Sermons

Leo the Great (d. AD 461)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

Contents

Sermon 1 Preached on His Birthday, or Day of Ordination 1

Sermon 2 On His Birthday, Delivered on the Anniversary Of His Consecration) 2

I. The Honour of Being Raised to the Episcopate Must Be Referred Solely to the Divine Head of the Church. 4

II. From Christ and Through S. Peter the Priesthood is Handed on in Perpetuity. 5

III. S. Peter's Work is Still Carried Out by His Successors. 6

IV. This Festival Then is in S. Peter's Honour, and the Progress of His Flock Redounds to His Glory. 7

I. The Devil's Wickedness in Leading Men Astray is Now Counteracted by the Work of Redemption in Restoring Them to the Truth. 9

II. God's Just Judgment Against Sin is Denounced that We May Avoid It by Deeds of Mercy and Love. 10

III. We Minister to Christ Himself in the Person of His Poor. 12

IV. To Complete Their Acceptance by God, They Must Not Neglect to Lay All Information Against the Manichees Who are in the City. 13

I. Our Goods are Given Us Not as Our Own Possessions But for Use in God's Service. 14

II. The Liberal Use of Riches is Worse Than Vain, If It Be for Selfish Ends Alone. 15

III. The Duty of Mercy Outweighs All Other Virtues. 16

IV. And Its Efficacy, as Scripture Proves, is Incalculable. 17

I.restoration to the Divine Image in Which We Were Made is Only Possible by Our Imitation of God's Will. 18

II. We Must Love Both God And Our Neighbour, and "Our Neighbour" Must Be Interpreted in Its Widest Sense. 20

III. We Must Be Thankful, and Show, Our Thankfulness for What We Have Received, Whethermuch or Little. 21

IV. Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving are the Three Comprehensive Duties of a Christian. 23

I. The Prosperous Must Show Forth Their Thankfulness to God, by Liberality to the Floor and Needy. 24

II. Almsgiving and Fasting are the Most Essential Aids to Prayer. 25

III. Christians' Pious Activity Has So Enraged Satan that He Has Multiplied Heresies to Wreak Them Harm. 26

IV. Of All Heresies Manicheism is the Worst and Foullest. 27

V. Every One Should Abjure Such Men, and Give All the Information They Possess About Them to the Authorities. 28

VI. Zeal in Rooting Out Heresy Will Make Other Pious Duties More Acceptable. 29

I. The Duty of Fasting is Based on Both the Old and New Testaments, and is Closely Connected with the Duties of Prayer and Almsgiving. 30

II. He that Lends to the Lord Makes a Better Bargain Than He that Lends to Man. 31

III. Money-Lending at High Interest is in All Respects Iniquitous. 32

IV. Let Us Avoid Avarice, and Share God's Benefits with Others. 33

I. Self-Restraint Leads to Higher Enjoyments. 34

II. The Teaching of the Four Yearly Fasts is that Spiritual Self-Restraint is as Necessary as Corporeal. 35

III. Thus Fasting in Mind as Well as Body, and Giving Alms Freely, We Shall Win God's Highest Favour. 37

I. All Share in the Joy of Christmas. 38

II. The Mystery of the Incarnation is a Fitting Theme for Joy Both to Angels and to Men. 39

III. Christians Then Must Live Worthily of Christ Their Head. 40

I. The Mystery of the Incarnation Demands Our Joy. 41

II. The New Character of the Birth of Christ Explained. 42

III. Justice Required that Satan Should Be Vanquished by God Made Man. 44

IV. The Incarnation Deceived the Devil and Caused Him to Break the Bond Under Which He Held Men. 45

V. The Christian is Exhorted to Share in the Blessings of the Incarnation. 46

VI. The Festival Has Nothing to Do with Sunworship, as Some Maintain. 47

I. The Truths of the Incarnation Never Suffer from Being Repeated. 48

II.the Arians Could Not Comprehend the Union of God And Man. 49

III. The Incarnation Was Necessary to the Taking Away of Sin. 51

IV.the Blessings of the Incarnation Stretch Backwards as Well as Reach Forward. 52

V. The Coming of Christ in Our Flesh Corresponds with Our Becoming Members of His Body. 53

I. The Incarnation Fulfils All Its Types and Promises. 54

II. The Incarnation Was the Only Effective Remedy to the Fall. 55

III. We All Became Partakers in the Birth of Christ, by the Re-Birth of Baptism. 56

IV. The Manichaeans, by Rejecting the Incarnation, Have Fallen into Terrible Iniquities. 57

V. Other Heresies Contain Some Portion of Truth, But the Manichoeans Contain None Whatever. 58

VI. Christians Must Cling to the One Faith and Not Be Led Astray. 59

I. Christmas Morning is the Most Appropriate Time for Thoughts on the Nativity. 60

II. Christians are Essentially Participators in the Nativity of Christ. 61

III. Peace with God Is His Best Gift to Man. 63

IV. We Must Be Worthy of Our Calling as Sans and Friends of God. 64

V. The Birth of Christ is the Birth of Peace to the Church. 65

I. It is Equally Dangerous to Deny the Godhead or the Manhood in Christ. 66

II. The Incarnation Has Changed All the Possibilities of Man's Existence. 67

III. The Devil Knows Exactly What Temptations to Offer to Each Several Person. 68

IV. The Foolish Practice of Some Who Turn to the Sun and Bow to It is Reprehensible. 69

V. The Sun and Moon Were Created for Use, Not for Worship. 70

VI. Let Us Awake to the Proper Use of All Our Parts and Facilities. 71

I. The Incarnation an Unceasing Source a Joy. 72

II. The Virgin's Conception Explained. 73

III. In Redeeming Man, Justice as Well as Mercy Ad to Be Considered. 74

IV. All Heresies Proceed from Failure to Believe the Twofold Nature of Christ. 75

V.nestorianism and Eutychianism are Particularly to Be Avoided at the Present Time. 76

VI. The Deity and the Manhood Were Present in Christ from the Very First. 77

VII. The Fulness of the Godhead is Imparted to the Body (the Church) Through the Head, (Christ). 78

I. The Epiphany a Necessary Sequel to the Nativity. 79

II. Herod's Evil Designs Were Fruitless. The Wise Men's Gifts Were Consciously Symbolical. 80

III. The Massacre of the Innocents is in Harmony with the Virgin's Conception, Which Again Teaches Us Purity of Life. 81

I. When We Were Yet Sinners, Christ Came to Save. 82

II. The Wise Men from the East are Typical Fulfilments of God's Promise to Abraham. 83

III. The Chosen Race is No Longer the Jews, But Believers of Every Nation. 84

IV. The Massacre of the Innocents Through the Consequent Flight of Christ, Brings the Truth into Egypt. 85

V. We Must Keep This Festival as Thankful Sons of Light. 86

I. The Yearly Observance of the Epiphany is Profitable to Christians. 87

II. Both Herod and the Wise Men Originally Had an Earthly Conception of the Kingdom Signified; But the Latter Learnt the Truth, the Former Did Not. 88

III. The Perseverance of the Magi Has Led to the Most Important Results. 90

IV. The Manichoean Heresy Corrupts the Scriptures in Order to Disprove the Truth. 92

V. Avoid All Dealings with the Heretics, But Intercede with God For Them. 94

I. The Story of the Magi Not Only a Byegone Fact in History, But of Everyday Application to Ourselves. 95

II. Satan Still Carries on the Wiles of Herod, And, as It Were, Personates Him in His Opposition to Christ. 97

III. The Cessation of Active Persecution Does Not Do Away with the Need of Continued Vigilance : Satan Has Only Changed His Tactics. 98

