The women having been taught the mystery by the voice of angels, run to tell these things to the disciples. For it was fitting that this grace, though so splendid, should be granted to women. For she who of old was the minister of death is now freed from her guilt by ministering to the voice of the holy angels, and by being the first both to learn and tell the adorable mystery of the resurrection. The female sex therefore gained both acquittal from their reproach and the reversal of their curse. For He Who of old had said to them, ”In pains shall you bear children,” gave them deliverance from their misfortune, by having met them in the garden, as another Evangelist mentions, and said, Hail. To the holy apostles however the account of the resurrection seemed absolutely but an idle tale, and falsehood; for even they did not know the inspired Scripture, and so they were incredulous, and mocked at the news and rejected it.

How did the disciples in John’s Gospel, having heard Mary, and having run to the sepulchre, believe? For to this also the Scripture bears witness in their behalf, saying, ”When therefore they entered, the other disciple who came first to the sepulchre both saw and believed.” But in Luke it is said, ”And they returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest,----it was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the wife” of James, and the rest with them, who told these things to the apostles, ----and they disbelieved them.” 24:13. Behold two of them went that same day to a village.

As two of the disciples walk to a village called Emmaus, they conversed with one another concerning Christ, regarding Him as no longer living, but mourning Him as dead. And as they conversed, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them, without being recognised by them, ”for their eyes were held that they should not know Him. And He says to them, ”What is it, I pray, of which you converse with one another as you walk thus mournfully? And one of them whose name was Cleopas answered and said, Are You only a stranger in Jerusalem,” &c. And then they tell Him of the rumours of the resurrection brought by the women, and of that by Peter, but believe them not. For by saying, ”And women also astonished us, who found not the body,” they show that they had not been induced to believe the news, nor regard it as true tidings, but as a cause of trouble and astonishment: and Peter’s

testimony, who had seen only the linen bandages at the sepulchre, they did not consider as a trustworthy proof of the resurrection, because he did not say that he had seen Him, but inferred that He had risen from His being no longer there. And you must know that those two belonged to the number of the seventy, and that Cleopas' companion was Simon,----not Peter, nor he of Cana,----but another of the seventy.

24:27. Having begun from Moses and from all the prophets.

In this discourse the Lord shows that the law was necessary to make ready the way, and the ministry of the prophets to prepare men for faith in this marvellous act, that so when the resurrection really took place, those who were troubled at its greatness might remember what was said of old, and be induced to believe. He brings forward therefore Moses and the prophets, interpreting their hidden meaning, and making plain to the worthy what to the unworthy was obscure, so settling in them that ancient and hereditary faith taught them by the sacred books which they possessed. For nothing which comes from God is without its use, but all and several of them have their appointed place and service. In their due place servants were sent before to make ready for the presence of the Master, by bringing in beforehand prophecy as the necessary preparative for faith, that, like some royal treasure, what had been foretold might in due season be brought forward from the concealment of its former obscurity, being unveiled and made plain by the clearness of the interpretation. Having thus then stirred up their minds by the writings of the law and the prophets, He afterwards more plainly sets Himself before them, when, having consented to their request to go with them to the village, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and divided it among them.

" For their eyes, it says, "were held that they might not know Him," until namely the word had entered stirring up their heart to faith, and then, rendering what they had before heard and believed visible, He offered them the sight seasonably after the hearing. He does not, however, continue with them, for "He vanished, it says, out of their sight. For our Lord's relation to men after His resurrection does not continue the same as before, for they too have need of renovation, and a second life in Christ, that the renewed may associate with the renewed, and the incorruptible approach the incorruptible. For which reason, as John tells us, He did not permit Mary to touch Him, until He should go away and return again.