IV. Timely Repentance Gains God's Merciful Consideration. 100

I. The Benefits of Abstinence Shown by the Example of the Hebrews. 101

II. Use Lent to Vanquish the Enemy, and Be Thus Preparing for Eastertide. 102

III. Fights are Necessary to Prove Our Faith. 103

IV. The Christian's Armour is Both for Defence and for Attack. 104

V. Abstinence Not Only from Food But from Other Evil Desires, Especially from Wrath, is Required in Lent. 105

VI. The Right Use of Lent Will Lead to a Happy Participation in Easter. 106

I. Progress and Improvement Always Possible. 107

II. Satan Seeks to Subtly His Numerous Lasses by Fresh Gains. 108

III. The Twofold Nature of Christ Shown at the Temptation. 109

IV. The Fast Should Not End with Abstinence Front Food, But Lead to Good Deeds. 110

V. And Still Further It Should Lead to Personal Amendment and Domestic Harmony. 111

I. The Lenten Fast an Opportunity for Restoring Our Purely. 112

II. Lent Must Be Used Far Removing All Our Defilements, and of Good Works There Must Be No Stint. 113

III. As with the Saviour, So with Us, the Devil Tries to Make Our Very Piety Its Own Snare. 115

IV. The Perverse Turn Even Their Fasting into Sin. 116

V. Be Reasonable and Seasonable in Your Fasting. 117

VI. Make Your Fasting a Reality by Amendment in Your Lives. 118

I. Lent Must Be Kept Not Only by Avoiding Bodily Impurity But Also by Avoiding Errors of Thought and Faith. 119

II. All the Actions of Christ Reveal the Presence of the Twofold Nature. 121

III. Hold Fast to the Statements of the Creed. 123

IV. Use Lent for General Improvement in the Whole Round of Christian Duties. 124

I. The Lenten Fast is Incumbent on All Alike. 125

II. The Broad Road is Crowded the Narrow Way of Salvation Nearly Empty. 126

III. Satan is Incited to Fresh Efforts at This Season of the Year. 127

IV.self-Examination by the Standard of God's Commands the Right Occupation in Lent. 128

V. Forgiveness of Our Own Sins Requires that We Should Forgive Others. 129

VI. Reconciliation Between Enemies and Alms-Giving are Also Lenten Duties. 130

I. Peter's Confession Shown to Lead Up to the Transfiguration. 131

II. The Same Continued. 132

III.the Object and the Meaning of the Transfiguration. 133

IV. The Significance of the Appearance of Moses and Elias. 134

V. S Peter's Suggestion Contrary to the Divine Order. 135

VI. The Import of the Father's Voice from the Cloud. 136

VII. Who It is We Have to Hear. 137

VIII. The Father's Words Have a Universal Application to the Whole Church. 138

I. The Two-Fold Nature of Christ Set Forth. 139

II. The Two Natures Acted Conjointly, and the Human Sufferings Were Not Compulsory, But in Accordance with the Divine Will. 140

IV. Christ Voluntarily Bartered His Glory for Our Weakness. 142

V. S. Peter Was the First To' Benefit by His Master's Humiliation. 143

VI. The Mad Counsel of the Jews Was Turned to Their Own Destruction. 144

I. The Difference Between the Penitence and Blasphemy of the Two Robbers is a Type of the Human Race. 145

II. The Chief Priests Showed Utter Ignorance of Scripture in Their Taunts. 146

III. The Triumph of the Cross is Immediate and Effective. 147

IV. When the Last Act in the Tragedy Was Over How Must the Jews Have Felt?148

V. Chastity, and Charity are the Two Things Most Needful in Preparing for Easter Communion. 149

I. The Reason of Christ Suffering at the Paschal Feast. 150

II. The Leading Jews Broke Their Own Law, as Well as Failed to Apprehend the New Dispensation in Destroying Christ. 151

III. Jesus Instituting the Blessed Sacrament Showed Mercy to Thetraitor Judas to the Last. 152

IV. Various Incidents of the Passion .further Explained and the Reality of Christ's Sufferings Asserted. 154

V. The Resignation of Christ is an Undying Lesson to the Church 156

I. Christ's Arrest Fulfils His Own Eternal Purpose. 157

II. How Great Was Pilate's Crime in Allowing Himself to Be Led Astray & the Jews. 158

III. Yet the Jews' Guilt Was Infinitely Greater. 159

IV. Christ Bearing His Own Cross is an Eternal Lesson to the Church. 160

V. The Transference of the Cross from the Lord To Simon of Cyrene Signifies the Participation of the Gentiles in His Sufferings. 161

VI. We are to See Not Only the Crass But the Meaning of It. 162

VII. The Power of the Crass is Universally Attractive. 163

VIII. We Must Live Not for Ourselves But for Christ, Who Died for Us. 164

I. The Mystery of the Passion Passes Man's Comprehension. 165

II. The Creed Takes Up S. Peter's Confession as the Fundamental Doctrine of the Church. 166

III. The Devil's Devices Were Turned Against Himself. 167

IV. Why Judas Could Not Obtain Forgiveness Through Christ. 168

V. The Cruelty of Christ's Crucifixion is Lost in Its Wondrous Power. 169

I. God Those to Save Man by Strength Made Perfect in Weakness. 170

II. God's Plan Was Always Partially Understood, and is Now of Universal Application. 171

III. The Union of the Divine Head with Its Members Inseparable. 172

IV. Christ's Passion Provided a Saving Mystery and an Example for Us to Follow. 173

V. Christ Not Destroyed, But Fulfilled and Elevated the Law. 174

VI. The Present Effect of Christ's Passion is Daily Realized by Christians, Especially in Hall, Baptism. 175

VII. The Good Works of Christians are Only Part of Christ's Good Works. 176

I. The Contemplation of the Prophecies of Christ's Suffering are a Great Source of Pious Delight. 177

II. The Divine Foreknowledge Does Not Account for the Jews'wickedness So as to Excuse Them. 178

III. Christ Was in No Sense the Author of His Murderer's Guilt. 179

IV. The Enormity Ofjudas' Crime is Set Forth. 180

V. Christ's Passion Was for Our Redemption by Mysteryand Example. 181

VI.we Can Only Attain to Christ's Perfection by Following in His Steps. 182

VII. Christ Cry of "Forsaken" On the Cross Was to Teach Us the Insufficiency of the Human Nature Without the Divine. 183

I. Christ's Godhead Never Forsook Him in His Passion. 184

II. Christ's Death Was Voluntary an His Part, and Yet in Saving Others He Could Not Save Himself. 185

III. A Transition Was Then Being Effect from the Old to the New Dispensation.187

IV. Let Us Profit by Fasting and Good Works at This Sacred Season of the Year.188

I. We Must All Be Partakers in Christ's Resurrection Life. 189

II. God Did Not Leave His Soul in Hell, Nor Suffer His Flesh to See Corruption.190

III. Christ's Manifestation After the Resurrection Showed that His Person Was Essentially the Same as Before. 191

IV. But Though It is the Same, It is Also Glorified. 192

V. Being Saved by Hope, We Must Not Fulfil the Lasts of the Flesh. 193

VI. Our Godly Resolutions Must Continue All the Year Round, Not Be Confined to Easier Only. 194

I. The Cross is Not Only the Mystery of Salvation, But an Example to Follow. 195

II. Christ Look Our Nature Upon Him for Our Salvation. 196

III. The Presence of the Risen and Ascended Lord Is Still with Us. 197

IV. We Must Have the Same Mind as Was in Christ Jesus. 198

V. Only He Who Holds T/re Truth on the Incarnation Can Keep Easter Properly.199

VI. A Mystical Application of the Term "Passover" Is Given. 200

VII. Only True Believers Can Keep the Easter Festival. 201

I.the Events Recorded as Happening After the Resurrection Were Intended to Convince Its Truth. 202

II. And Therefore They are in the Highest Degree Instructive. 203

III. The Prove the Resurrection of the Flesh. 204

IV. Christ's Ascension Has Given Us Greater Privileges and Joys Than the Devil Had Taken from Us. 205

I. The Ascension Completes Our Faith in Him, Who Was God As Well as Man. 206

II. The Ascension Renders Our Faith More Excellent and Stronger. 207

III. The Marvellous Effects of This Faith on All. 208

IV. His Ascension Refines Our Faith : the Ministering of Angels to Hint Shows the Extent of His Authority. 209

V. We Must Despise Earthly Things and Rise to Things Above, Especially by Active Works of Mercy and Love. 211

I. The Giving of the Law by Moses Prepared the Way for the Outpouring of the Holy Ghost. 213

II. How Marvellous Was the Gift of "Divers Tongues." 214

III. The Three Persons in the Trinity are Perfectly Equal in All Things. 215

IV. The Macedonian Heresy is as Blasphemous as the Arian. 217

V. The Spirit's Work is Still Continued in Thechurch. 218

I. The Holy Ghost's Work Did Not Begin at Pentecost, But Was Continued Because the Holy Trinity is One in Action and in Will. 219

II. Each Person in the Trinity Look Part in Our Redemption. 220

III. But This Apportionment of Functions Does Not Mar the Unity of the Trinity. 221

IV. In Thinking Upon God, We Must Put Aside All Material Notions. 222

V. Christ as Man is Less Than the Father, as God Co-Equal. 223

VI. And This Equality Which the Son Has with the Father, the Holy Ghost Also Has. 224

I. Since the Apostles' Day Till Now Self-Restraint is the Best Defence Against the Devil's Assaults. 225

II. The Templer is Foiled in Attacks Upon Those Who Have Learnt These Tactics. 226

III. And So This Fast Comes Very Opportunely After the Feast of Whitsuntide 227

IV. And by Proper Use of It We Shall Win God's Favour. 228

I. Rome Owes Its High Position to These Apostles. 229

II. The Extension of the Roman Empire Was Part of the Divine Scheme. 230

III. On the Dispersing of the Twelve, St. Peter Was Sent to Rome. 231

IV. St. Peter's Love Conquered His Fears in Coming to Rome. 232

V. S. Peter Was Providentially Prepared for His Great Mission. 233

VI. Many Noble Martyrs Have Sprung from the Blood of Ss. Peter and Paul. 234

VII. No Distinction Must Be Drawn Between the Merits of the Two. 235

Sermon 84 Concerning the Neglect of the Commemoration 236

I. The Example of the Martyrs is Most Valuable 238

II. The Saint's Martyrdom Described. 239

III.the Description of His Sufferings Continued. 240

IV. Laurentius Has Conquered His Persecutor. 241

I. The Fasts, Which the Ancient Prophets Proclaimed, are Still Necessary. 242

II. Public Services are of a Higher Character Than Private. 243

III. The September Fast Calls Us in This Public Way to Self-Amendment. 244

IV. Community of Goods and of Actions is Most Precious in God's Sight. 245

V. Let Us Then Make the Best Use Possible of the Opportunity. 246

I.we Must Always Be Seeking Pardon, Because We are Always Liable to Sin. 247

II. Christ is Himself the Way, Which He Bids Us Tread. 248

III. The Love of God Contrasted with the Love of the World. 249

IV. The Love of God Is Fostered by Good Works. 250

I. Abstinence Must Include Discipline of the Soul as Well Asof the Body. 251

II. And in Particular We Must Abstain from Heresy, and that of Eutyches as Well as that of Nestorius. 252

III. The Truth of the Incarnation is Proved Both by the Eucharistic Feast and by the Divine Institution of Almsgiving. 253

I. Introduction of the Subject. 254

II. The Blessedness of Humility Discussed 255

III. Scriptural Examples of Humility. 256

IV. The Blessedness of Mourning Discussed. 257

V. The Blessedness of the Meek. 258

VI. The Blessedness of Desiring Righteousness. 259

VII. The Blessedness of the Merciful: 260

VIII. The Blessedness of a Pure Heart. 261

IX. The Blessedness of Peace-Making. 262

Sermon 1 Preached on His Birthday, or Day of Ordination

Having been elected in absence he returns thanks for the kindness and earnestly demands the prayers of his church.

”Let my mouth speak the praise or the Lord ,” and my breath and spirit, my flesh and tongue bless His holy Name. For it is a sign, not of a modest, but an ungrateful mind, to keep silence on the kindnesses of God: and it is very meet to begin our duty as consecrated pontiff with the sacrifices of the Lord’s praise . Because ”in our humility” the Lord ”has been mindful of us ” and has blessed us: because ”He alone has done great wonders for me ,” so that your holy affection for me reckoned me present, though my long journey had forced me to be absent. Therefore I give and always shall give thanks to our God for all the things with which He has recompensed me. Your favourable opinion also I acknowledge publicly, paying you the thanks I owe, and thus showing that I understand how much respect, love and fidelity your affectionate zeal could expend on me who long with a shepherd’s anxiety for the safety of your souls, who have passed so conscientious a judgment on me, with absolutely no deserts of mine to guide you. I entreat you, therefore, by the mercies of the Lord, aid with your prayers him whom you have sought out by your solicitations that both the Spirit of grace may abide in me and that your judgment may not change. May He who inspired you with such unanimity of purpose, vouchsafe to us all in common the blessing of peace:

so that all the days of my life being ready for the service of Almighty Can, and for my duties towards you, I may with confidence entreat the Lord: ”Holy Father, keep in Thy name those whom Thou hast given me : and while you ever go on unto salvation, may ”my soul magnify the Lord ,” and in the retribution of the judgment to come may the account of my priesthood so be rendered to the just Judge that through your good deeds you may be my joy and my crown, who by your good will have given an earnest testimony to me in this present life.

Sermon 2 On His Birthday, Delivered on the Anniversary Of His Consecration)

I. The Lord Raises Up the Weak and Gives Him Grace According to His Need.
The Divine condescension has made this an honourable day for me, for it has shown by raising my humbleness to the highest rank, that He despised not any of His own. And hence, although one must be diffident of merit, yet it is one's bounden duty to rejoice over the gift, since He who is the Imposer of the burden is Himself the Aider in its execution: and lest the weak recipient should fall beneath the greatness of the grace, He who conferred the dignity will also give the power. As the day therefore returns in due course on which the Lord purposed that I should begin my episcopal office, there is true cause for me to rejoice to the glory of God, Who that I might love Him much, has forgiven me much, and that I might make His Grace wonderful, has conferred His gifts upon me in whom He found no recommendations of merit. And by this His work what does the Lord suggest and commend to our hearts but that no one should presume upon his own righteousness nor distrust God's mercy which shines out more pre-eminently then, when the sinner is made holy and the downcast lifted up. For the measure of heavenly gifts does not rest upon the quality of our deeds, nor in this world, in which "all life is temptation ," is each one rewarded according to his deserving, for if the Lord were to take count of a man's iniquities, no one could stand before His judgment.

II. The Mighty Assemblage of Prelates Testifies to Men's Loyal Acceptance of Peter in Peter's Unworthy Successor.
Therefore, dearly-beloved, "magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together ," that the whole reason of to-day's concourse may be referred to the praise of Him Who brought it to pass. For so far as my own feelings are concerned, I confess that I rejoice most over the devotion of you all; and when I look upon this splendid assemblage of my venerable brother-priests I feel that, where so many saints are gathered, the very angels are amongst us. Nor do I doubt that we are to-day visited by a more abundant outpouring of the Divine Presence, when so many fair tabernacles of God, so many excellent members

of the Body of Christ are in one place and shine with one light. Nor yet I feel sure, is the fostering condescension and true love of the most blessed Apostle Peter absent from this congregation: he has not deserted your devotion, in whose honour you are met together. And so he too rejoices over your good feeling and welcomes your respect for the Lord's own institution as shown towards the partners of His honour, commending the well ordered love of the whole Church, which ever finds Peter in Peter's See, and from affection for so great a shepherd grows not lukewarm even over so inferior a successor as myself.

In order therefore, dearly beloved, that this loyalty which you unanimously display towards my humbleness may obtain the fruit of its zeal, on bended knee entreat the merciful goodness of our God that in our days He will drive out those who assail us, strengthen faith, increase love, increase peace and deign to render me His poor slave, whom to show the riches of His grace He has willed to stand at the helm of the Church, sufficient for so great a work and useful in building you up, and to this end to lengthen our time for service that the years He may grant us may be used to His glory through Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The Honour of Being Raised to the Episcopate Must Be Referred Solely to the Divine Head of the Church.