24:33. They rose up that same hour. Cleopas, it says, and his companions, rose up that same hour, the same of course in which Jesus had vanished out of their sight, and returned to Jerusalem: but it does not say that they found the eleven gathered together that same hour, and told them what had happened concerning Jesus, but this took place on the fortieth day after His resurrection, on which day He was also taken up. This evangelist therefore has omitted the events which took place in the intervening time, and which Cleopas and his companions found the

eleven discussing in private, and saying, that ”the Lord is risen, and has been seen by Simon:” and of him he has not mentioned either where, or when, or how this took place. It was during these days that those events also took place which were done in Galilee, and which Matthew has recorded.

24:36. Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them. And now, keeping to the order of events, we say, that the account of the resurrection having already reached the apostles from many quarters, and their desire to see Him having thus been roused, He comes according to their desire, and stands visible and revealed before them as they seek for and expect Him. And no longer does He appear to them with their eyes held, nor converse with them as concerning some other person, but permits them to see Him plainly, and bids them be of good cheer. But they even so were in doubt and affright; for they thought that they saw not Himself, but some apparition and shadow: but He quiets the perturbation occasioned by such thoughts, addressing them with His usual and customary speech, and saying, ”Peace be to you.” 24:38. He said to them, Why are you troubled? and why do reasonings arise in your hearts?

To convince them firmly and indubitably, that He is the same Who suffered, He immediately shows that being God by nature, He knows what is hidden, and that the tumultuous thoughts within them escape Him not: for He said, ”Why are you troubled? And this is a very plain proof that He Whom they see before them is not some other person, but the very same Whom they had seen both suffering death upon the cross and laid in the tomb, even Him Who sees reins and heart, and from Whom nothing that is in us is hid. This therefore He gives them as a sign, His knowledge namely of the tumult of thoughts that was within them. And to prove moreover in another way that both death is conquered, and that human nature has put off corruption in Him as the foremost, He shows His hands and His feet, and the holes of the nails, and permits them to handle Him, and in every way convince themselves that the very body which had suffered was, as I said, risen. Let no one therefore cavil at the resurrection: and though you hear the sacred Scripture say of the human body, that ”it is sown an animal body, it is raised a spiritual body,” do not deny the return even of human bodies to incorruption. For as the animal is that which follows after, and is subject to animal, that is, to fleshly lusts, so also the spiritual is that which submits itself to the will of the Holy Spirit. For after the resurrection from the dead, there will be no longer the opportunity for carnal affection, but, the goad of sin will be entirely powerless. That very (body) therefore which has been brought down to the earth, shall be clothed with incorruption.

That the disciples therefore might be quite sure that it is the very same Who suffered and was buried and rose again, He shows, as I said, both His hands and feet: and He bids them be fully convinced that it is not a spirit, as they thought, but rather in very truth a body, saying, ”And you see that a spirit has not flesh and

bones, as you see Me have." For a shadow and spirit and apparition merely could not endure the touch of the hand.

Having then, as we have said, shown His hands and feet to the disciples, the Lord fully convinced them that the body which had suffered had risen: but, to produce in them still further a yet more firmly-settled faith therein, He asked for something to eat. And what was brought was a piece of broiled fish, which He took and ate in the presence of them all. Now this He did for no other reason than clearly to show them that He Who had risen from the dead was the same Who in old time had eaten and drunk with them during the whole period of the dispensation, and conversed with them as a man, according to the prophet's voice: intending them to perceive that the human body does indeed need sustenance of this kind, but a spirit by no means so. Who therefore that claims to be faithful, and receives unhesitatingly the witness of the holy evangelists, can any longer listen to the fictions of heretics, can any longer endure the apparition-mongers? For the power of Christ surpasses human enquiry, nor is it on the level of the understanding of ordinary events. He ate then a piece of fish because of the resurrection: but the natural consequences of eating by no means followed in the case of Christ, as the unbeliever might object, knowing that "whatsoever enters in at the mouth, must necessarily be cast out and go into the draught." But the believer will admit no such cavils into his mind, but leave the matter to the power of God.