As often as God's mercy deigns to bring round the day of His gifts to us, there is, dearly-beloved, just and reasonable cause for rejoicing, if only our appointment to the office be referred to the praise of Him who gave it. For though this recognition of God may well be found in all His priests, yet I take it to be peculiarly binding on me, who, regarding my own utter insignificance and the greatness of the office undertaken, ought myself also to utter that exclamation of the Prophet," Lord, I heard Thy speech and was afraid: I considered Thy works and was dismayed . For what is so unwonted and so dismaying as labour to the frail, exaltation to the humble, dignity to the undeserving? And yet we do not despair nor lose heart, because we put our trust not in ourselves but in Him who works in us. And hence also we have sung with harmonious voice the psalm of David, dearly beloved, not in our own praise, but to the glory of Christ the Lord. For it is He of whom it is prophetically written, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedeck ," that is, not after the order of Aaron, whose priesthood descending along his own line of offspring was a temporal ministry, and ceased with the law of the Old Testament, but after the order of Melchizedeck, in whom was prefigured the eternal High Priest.

And no reference is made to his parentage because in him it is understood that He was portrayed, whose generation cannot be declared. And finally, now that the mystery of this Divine priesthood has descended to human agency, it runs not by the line of birth, nor is that which flesh and blood created, chosen, but without regard to the privilege of paternity and succession by inheritance, those men are received by the Church as its rulers whom the Holy Ghost prepares: so that in the people of God's adoption, the whole body of which is priestly and royal, it is not the prerogative of earthly origin which obtains the unction , but the condescension of Divine grace which creates the bishop.

II. From Christ and Through S. Peter the Priesthood is Handed on in Perpetuity.

Although, therefore, dearly beloved, we be found both weak and slothful in fulfilling the duties of our office, because, whatever devoted and vigorous action we desire to do, we are hindered by the frailty of our very condition; yet having the unceasing propitiation of the Almighty and perpetual Priest, who being like us and yet equal with the Father, brought down His Godhead even to things human, and raised His Manhood even to things Divine, we worthily and piously rejoice over His dispensation, whereby, though He has delegated the care of His sheep to many shepherds, yet He has not Himself abandoned the guardianship of His beloved flock. And from His overruling and eternal protection we have received the support of the Apostles' aid also, which assuredly does not cease from its operation: and the strength of the foundation, on which the whole superstructure of the Church is reared, is not weakened by the weight of the temple that rests upon it. For the solidity of that faith which was praised in the chief of the Apostles is perpetual: and as that remains which Peter believed in Christ, so that remains which Christ instituted in Peter.

For when, as has been read in the Gospel lesson , the Lord had asked the disciples whom they believed Him to be amid the various opinions that were held, and the blessed Peter bad replied, saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the Lord says, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and flood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father, which is in heaven. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shall loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven ."

III. S. Peter's Work is Still Carried Out by His Successors.

The dispensation of Truth therefore abides, and the blessed Peter persevering in the strength of the Rock, which he has received, has not abandoned the helm of the Church, which he undertook. For he was ordained before the rest in such a way that from his being called the Rock, from his being pronounced the Foundation, from his being constituted the Doorkeeper of the kingdom of heaven, from his being set as the Umpire to bind and to loose, whose judgments shall retain their validity in heaven, from all these mystical titles we might know the nature of his association with Christ. And still to-day he more fully and effectually performs what is entrusted to him, and carries out every part of his duty and charge in Him and with Him, through Whom he has been glorified. And so if anything is rightly done and rightly decreed by us, if anything is won from the mercy of God by our daily supplications, it is of his work and merits whose power lives and whose authority prevails in his See. For this, dearly-beloved, was gained by that confession, which, inspired in the Apostle's heart by God the Father, transcended all the uncertainty of human opinions, and was endued with the firmness of a rock, which no assaults could shake. For throughout the Church Peter daily says, "Thou an the Christ, the Son of the living God," and every tongue which confesses the Lord, accepts the instruction his voice conveys. This Faith conquers the devil, and breaks the bonds of his prisoners. It uproots us from this earth and plants us in heaven, and the gates of Hades cannot prevail against it. For with such solidity is it endued byGod that the depravity of heretics cannot mar it nor the unbelief of the heathen overcome it.

IV. This Festival Then is in S. Peter's Honour, and the Progress of His Flock Redounds to His Glory.

And so, dearly beloved, with reasonable obedience we celebrate to-day's festival by such methods, that in my humble person he may be recognized and honoured, in whom abides the care of all the shepherds, together with the charge of the sheep commended to him, and whose dignity is not abated even in so unworthy an heir. And hence the presence of my venerable brothers and fellow-priests, so much desired and valued by me, will be the more sacred and precious, if they will transfer the chief honour of this service in which they have deigned to take part to him whom they know to be not only the patron of this see, but also the primate of all bishops. When therefore we utter our exhortations in your ears, holy brethren, believe that he is speaking whose representative we are: because it is his warning that we give, nothing else but his teaching that we preach, beseeching you to "gird up the loins of your mind ," and lead a chaste and sober life in the fear of God, and not to let your mind forget his supremacy and consent to the lusts of the flesh. Short and fleeting are the joys of this world's pleasures which endeavour to turn aside from the path of life those who are called to eternity. The faithful and religious spirit, therefore, must desire the things which are heavenly, and being eager for the Divine promises, lift itself to the love of the incorruptible Good and the hope of the true Light.

But be sure, dearly-beloved, that your labour, whereby you resist vices and fight against carnal desires, is pleasing and precious in God's sight, and in God's mercy will profit not only yourselves but me also, because the zealous pastor makes his boast of the progress of the Lord's flock. "For ye are my crown and joy ," as the Apostle says; if your faith, which from the beginning of the Gospel has been preached in all the world has continued in love and holiness. For though the whole Church, which is in all the world, ought to abound in all virtues, yet you especially, above all people, it becomes to excel in deeds of piety, because founded as you are on the very citadel of the Apostolic Rock, not only has our Lord Jesus

IV. THIS FESTIVAL THEN IS IN S. PETER'S HONOUR, AND THE PROGRESS OF HIS FLOCK RE

Christ redeemed you in common with all men, but the blessed Apostle Peter has instructed you far beyond all men. Through the same Christ our Lord.

I. The Devil's Wickedness in Leading Men Astray is Now Counteracted by the Work of Redemption in Restoring Them to the Truth.

God's mercy and justice, dearly-beloved, has in loving-kindness disclosed to us through our Lord Jesus Christ's teaching, the manner of His retributions, as they have been ordained from the foundation of the world, that accepting the significance of facts we might take what we believe will happen, to have, as it were, already come to pass. For our Redeemer and Saviour knew what great errors the devil's deceit had dispersed throughout the world and by how many superstitions he had subjected the chief part of mankind to himself. But that the creature formed in God's image might not any longer through ignorance of the Truth be driven on to the precipice of perpetual death, He inserted in the Gospel-pages the nature of His judgment that it might recover every man from the snares of the crafty foe; for now all would know what rewards the good might hope for and what punishments the evil must fear. For the instigator and author of sin in order first to fall through pride and then to injure us through envy, because "he stood not in the Truth " put all his strength in lying and produced every kind of deceit from this poisoned source of his cunning, that he might cut off man's devout hopes from that happiness which he had lost by his own uplifting, and drag them into partnership with his condemnation, to whose reconciliation he himself could not attain.

Whoever therefore among men has wronged God by his wickednesses, has been led astray by his guile, and depraved by his villainy. For he easily drives into all evil doings those whom he has deceived in the matter of religion. But knowing that God is denied not only by words but also by deeds, many whom he could not rob of their faith, he has robbed of their love, and by choking the ground of their heart with the weeds of avarice, has spoiled them of the fruit of good works, when he could not spoil them of the confession of their lips.

II. God's Just Judgment Against Sin is Denounced that We May Avoid It by Deeds of Mercy and Love.

On account therefore, dearly-beloved, of these crafty designs of our ancient foe, the unspeakable goodness of Christ has wished us to know, what was to be decreed about all mankind in the day of retribution, that, while in this life healing remedies are legitimately offered, while restoration is not denied to the contrite, and those who have been long barren can at length be fruitful, the verdict on which justice has determined may be fore-stalled and the picture of God's coming to judge the world never depart from the mind's eye. For the Lord will come in His glorious Majesty, as He Himself has foretold, and there will be with Him an innumerable host of angel-legions radiant in their splendour. Before the throne of His power will all the nations of the world be gathered; and all the men that in all ages and on all the face of the earth have been born, shall stand in the Judge's sight. Then shall be separated the just from the unjust, the guiltless from the guilty; and when the sons of piety, their works of mercy reviewed, have received the Kingdom prepared for them, the unjust shall be upbraided for their utter barrenness, and those on the left having naught in common with those on the right, shall by the condemnation of the Almighty Judge be cast into the fire prepared for the torture of the devil and his angels, with him to share the punishment, whose will they choose to do.

Who then would not tremble at this doom of eternal torment? Who would not dread evils which are never to be ended? But since this severity is only denounced in order that we may seek for mercy, we too in this present life must show such open-handed mercy that after perilous neglect returning to works of piety it may be possible for us to be set free from this doom. For this is the purpose of the Judge's might and of the Saviour's graciousness, that the unrighteous may forsake his ways and the sinner give up his wicket habits. Let those who wish Christ to spare them, have mercy on the poor; let them give freely to feed the wretched, who desire to attain to the society of the blessed. Let no man consider his

fellow vile, nor despise in any one that nature which the Creator of the world made His own. For who that labours can deny that Christ claims that labour as done unto Himself? Your fellow-slave is helped thereby, but it is the Lord who will repay. The feeding of the needy is the purchase money of the heavenly kingdom and the free dispenser of things temporal is made the heir of things eternal. But how has such small expenditure deserved to be valued so highly except because our works are weighed in the balance of love, and when a man loves what God loves, he is deservedly raised into His kingdom, whose attribute of love has in part become his?

III. We Minister to Christ Himself in the Person of His Poor.

To this pious duty of good works, therefore dearly beloved, the day of Apostolic institution invites us, on which the first collection of our holy offerings has been prudently and profitably ordained by the Fathers; in order that, because at this season formerly the Gentiles used superstitiously to serve demons, we might celebrate the most holy offering of our alms in protest against the unholy victims of the wicked. And because this has been most profitable to the growth of the Church, it has been resolved to make it perpetual. We exhort you, therefore, holy brethren throughout the churches of your several regions on Wednesday next to contribute of your goods, according to your means and willingness, to purposes of charity, that ye may be able to win that blessedness in which he shall rejoice without end, who ”considereth the needy and poor . And if we are to ”consider” him, dearly beloved, we must use loving care and watchfulness, in order that we may find him whom modesty conceals and shamefastness keeps back. For there are those who blush openly to ask for what they want and prefer to suffer privation without speaking rather than to be put to shame by a public appeal. These are they whom we ought to ”consider” and relieve from their hidden straits in order that they may the more rejoice from the very fact that their modesty as well as poverty has been consulted.

And rightly in the needy and poor do we recognize the person of Jesus Christ our Lord Himself, ”Who though He was rich,” as says the blessed Apostle, ”became poor, that He might enrich us by His poverty . And that His presence might never seem to be wanting to us, He so effected the mystic union of His humility and His glory that while we adore Him as King and Lord in the Majesty of the Father, we might also feed Him in His poor, for which we shall be set free in an evil day from perpetual damnation, and for our considerate care of the poor shall be joined with the whole company of heaven.

IV. To Complete Their Acceptance by God, They Must Not Neglect to Lay All Information Against the Manichees Who are in the City.

But in order that your devotion, dearly beloved, may in all things be pleasing to God, we exhort you also to show due zeal in informing your presbyters of Manichees where- ever they be hidden . For it is naught but piety to disclose the hiding-places of the wicked, and in them to overthrow the devil whom they serve. For against them, dearly beloved, it becomes indeed the whole world and the whole Church everywhere to put on the armour of Faith: but your devotion ought to be foremost in this work, who in your progenitors learnt the Gospel of the Cross of Christ from the very mouth of the most blessed Apostles Peter and Paul. Men must not be allowed to lie hid who do not believe that the law given through Moses, in which God is shown to be the Creator of the Universe, ought to be received: who speak against the Prophets and the Holy Ghost, dare in their damnable profanity to reject the Psalms of David which are sung through the universal Church with all reverence, deny the birth of the Lord Christ, according to the flesh, say that His Passion and Resurrection was fictitious, not true, and deprive the baptism of regeneration of all its power as a means of grace. Nothing with them is holy, nothing entire, nothing true. They are to be shunned, lest they harm any one: they are to be given up, lest they should settle in any part of our city. Yours, dearly. beloved, will be the gain before the Lord's judgment-seat of what we bid, of what we ask. For it is but right that the triumph of this deed also should be joined to the oblation of our alms, the Lord Jesus Christ in all things aiding us, Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

I. Our Goods are Given Us Not as Our Own Possessions But for Use in God's Service.

Observing the institutions of the Apostles' tradition, dearly beloved, we exhort you, as watchful shepherds, to celebrate with the devotion of religious practice that day which they purged from wicked superstitions and consecrated to deeds of mercy, thus showing that the authority of the Fathers still lives among us, and that we obediently abide by their teaching. Inasmuch as the sacred usefulness of such a practice affects not only time past but also our own age, so that what aided them in the destruction of vanities, might contribute with us to the increase of virtues. And what so suitable to faith, what so much in harmony with godliness as to assist the poverty of the needy, to undertake the care of the weak, to succour the needs of the brethren, and to remember one's own condition in the toils of others . In which work He only who knows what He has given to each, discerns aright how much a man can and how much he cannot do. For not only are spiritual riches and heavenly gifts received from God, but earthly and material possessions also proceed from His bounty, that He may be justified in requiring an account of those things which He has not so much put in our possession as committed to our stewardship. God's gifts, therefore, we must use properly and wisely, lest the material for good work should become an occasion of sin. For wealth, after its kind and regarded as a means, is good and is of the greatest advantage to human society, when it is in the bands of the benevolent and open-handed, and when the luxurious man does not squander nor the miser hoard it; for whether ill-stored or unwisely spent it is equally lost.

II. The Liberal Use of Riches is Worse Than Vain, If It Be for Selfish Ends Alone.

And, however praiseworthy it be to flee from intemperance, and to avoid the waste of base pleasures, and though many in their magnificence disdain to conceal their wealth, and in the abundance of their goods think scorn of mean and sordid parsimony, yet such men's liberality is not happy, nor their thriftiness to be commended, if their riches are of benefit to themselves alone; if no poor folks are helped by their goods, no sick persons nourished; if out of the abundance of their great possessions the captive gets not ransom, nor the stranger comfort, nor the exile relief. Rich men of this kind are needier than all the needy. For they lose those returns which they might have for ever, and while they gloat over the brief and not always free enjoyment of what they possess, they are not fed upon the bread of justice nor the sweets of mercy: outwardly splendid, they have no light within: of things temporal they have abundance, but utter lack of things eternal: for they inflict starvation on their own souls, and bring them to shame and nakedness by spending upon heavenly treasures none of these things which they put into their earthly storehouses.

III. The Duty of Mercy Outweighs All Other Virtues.

But, perhaps there are some rich people, who, although they are not wont to help the Church's poor by bounteous gifts, yet keep other commands of God, and among their many meritorious acts of faith and uprightness think they will be pardoned for the lack of this one virtue. But this is so important that, though the rest exist without it, they can be of no avail. For although a man be full of faith, and chaste, and sober, and adorned with other still greater decorations, yet if he is not merciful, he cannot deserve mercy: for the Lord says, "blessed are the merciful, for God shall have mercy upon them ." And when the Son of Man comes in His Majesty and is seated on His glorious throne, and all nations being gathered together, division is made between the good and the bad, for what shall they be praised who stand upon the fight except for works of benevolence and deeds of love which Jesus Christ shall reckon as done to Himself? For He who has made man's nature His own, has separated Himself in nothing from man's humility. And what objection shall be made to those on the left except for their neglect of love, their inhuman harshness, their refusal of mercy to the poor? as if those on the right had no other virtues those on the left no other faults. But at the great and final day of judgment large-hearted liberality and ungodly meanness will be counted of such importance as to outweigh all other virtues and all other shortcomings, so that for the one men shall gain entrance into the Kingdom, for the other they shall be sent into eternal fire.