24:45. Then He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures. When He had quieted their reasonings by what He said, by the touch of their hands, and by partaking of food, He then opened their mind to understand, that "so it was necessary for Him to suffer," even upon the wood of the cross. The Lord therefore recalls the minds of the disciples to what Me had before said: for He had forewarned them of His sufferings upon the cross, according to what the prophets had long before spoken: and He opens also the eyes of their heart, so as for them to understand the ancient prophecies. The Saviour promises the disciples the descent of the Holy Spirit, which God had announced of old by Joel, and power from above, that they might be strong and invincible, and without all fear preach to men everywhere the divine mystery. He says to them now that they had received the Spirit after the resurrection, "Receive you the Holy Spirit," and adds, "But tarry you at Jerusalem, and wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard of Me. For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit;" in water no longer, for that they had received, but with the Holy Spirit: He does not add water to water, but completes that which was deficient by adding what was wanting to it.

Having blessed them, and gone a little in advance, He was carried up to heaven, that He might share the Father's throne even with the flesh that was united to Him. And this new pathway the Word made for us when He appeared in human form: and

hereafter in due time He will come again in the glory of His Father with the angels, and will take us up to be with Him. Let us glorify therefore Him Who being God the Word became man for our sakes: Who suffered willingly in the flesh, and arose from the dead, and abolished corruption: Who was taken up, and hereafter shall come with great glory to judge the living and the dead, and to give to every one according to his deeds: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be glory and power with the Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

PRAISE GOD.

Translator’s Introduction

A COMMENTARY UPON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S. LUKE, BY S. CYRIL, PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA. NOW FIRST TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH FROM AN ANCIENT SYRIAC VERSION BY R. PAYNE SMITH, M. A., SUBLIBRARIAN OF THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY, -------- PART I. -------- OXFORD: AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS. M.DCCC.LIX. [Blank page]

PREFACE.

When I undertook the task of preparing for the press the Syriac Version of S. Cyril’s Commentary upon the Gospel of S. Luke, discovered among the manuscripts lately obtained from Egypt, and deposited in the British Museum, I was aware that my labours would be of little practical benefit, unless I also made it accessible to theologians generally by means of an English translation. In the performance of this duty, my chief assistance has been derived from the Nova Bibliotheca Patrum of Cardinal Mai, published in 1844-58 at Rome: for so miserably defective is even the best Syriac Lexicon, that it has repeatedly happened that I have only been able to arrive with something like certainty at the meaning of a passage, by waiting until I found in some extract in Mai the equivalent in Greek of the word or phrase in question. Wherever this help has failed, I have carefully examined the use of words, in other Semitic dialects, or in the numerous Syriac works which during the last few years have issued from the press, and in which I had been in the habit of noting the occurrence of all new and unusual terms. To have discussed these difficulties in notes, would have been only to crowd my pages with matter not generally interesting, and for which, I trust, I shall hereafter have a more fitting opportunity. I think, however, that I can safely say, that in no case have I come to a conclusion except upon reasonable grounds, and that, after due allowance made for possible errors, my translation will be found to convey a correct and adequate representation of the original work.

Of the value of the Commentary, I shall probably not be considered an impartial judge: still my conviction is, that it can scarcely fail of being regarded as an important addition to our means of forming an accurate judgment of what was the real teaching of one of the most famous schools of thought in the early Church. It

has not indeed gained entire acceptance; its philosophy was too deep, its creed too mysterious, its longings too fervently fixed upon the supernatural, for the practical mind of the West readily to assent to doctrines which mock rather than exercise the powers of even the subtlest reason. And while the names of its doctors have become household words with us, and we owe to their labours the establishment of the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity in its main outlines as we hold it at present, still the student of Church History is aware, that in many minor, though still important particulars, the teaching of the Alexandrine school was in excess of what we at present hold. The Athanasian Creed does not embody the actual tenets of Athanasius, nor of the other great masters of Alexandria, except in the form in which they were modified and altered by the influence of rival schools: and in like manner S. Cyril, the inheritor at once of Athanasius' throne, and of his views, often uses arguments which the Monophysites could fairly claim as giving a colour to their belief, that after the union of the two natures in Christ it was no longer lawful to distinguish their separate limits.

It was the Nestorian controversy which called out the argumentative powers and the fiery zeal of S. Cyril; and it is certainly true that in that controversy he used Nestorius unfairly, taxing him with deductions, which, however logically they might seem to follow from his opponent's teaching, yet Nestorius himself expressly denied: but it is not true that the controversy led him into statements of doctrine beyond what his predecessors in the see of Alexandria had taught. For constantly what he opposed to his rival's views was the very doctrine of S. Athanasius; and the passage which he quotes in his treatise De recta Fide, ad Imperatrices, from that father's treatise on the Incarnation of Christ, is never exceeded in any of his own dogmatic statements. Its words are as follow:---- ὁμολογοῦμεν, καὶ εἶναι αὐτὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ θεὸν κατὰ πνεῦμα, υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου κατὰ σάρκα· οὐ δύο φύσεις τὸν ἕνα υἱὸν, μίαν προσκυνητὴν καὶ μίαν ἀπροσκύνητον· ἀλλὰ μίαν φύσιν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένην καὶ προσκυνουμένην μετὰ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ μίᾳ προσκυνήσει. This was S. Athanasius' doctrine, this also was S. Cyril's; and it is only a falsification of the facts of history to endeavour to bring the Alexandrine school into verbal accordance with the decrees of the general council of Chalcedon. The doctrine which prevailed there was that of the rival school of Antioch, which had always firmly stood by the literal interpretation of the plain letter of Scripture; a sound, judicious, common-sense school, which had never depth enough to have fought the battle of the Arian heresy with the profoundness of conviction which gave such undying energy to the great chiefs of Alexandria; but which nevertheless had under Providence its due place in the Church, and corrected the tendency of Athanasius and Cyril to a too immoderate love of the supernatural and mysterious.

That S. Cyril however felt that there was no insuperable barrier between the two schools is shown by his reconciliation with John of Antioch, and their signing com-

mon articles of faith. For essentially both Cyril and John of Antioch held the mean between the extremes of Nestorius and Eutyches; only Cyril's leaning was towards Eutyches, John's towards Nestorius. And when subsequently the council of Chalcedon, A. D. 451, modified, happily and wisely, the decrees of the previous general council of Ephesus, A. D. 431, and adopted as their standard of faith the teaching of the Antiochian school as embodied in the famous Epistola Flaviana of Leo, Pope of Rome, they acknowledged this substantial agreement between Antioch and Alexandria,----between themselves and the council of Ephesus,----by their declaration that Λέων εἶπε τὰ τοῦ Κυρίλλου,----that what Leo wrote was the same that Cyril taught. And that in the main they were right this present Commentary will shew; for S. Cyril's doctrine in it is essentially moderate. There are indeed passages in which he apparently confounds the limits of the two natures in Christ, but many more in which he gives to each its proper attributes, and bears witness to the existence of both the godhead and the manhood in the one person of our Lord, inseparable, yet unconfused.

But when Mai would go further, and deny that the Monophysites had any ground for claiming S. Cyril's authority in their favour, his uncritical turn of mind at once betrays him: for he rests chiefly upon the treatise De Incarnatione Domini, Nov. Bib. Pat. ii. 32-74:, ascribed by him to S. Cyril upon the testimony of a MS. in the Vatican. But independently of other internal evidence that this piece was written subsequently to the council of Chalcedon, it is absolutely impossible that Cyril could ever have adopted the very keystone and centre of Nestorius' teaching, the doctrine I mean of a συνάφεια (pp. 59, 71), a mere juxtaposition, or mechanical conjunction of the two natures in Christ, in opposition to a real union.