IV. And Its Efficacy, as Scripture Proves, is Incalculable.

Let no one therefore, dearly beloved, flatter himself on any merits of a good life, if works of charity be wanting in him, and let him not trust in the purity of his body, if he be not cleansed by the purification of almsgiving. For ”almsgiving wipes out sin ,” kills death, and extinguishes the punishment of perpetual fire. But he who has not been fruitful therein, shall have no indulgence from the great Re-compenser, as Solomon says, ”He that closeth his ears lest he should hear the weak, shall himself call upon the Lord, and there shall be none to hear him . And hence Tobias also, while instructing his son in the precepts of godliness, says, ”Give alms of thy substance, and turn not thy face from any poor man: so shall it come to pass that the face of God shall not be turned from thee . This virtue makes all virtues profitable; for by its presence it gives life to that very faith, by which ”the just lives ,” and which is said to be ”dead without works : because as the reason for works consists in faith, so the strength of faith consists in works. ”While we have time therefore,” as the Apostle says, ”let us do that which is good to all men, and especially to them that are of the household of faith . ”But let us not be weary in doing good;

for in His own time we shall reap .”And so the present life is the time for sowing, and the day of retribution is the time of harvest, when every one shall reap the fruit of his seed according to the amount of his sowing. And no one shall be disappointed in the produce of that harvesting, because it is the heart’s intentions rather than the sums expended that will be reckoned up. And little sums from little means shall produce as much as great sums from great means. And therefore, dearly beloved, let us carry out this Apostolic institution. And as the first collection will be next Sunday, let all prepare themselves to give willingly, that every one according to his ability may join in this most sacred offering. Your very alms and those who shall be aided by your gifts shall intercede for you, that you may be always ready for every good work in Christ Jesus our Lord, Who lives and reigns for ages without end. Amen.

I.restoration to the Divine Image in Which We Were Made is Only Possible by Our Imitation of God's Will.

If, dearly beloved, we comprehend faithfully and wisely the beginning of our creation, we shall find that man was made in God's image, to the end that he might imitate his Creator, and that our race attains its highest natural dignity, by the form of the Divine goodness being reflected in us, as in a mirror. And assuredly to this form the Saviour's grace is daily restoring us, so long as that which, in the first Adam fell, is raised up again in the second. And the cause of our restoration is naught else but the mercy of God, Whom we should not have loved, unless He had first loved us, and dispelled the darkness of our ignorance by the light of His truth. And the Lord foretelling this by the holy Isaiah says, "I will bring the blind into a way that they knew not, and will make them walk in paths which they were ignorant of. I will turn darkness into light for them, and the crooked into the straight. These words will I do for them, and not forsake them . And again he says, "I was found by them that sought Me not, and openly appeared to them that asked not for Me . And the Apostle John teaches us how this has been fulfilled, when he says.

"We know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and may be in Him that is true, even His Son ," and again, "let us therefore love God, because He first loved us . Thus it is that God, by loving us, restores us to His image, and, in order that He may find in us the form of His goodness, He gives us that whereby we ourselves too may do the work that He does, kindling that is the lamps of our minds, and inflaming us with the fire of His love, that we may love not only Himself, but also whatever He loves. For if between men that is the lasting friendship which is based upon similarity of character notwithstanding that such identity of wills is often directed to wicked ends, how ought we to yearn and strive to differ in nothing from what is pleasing to God. Of which the prophet speaks, "for wrath is in His indignation, and life in His pleasure

," because we shall not otherwise attain the dignity of the Divine Majesty, unless we imitate His will.

II. We Must Love Both God And Our Neighbour, and ”Our Neighbour” Must Be Interpreted in Its Widest Sense.

And so, when the Lord says, ”Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, from all thy heart and from all thy mind: and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself ,” let the faithful soul put on the unfading love of its Author and Ruler, and subject itself also entirely to His will in Whose works and judgments true justice and tender-hearted compassion never fail. For although a man be wearied out with labours and many misfortunes, there is good reason for him to endure all in the knowledge that adversity will either prove him good or make him better. But this godly love cannot be perfect unless a man love his neighbour also. Under which name must be included not only those who are connected with us by friendship or neighbourhood, but absolutely all men, with whom we have a common nature, whether they be foes or allies, slaves or free. For the One Maker fashioned us, the One Creator breathed life into us; we all enjoy the same sky and air, the same days and nights, and, though some be good, others bad, some righteous, others unrighteous, yet God is bountiful to all, kind to all, as Paul and Barnabas said to the Lycaonians concerning God’s Providence, ”who in generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet He left Himself not without witness, doing them good, giving rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling our hearts with food and gladness .

But the wide extent of Christian grace has given us yet greater reasons for loving our neighbour, which, reaching to all parts of the whole world, looks down on no one, and teaches that no one is to be neglected. And full rightly does He command us to love our enemies, and to pray to Him for our persecutors, who, daily grafting shoots of the wild olive from among all nations upon the holy branches of His own olive, makes men reconciled instead of enemies, adopted sons instead of strangers, just instead of ungodly, ”that every knee may bow of things in heaven, of things on earth, and of things under the earth, and every tongue confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father .”

III. We Must Be Thankful, and Show, Our Thankfulness for What We Have Received, Whethermuch or Little.

Accordingly, as God wishes us to be good, because He is good, none of His judgments ought to displease us. For not to give Him thanks in all things, what else is it but to blame Him in some degree. Man's folly too often dares to murmur against his Creator, not only in time of want, but also in time of plenty, so that, when something is not supplied, he complains, and when certain things are in abundance he is ungrateful. The Lord of rich harvests thought scorn of his well-filled garners, and groaned over his abundant grape-gathering: he did not give thanks for the size of the crop, but complained of its poorness . And if the ground has been less prolific than its wont in the seed it has reared, and the vines and the olives have failed in their supply of fruit, the year is accused, the elements blamed, neither the air nor the sky is spared, whereas nothing better befits and reassures the faithful and godly disciples of Truth than the persistent and unwearied lifting of praise to God, as says the Apostle, "Rejoice alway, pray without ceasing: in all things give thanks. For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus in all things for you . But how shall we be partakers of this devotion, unless vicissitudes of fortune train our minds in constancy, so that the love directed towards God may not be puffed up in prosperity nor faint in adversity. Let that which pleases God, please us too.

Let us rejoice in whatever measure of gifts He gives. Let him who has used great possessions well, use small ones also well. Plenty and scarcity may be equally for our good, and even in spiritual progress we shall not be east down at the smallness of the results, if our minds become not dry and barren. Let that spring from the soil of our heart, which the earth gave not. To him that fails not in good will, means to give are ever supplied. Therefore, dearly beloved, in all works of godliness let us use what each year gives us, and let not seasons of difficulty hinder our Christian benevolence. The Lord knows how to replenish the widow's vessels, which her pious deed of hospitality has emptied: He knows how to turn water into

wine: He knows how to satisfy 5,000 hungry persons with a few loaves. And He who is fed in His poor, can multiply when He takes what He increased when He gave.

IV. Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving are the Three Comprehensive Duties of a Christian.

But there are three things which most belong to religious actions, namely prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, in the exercising of which while every time is accepted, yet that ought to be more zealously observed, which we have received as hallowed by tradition from the apostles: even as this tenth month brings round again to us the opportunity when according to the ancient practice we may give more diligent heed to those three things of which I have spoken. For by prayer we seek to propitiate God, by fasting we extinguish the lusts of the flesh, by alms we redeem our sins: and at the same time God's image is throughout renewed in us, if we are always ready to praise Him, unfailingly intent on our purification and unceasingly active in cherishing our neighhour. This threefold round of duty, dearly beloved, brings all other virtues into action: it attains to God's image and likenessand unites us inseparably with the Holy Spirit. Because in prayer faith remains stedfast, in fastings life remains innocent, in almsgiving the mind remains kind. On Wednesday and Friday therefore let us fast: and on Saturday let us keep vigil with the most blessed Apostle Peter, who will deign to aid our supplications and fast and alms with his own prayers through our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Prosperous Must Show Forth Their Thankfulness to God, by Liberality to the Floor and Needy.