In the West, under the guiding minds of Augustine and Ambrose, the council of Chalcedon met at once with ready acceptance; but not so in the East. It was there that the controversy had been really waged against Arius, and the reaction from his teaching led many of the fathers into overstrained arguments which ended in heresies, ejected one after another from the Church. As in the process of fermentation there is a thick scum upon the surface while the work of purification is going on below, so each extraneous element, after mingling for a time with the great mass of Christian truth, was at length rejected with an ease or difficulty proportioned to the intense-ness of its admixture with sounder doctrines. And thus the general orthodoxy and invaluable services of the Alexandrine school caused whatever there was of exaggeration in their views long and violently to resist this purifying process in those parts of the world which had been the nearest witnesses of their struggles in defence of the doctrine of the consubstantial nature of the Son. Up to the time also of the council ofChalcedon the language of the Fathers had been vague and confused: and the expression of S. John i. 14, that "the Word was made flesh; as it had led the Arians to affirm that the Logos was a created being, so it had led orthodox Fathers to speak as if Christ's human body was "very God.

And thus the Monophysites could count up a long array of all the great names in the Church, Ignatius, Polycarp, Clemens of Rome, Irenaeus, Melito of Sardes, Felix and Julius of Rome, the Gregories, Athanasius, Basil, and many more, who had confounded in Christ the human with the divine. With such authorities on their side the conflict was long and dubious, and in Justinian's time they seemed likely to gain the ascendancy: for the Pope then was the mere creature of simony, and consequently there was nothing to balance the tendencies of the Eastern Church. Accordingly in A. D. 533 Justinian, though nominally opposed to their tenets, decreed that "one of the holy and consubstantial Trinity was crucified: and twenty years after, the fifth general council of Constantinople authoritatively ratified the same doctrine. But in the subsequent weak reign of Justin, the Patriarch of Constantinople, John the Jurist, thwarted by the Monophysite monks whom Theodora had planted in the capital, took such vigorous measures against the leaders of the party, that their principles have since exercised no appreciable influence in the Church.

As the Monophysites had only pushed to excess the tendencies of the Alexandrine school----and it must be remembered that they are by no means to be confounded with the Eutychians, according to the fashion of Church histories in general, whereas really they anathematized them ---- the above sketch may place the reader in a position to judge of the statements of S. Cyril regarding this doctrine,----a doctrine after all of metaphysical rather than of practical importance. But, as a general rule, he will find the Commentary written in a tone of moderation, as might be expected in homilies addressed by a teacher to his own people, far from the baleful atmosphere of controversy, and in a place where his views were in full and hereditary possession of the teacher's chair. There is too a practical tone throughout, and while in his interpretation of the Old Testament he follows the usual tendencies of the fathers to see nothing there but types and allegories, in the New he chiefly follows the obvious meaning, and considers each parable or narrative or discourse as a whole, the key of which he generally finds in the occasion which gave rise to it. He even warns us against pushing the minutiae of parables into too prominent a position, by means of which the machinery to enforce a moral lesson becomes the medium for conveying some cabbalistic mystery: as when, instead of inferring the certainty of our having to give an account of the use of our worldly means from the parable of Dives and Lazarus, commentators use it to unveil the secrets of the future world; or discover the two sacraments in the pence given by the Samaritan to the host at the inn.

Like many other patristic Commentaries, it was delivered in a course of short Sermons, preached extemporaneously: for so we may conclude, not only from the opening sentences of Sermon III, and the reiteration of favourite texts, but also from their evidently being quoted from memory. Repeatedly S. Cyril's reading agrees neither with the Septuagint nor with any other Greek version of the Old

Testament, though occasionally he (apparently) purposely follows Theodotion. In the New Testament he was evidently most familiar with S. Matthew's Gospel, and not only does he make his ordinary quotations from it, but even introduces its readings into the Commentary, after correctly giving S. Luke's text at the head of the Sermon. And as increased attention is now being paid to the collection of the various readings of Holy Scripture contained in the works of the fathers, the caution may not be out of place, that certainly in S. Cyril, and probably in the patristic writings generally, no importance is to be attached to the substitution of the words and phrases of one Gospel for those of another.