The transcendant power of God's grace, dearly beloved, is indeed daily effecting in Christian hearts the transference of our every n desire from earthly to heavenly things. But this present life also is passed through the Creator's aid and sustained by His providence, because He who promises things eternal is also the the Supplier of things temporal. As therefore we ought to give God thanks for the hope of future happiness towards which we run by faith, because He raises us up to a perception of the happiness in store for us, so for those things also which we receive in the course of every year, God should be honoured and praised, who having from the beginning given fertility to the earth and laid down laws of bearing fruit for every germ and seed, will never forsake his own decrees but will as Creator ever continue His kind administration of the things that He has made. Whatever therefore the cornfields, the vineyards and the olive groves have bornefor man's purposes, all this God in His bounteous goodness has produced: for under the varying condition of the elements He has mercifully aided the uncertain toils of the husbandmen so that wind, and rain, cold and heat, day and night might serve our needs. For men's methods would not have sufficed to give effect to their works, had not God given the increase to their wonted plantings and waterings.

And hence it is but godly and just that we too should help others with that which the Heavenly Father has mercifully bestowed on us. For there are full many, who have no fields, no vineyards, no olive-groves, whose wants we must provide out of the store which God has given, that they too with us may bless God for the richness of the earth and rejoice at its possessors having received things which they have shared also with the poor and the stranger. That garner is blessed and most worthy that all fruits should increase manifold in it, from which the hunger of the needy and the weak is satisfied from which the wants of the stranger are relieved, from which the desire of the sick is gratified. For these men God has in His justice permitted to be afflicted with divers troubles, that He might both crown the wretched for their patience and the merciful for their loving-kindness.

II. Almsgiving and Fasting are the Most Essential Aids to Prayer.

And while all seasons are opportune for this duty, beloved, yet this present season is specially suitable and appropriate, at which our holy fathers, being Divinely inspired, sanctioned the Fast of the tenth month, that when all the ingathering of the crops was complete, we might dedicate to God our reasonable service of abstinence, and each might remember so to use his abundance as to be more abstinent in himself and more open-handed towards the poor. For forgiveness of sins is most efficaciously prayed for with almsgiving and fasting, and supplications that are winged by such aids mount swiftly to God's ears: since as it is written, "the merciful man doeth good to his own soul ," and nothing is so much a man's own as that which he spends on his neighbour. For that part of his material possessions with which he ministers to the needy, is transformed into eternal riches, and such wealth is begotten of this bountifulness as can never be diminished or in any way destroyed, for "blessed are the merciful, for God shall have mercy on them ," and He Himself shall be their chief Reward, who is the Model of His own command.

III. Christians' Pious Activity Has So Enraged Satan that He Has Multiplied Heresies to Wreak Them Harm.

But at all these acts of godliness, dearly-beloved, which commend us more and more to God, there is no doubt that our enemy, who is so eager and so skilled in harming us, is aroused with keener stings of hatred, that under a false profession of the Christian name he may corrupt those whom he is not allowed to attack with open and bloody persecutions, and for this work he has heretics in his service whom he has led astray from the catholic Faith, subjected to himself, and forced under divers errors to serve in his camp. And as for the deception of primitive man he used the services of a serpent, so to mislead the minds of the upright he has armed these men's tongues with the poison of his falsehoods. But these treacherous designs, dearly beloved, with a shepherd's care, and so far as the Lord vouchsafes His aid, we will defeat. And taking heed lest any of the holy flock should perish, we admonish you with fatherly warnings to keep aloof from the "lying lips" and the "deceitful tongue" from which the prophet asks that his soul should be delivered ; because "their words," as says the blessed Apostle, "do creep as doth a gangrene . They creep in humbly, they arrest softly, they bind gently, they slay secretly. For they "come," as the Saviour foretold, "in sheeps' clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves ; because they could not deceive the true and simple sheep, unless they covered their bestial rage with the name of Christ.

But in them all he is at work who, though he is really the enemy of enlightenment, "transforms himself into an angel of light . His is the craft which inspires Basilides; his the ingenuity which worked in Marcion; he is the leader under whom Sabellius acted; he the author of Photinus' headlong fall, his the authority and his the spirit which Arius and Eunomius served: in fine under his command and authority the whole herd of such wild beasts has separated from the unity of the Church and severed connexion with the Truth.

IV. Of All Heresies Manicheism is the Worst and Foullest.

But while he retains this ever-varying supremacy over all the heresies, yet he has built his citadel upon the madness of the Manichees, and found in them the most spacious court in which to strut and boast himself: for there he possesses not one form of misbelief only, but a general compound of all errors and ungodlinesses. For all that is idolatrous in the heathen, all that is blind in carnal Jews, all that is unlawful in the secrets of the magic art, all finally that is profane and blasphemous in all the heresies is gathered together with all manner of filth in these men as if in a cesspool . And hence it is too long a matter to describe all their ungodlinesses: for the number of the charges against them exceeds my supply of words. It will be sufficient to indicate a few instances, that you may, from what you hear, conjecture what from modesty we omit. In the matter of their rites, however, which are as indecent morally as they are religiously, we cannot keep silence about that which the Lord has been pleased to reveal to our inquiries, lest any one should think we have trusted in this thing to vague rumours and uncertain opinions. And so with bishops and presbyters sitting beside me, and Christian nobles assembled in the same place, we ordered their elect men and women to be brought before us.

And when they had made many disclosures concerning their perverse tenets and their mode of conducting festivals, they revealed this story of utter depravity also, which I blush to describe but which has been so carefully investigated that no grounds for doubt are left for the incredulous or for cavillers. For there were present all the persons by which the unutterable crime had been perpetrated, to wit a girl at most ten years old, and two women who had nursed her and prepared her for this outrage. There was also present the stripling who had outraged her, and the bishop, who had arranged their horrible crime. All these made one and the same confession, and a tale of such foul orgies was disclosed as our ears could scarcely bear. And lest by plainer speaking we offend chaste ears, the account Of the proceedings shall suffice, in which it is most fully shown that in that sect no modesty, no sense of honour, no chastity whatever is found: for their law is falsehood, their religion the devil, their sacrifice immorality.

V. Every One Should Abjure Such Men, and Give All the Information They Possess About Them to the Authorities.

And so, dearly beloved, renounce all friendship with these men who are utterly abominable and pestilential, and whom disturbances in other districts have brought in great numbers to the city : and you women especially refrain from acquaintance and intercourse with such men, lest while your ears are charmed unawares by their fabulous stories, you fall into the devil's noose, who, knowing that he seduced the first man by the woman's mouth, and drove all men from the bliss of paradise through feminine credulity, still lies in watch for your sex with more confident craft that he may rob both of their faith and of their modesty those whom he has been able to ensnare by the servants of his falseness. This, too, dearly beloved, I entreat and admonish you loyally to inform us , if any of you know where they dwell, where they teach, whose houses they frequent, and in whose company they take rest: because it is of little avail to any one that through the Holy Ghost's protection he is not caught by them himself, if he takes no action when he knows that others are being caught. Against common enemies for the common safety all alike should exercise the same vigilance lest from one member's wound other members also be injured, and they that think such men should not be given up, in Christ's judgment be found guilty for their silence even though they are not contaminated by their approval.