In the headings however placed before each Sermon, we have a most valuable addition to our materials for biblical criticism: for evidently they give us the received Alexandrine text as it was read in the beginning of the fifth century; and that S. Cyril was fully aware of the importance of correctness on this head is evident from his constant allusions to the readings of the other Gospels. Its value however will best appear by a comparison between it and the chief extant authorities, and I have therefore collated it in the margin, 1°. with the readings of the great Vatican MS. published posthumously by Cardinal Mai, and which I have marked as B.; 2°. with the seventh edition of Tischendorf, now in process of publication, T.; 3°. with Griesbach, G.; and, 4°. with the textus receptus, ç. I have not however considered it necessary to notice unimportant transpositions in the order of words, and where Griesbach is equally in favour of two readings, I have usually omitted his name; as also I have done with the Syriac, represented by S., in the few cases in which it corresponds as much with the one as with the other Greek reading. It will be noticed that in all cases I have represented the Syriac by its equivalent in Greek, which rule I have also followed wherever it has appeared expedient to give in the margin the original word; often however of course the Greek is actually taken from the remains in Mai.

The most cursory glance at the margin will shew that the high expectation naturally formed of the probable value of so ancient a text is fully carried out in fact. Its readings are almost always supported by one or other of the chief authorities, far more so than those of B. itself. And even where it seems to stand alone, an examination of the readings in Tischendorf will almost universally shew that there is a strong array of evidence in its support among the most valued MSS., while it contains nothing which modern criticism has definitely condemned. One observation is however necessary, namely, that the Syriac language indulges in a fuller use of pronouns even than our own; and though I have noticed in the margin their addition wherever they might possibly exist in the Greek, yet, like those in italics in our own version, they are really not to be regarded as variae lectiones, but only as the necessary result of the idiom of the language.

It may however be asked, whether the Syriac translator may be depended upon in his rendering of the. original Greek text. To this I can answer unhesitatingly in the affirmative: wherever the Greek is extant in Mai's collection, the exactness with which it is reproduced in the Syriac without the slightest alteration of tense and number, and with the most curious expedients for rendering those compound words in which Greek delights, is marvellous. Wherever also Mai has misunderstood a passage, or wrongly punctuated a sentence, it is as a usual rule correctly given in the Syriac, and though occasionally it has erred, as in rendering σχοῖνος, in Jer. viii. 8, by "cord," whereas it really means "pen," still such instances are extremely rare.

At the same time the translator has been guilty of one fault, which I am the more anxious to mention, as otherwise it might be laid to my own charge, namely, that he has taken no care to render each quotation always in the same words. The most glaring instance of this occurs in Is. i. 23, where no less than three different renderings are given of "Thy princes are disobedient" one only of which is the exact equivalent of the Greek ἀπειθοῦσι, though none deviate far from it; while the Peschito gives a fourth word, the equivalent of the Hebrew "rebellious." Similarly the words σωρηρίους ἐπιφανείας in Amos v. 22, have greatly puzzled the Syriac translator, who renders them sometimes by "your appearances for salvation," sometimes "the salvation of your appearances," the language not admitting of a literal rendering on account of its scanty use of adjectives. And though the same Greek text naturally suggested to the translator the same Syriac rendering, still he has not troubled himself about maintaining verbal identity in the various places in which the same text occurs. For my own part, originally I made an entry of each text upon translating it, for the purpose of retaining as much verbal accuracy as possible; but when I found these variations in the Syriac, I gave up the attempt, and following the same plan as my predecessor, have contented myself with carefully rendering each text as it occurred, without comparing it with previous translations, and I think it will be found that neither of us have gone far astray from the exact sense of the original.

I need scarcely mention after the above, that the Syriac translator does not take his quotations from the Peschito. Of course in the Old Testament this was impossible, as that version represents, not the Septuagint, but the Hebrew. For the same reason, the use of our own version was equally an impossibility to myself, since, as is well known, the Greek differs too considerably from the Masoretic text, of which ours is a translation, for one to be at all the equivalent of the other. I am by no means however prepared to join in the general condemnation of the Septuagint, stamped as it is by the approval of our Lord and His apostles; and though parts of it are done far less efficiently than the rest, yet whoever neglects it throws away one of the most important means for attaining to a knowledge of the original Scriptures; and I know of no more difficult question than the adjudication between the

vocalising and arrangement of the Hebrew text as represented by the Septuagint, and that which gives us the subsequent tradition of the Jewish schools. Not that there is the slightest room for doubting the authenticity and genuineness in all substantial points of the Scriptures of the Old Testament; for the question affects only the vowels and the division of words; and the vowels in Semitic languages are not so important as in those of the Indo-Germanic family.

To the present day no Jewish author ever expresses them in writing, though they have so far adopted modern customs as no longer to string their consonants together in one unbroken line. Necessarily, however, under such circumstances reading in ancient times was a matter of no slight difficulty, and hence the dignity of the profession of the scribe, and the wonder of the Jews at our Lord and His apostles possessing the requisite knowledge. The Septuagint therefore possesses especial value, as being both the first attempt at fixing the meaning of the uncertain elements in the Hebrew language, and as dating prior to the establishment of Christianity: and though Jewish tradition subsequently grew more exact, and eliminated many mistakes into which the authors of the Septuagint had fallen, still the fact that these subsequent labours of the Jewish schools first found their expression in the version of Aquila, who had deserted Christianity, and published his translation as a rival to the Septuagint, and certainly with no kindly intention towards the religion which he had abandoned, may well make us hesitate before we so unceremoniously decry a version, the mistakes of which can be ascribed to nothing worse than simple inefficiency.

That from such hands and under such auspices the Masoretic text is so trustworthy, and so free from any real ground of suspicion, entirely as regards its consonants, and to a great extent as regards its vowels, is the result, under God's Providence, of the extreme reverence of the Jews for the letter of those ordinances which had been entrusted to their keeping, since the Christian Church was by no means aware of the importance of an exact inquiry into the true meaning of the earlier Scriptures, and contented itself with receiving what the Jews provided for its use; even Jerome himself scarcely giving us more than what his Jewish masters taught him, and Origen's knowledge of Hebrew being about as much as could be expected from the time it took him to acquire it.

In the New Testament the case was different: for of course it was just possible there to have used the words of our authorized Version. But so to have done would have brought me into constant opposition to my text; for I had not the Greek before me, but a Syriac rendering of it, punctuated to an extreme degree of nicety, and fixing the meaning to one definite sense. It seemed therefore my only honest course to reproduce as exactly as I could the version of the Syriac translator. Whether I should myself in all cases have given the same meaning to the original Greek is an entirely distinct thing; for the duty of a translator is not to give his own views, but

those of his author. Still, as the memory naturally suggested the language of the authorized Version, it will no doubt be found to have exercised no little influence upon the words which I have used.

But it seemed to me expedient for another reason to reproduce as exactly as possible the renderings of the Syriac translation. For the perfecting of the English translation of the Inspired Word is one of the noblest tasks which the mind of man can undertake: and though there may be evils attendant upon interfering with our present noble Saxon Version, still none can be so great as its being regarded by a gradually increasing proportion of the community as deficient in correctness. To commission however any body of scholars, however competent, to undertake a completely new version, or at present even a general revision of what we have, would be, in my opinion, at least premature. The controversy ought to be carried on in a region distinct from the book which we use in our worship and devotion: and such at present is the case, the attempts at improvement being made by individuals, and not by any constituted authority. When, however, there has been gained a sufficient mass of results generally received, the time will have come for the proper steps to be taken for admitting them into the authorized version. And possibly in the New Testament the labours of so many scholars and commentators may in a few years bring matters to such a pass as may justify the proper authorities in undertaking its revision: but in the Old Testament the case is very different, and a lengthened period of far more profound study of Hebrew literature than at present prevails, carried on by many different minds, is required before anything more could be done than to bring the translation in a few unimportant particulars nearer to the Masoretic text.

In the present translation, therefore, I have used the utmost exactness in rendering all quotations from Holy Scripture, in the hope that it might not be without is value to shew in what way the New Testament was understood and rendered by so competent and ancient an authority as the Syriac translator of this present work. It remains now only to mention the relation in which the Syriac Version of the Commentary stands to the Greek remains collected by Mai, and of which I have given a translation wherever the MS. of the Syriac was unfortunately defective. As early then as the year 1838 Mai had shewn the great value of this Commentary by the extracts published in the tenth volume of his Auctores Classici: and from that time he laboured assiduously in making his collection as complete as possible, until at length in the 2nd vol. of his Bib. Pat. Nova, the fragments gathered by him from twelve different Catenae, together with a Latin translation, occupy more than 300 quarto pages.

But the critical acumen of Mai was by no means commensurate with his industry. With the usual fault of collectors, the smallest amount of external evidence was sufficient to override the strongest internal improbability: nor apparently did his

reading extend much beyond those Manuscripts, among which he laboured with such splendid results. At all events, though Cyril was an author whom he greatly valued, not only does he ascribe to the Commentary a vast mass of matter really taken from Cyril's other works, but even numerous extracts from Theophylact, Gregory Nazianzen, and other writers, whose style and method of interpretation are entirely opposed to the whole tenor of Cyril's mind. Although it scarcely belonged to my undertaking to sift these extracts, yet, as it might have thrown a suspicion upon the genuineness of the Syriac Version to find it unceremoniously rejecting nearly a third of what Mai had gathered, I have in most cases indicated the work or author to whom the rejected passages belong. A few still remain unaccounted for; but as the principle of Niketas, the compiler of the chief Catena upon S. Luke, confessedly was to gather from all Cyril's works whatever might illustrate the Evangelist's meaning, and as in so doing he often weaves two, or even three distinct extracts into one connected narrative, it is no wonder if it was more easy to gather such passages than to restore the disjecta membra to their original position. Several extracts also which escaped me at the time have since met my eye, of which the only one of importance is the remarkable explanation of the two birds at the cleansing of the leper, conf. Com. on Luke v. 14, and which is taken from a letter of Cyril to Acacius.

But the value of the Commentary does not arise simply from the uncertainty attaching to what Mai has gathered, but also from the superior form in which it gives what really is Cyril's own. As a general rule, the Catenists give conclusions without premisses, striking statements separated from the context which defines their meaning, results as true generally which are only true particularly, or which at least are greatly modified by the occasion which led to them. As it is moreover the manner of the Catenists often to introduce extracts by a summary of what precedes them, or where their length precluded their admission to give an abstract of them in briefer words, it often happens that a passage really Cyril's is followed in Mai by an abstract of itself taken from some smaller Catena: and thus an amount of confusion and repetition is occasioned which contrasts unfavourably with the simplicity of arrangement and easiness of comprehension which prevail throughout the Commentary itself.

Nevertheless Mai probably took the best course in confining himself to the simple collection of materials: and at all events his works are carefully edited, punctuated intelligibly, and translated with very considerable correctness. No one, in using his very voluminous works, however much he may be inclined to regret his want of critical ability, will accuse him of an inefficient treatment of the materials before him. The very reverse is the case with the other Catena which I have used, and which was edited by Dr. Cramer. In itself it is of considerable intrinsic value, but is entirely untranslateable, except by one who will take the trouble of restoring the text, and entirely altering Dr. Cramer's punctuation. In conclusion, I have to

return my thanks to the Delegates of the University Press for undertaking both the publication of the Syriac Version of S. Cyril's Commentary, and also of the present English translation.

Oxford, Jan. 1859. This text was transcribed by Roger Pearse, 2006. All material on this page is in the public domain - copy freely. Greek text is rendered using unicode.

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.