VI. Zeal in Rooting Out Heresy Will Make Other Pious Duties More Acceptable.

Display then a holy zeal of religious vigilance, and let all the faithful rise in one body against these savage enemies of their souls. For the merciful God has delivered a certain portion of our noxious foes into our hands in order that by revelation of the danger theutmost caution might be aroused. Let not what has been done suffice, but let us persevere in searching them out: and by God's aid the result will be not only the continuance in safety of those who still stand, but also the recovery from error of many who have been deceived by the devil's seduction. And the prayers, and alms, and fasts that you offer to the merciful God shall be the holier for this very devotion, when this deed of faith also is added to all your other godly duties. OnWednesday and Friday, therefore, let us fast, and on Saturday let us keep vigil in the presence of the most blessed Apostle Peter; who, as we experience and know, watches unceasingly like a shepherd over the sheep entrusted to him by the Lord, and who will prevail in his entreaties that the Church of God, which was rounded by his preaching, may be free from all error, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The Duty of Fasting is Based on Both the Old and New Testaments, and is Closely Connected with the Duties of Prayer and Almsgiving.

The teaching of the Law, dearly beloved, imparts great authority to the precepts of the Gospel, seeing that certain things are transferred from the old ordinances to the new, and by the very devotions of the Church it is shown that the Lord Jesus Christ ”came not to destroy but to fulfil the Law . For since the cessation of the signs by which our Saviour’s coming was announced, and the abolition of the types in the presence of the Very Truth, those things which our religion instituted, whether for the regulation of customs or for the simple worship of God, continue with us in the same form in which they were at the beginning, and what was in harmony with both Testaments has been modified by no change. Among these is also the solemn fast of the tenth month, which is now to be kept by us according to yearly custom, because it is altogether just and godly to give thanks to the Divine bounty for the crops which the earth has produced for the use of men under the guiding hand of supreme Providence. And to show that we do this with ready mind, we must exercise not only the self-restraint of fasting, but also diligence in almsgiving, that from the ground of our heart also may spring the germ of righteousness and the fruit of love, and that we may deserve God’s mercy by showing mercy to His poor.

For the supplication, which is supported by works of piety, is most efficacious in prevailing with God, since he who turns not his heart away from the poor soon turns himself to hear the Lord, as the Lord says: ”be ye merciful as your Father also is merciful .... release and ye shall be released . What is kinder than this justice? what more merciful than this retribution, where the judge’s sentence rests in the power of him that is to be judged? ”Give,” he says, ”and it shall be given to you . How soon do the misgivings of distrust and the puttings off of avarice fall to the ground, when humanity may fearlessly spend what the Truth pledges Himself to repay.

II. He that Lends to the Lord Makes a Better Bargain Than He that Lends to Man.

Be stedfast, Christian giver: give what you may receive, sow what you may reap, scatter what you may gather. Fear not to spend, sigh not over the doubtfulness of the gain. Your substance grows when it is wisely dispensed. Set your heart on the profits due to mercy, and traffic in eternal gains. Your Recompenser wishes you to be munificent, and He who gives that you may have, commands you to spend, saying, ”Give, and it shall be given to you. You must thankfully embrace the conditions of this promise. For although you have nothing that you did not receive, yet you cannot fail to have what you give. He therefore that loves money, and wishes to multiply his wealth by immoderate profits, should rather practise this holy usury and grow rich by such money-lending, in order not to catch men hampered with difficulties, and by treacherous assistance entangle them in debts which they can never pay, but to be His creditor and His money-lender, who says, ”Give, and it shall be given to you,” and ”with what measure ye measure, it shall be measured again to you . But he is unfaithful and unfair even to himself, who does not wish to have for ever what he esteems desirable. Let him amass what he may, let him hoard and store what he may, he will leave this world empty and needy, as David the prophet says, ”for when he dieth he shall take nothing away, nor shall his glory descend with him .

Whereas if he were considerate of his own soul, he would trust his good to Him, who is both the proper Surety for the poor and the generous Repayer of loans. But unrighteous and shameless avarice, which promises to do some kind act but eludes it, trusts not God, whose promises never fail, and trusts man, who makes such hasty bargains; and while he reckons the present more certain than the future, often deservedly finds that his greed for unjust gain is the cause of by no means unjust loss.

III. Money-Lending at High Interest is in All Respects Iniquitous.

And hence, whatever result follow, the money-lender's trade is always bad, for it is sin either to lessen or increase the sum, in that if he lose what he lent he is wretched, and if he takes more than he lent he is more wretched still. The iniquity of money-lending must absolutely be abjured, and the gain which lacks all humanity must be shunned. A man's possessions are indeed multiplied by these unrighteous and sorry means, but the mind's wealth decays because usury of money is the death of the soul . For what God thinks of such men the most holy Prophet David makes clear, for when he asks, "Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy holy hill ?" he receives the Divine utterance in reply, from which he learns that that man attains to eternal rest who among other rules of holy living "hath not given his money upon usury :" and thus he who gets deceitful gain from lending his money on usury is shown to be both an alien from God's tabernacle and an exile from His holy hill, and in seeking to enrich himself by other's losses, he deserves to be punished with eternal neediness.

IV. Let Us Avoid Avarice, and Share God's Benefits with Others.

And so, dearly beloved, do ye who with the whole heart have put your trust in the Lord's promises, flee from this unclean leprosy of avarice, and use God's gift piously and wisely. And since you rejoice in His bounty, take heed that you have those who may share in your joys. For many lack what you have in plenty, and some men's needs afford you opportunity for imitating the Divine goodness, so that through you the Divine benefits may be transferred to others also, and that by being wise stewards of your temporal goods, you may acquire eternal riches. On Wednesday and Friday next, therefore, let us fast, and on Saturday keep vigil with the most blessed Apostle Peter, by whose prayers we may in all things obtain the Divine protection through Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. Self-Restraint Leads to Higher Enjoyments.

When the Saviour would instruct His disciples about the Advent of God's Kingdom and the end of the world's times, and teach His whole Church, in the person of the Apostles, He said, "Take heed lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and care of this life ." And assuredly, dearly beloved, we acknowledge that this precept applies more especially to us, to whom undoubtedly the day denounced is near, even though hidden. For the advent of which it behoves every man to prepare himself, lest it find him given over to gluttony, or entangled in cares of this life. For by daily experience, beloved, it is proved that the mind's edge is blunted by over-indulgence of the flesh, and the heart's vigour is dulled by excess of food, so that the delights of eating are even opposed to the health of the body, unless reasonable moderation withstand the temptation and the consideration of future discomfort keep from the pleasure. For although the flesh desires nothing without the soul, and receives its sensations from the same source as it receives its motions also, yet it is the function of the same soul to deny certain things to the body which is subject to it, and by its inner judgment to restrain the outer parts from things unseasonable, in order that it may be the oftener free from bodily lusts, and have leisure for Divine wisdom in the palace of the mind, where, away from all the noise of earthly cares, it may in silence enjoy holy meditations and eternal delights. And, although this is difficult to maintain in this life, yet the attempt can frequently be renewed, in order that we may the oftener and longer be occupied with spiritual rather than fleshly cares; and by our spending ever greater portions of our time on higher cares, even our temporal actions may end in gaining the incorruptible riches.

II. The Teaching of the Four Yearly Fasts is that Spiritual Self-Restraint is as Necessary as Corporeal.

This profitable observance, dearly beloved, is especially laid down for the fasts of the Church, which, in accordance with the Holy Spirit's teaching, are so distributed over the whole year that the law of abstinence may be kept before us at all times. Accordingly we keep the spring fast in Lent, the summer fast at Whitsuntide, the autumn fast in the seventh month, and the winter fast in this which is the tenth month, knowing that there is nothing unconnected with the Divine commands, and that all the elements serve the Word of God to our instruction, so that from the very hinges on which the world turns, as if by four gospels we learn unceasingly what to preach and what to do. For, when the prophet says, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork: day unto day uttereth speech, and night showeth knowledge ," what is there by which the Truth does not speak to us? By day and by night His voices are heard, and the beauty of the things made by the workmanship of the One God ceases not to instil the teachings of Reason into our hearts' ears, so that "the invisible things of God may be perceived and seen through the things which are made," and men may serve the Creator of all, not His creatures .

Since therefore all vices are destroyed by self-restraint, and whatever avarice thirsts for, pride strives for, luxury lusts after, is overcome by the solid force of this virtue, who can fail to understand the aid which is given us by fastings? for therein we are bidden to restrain ourselves, not only in food, but also in all carnal desires. Otherwise it is lost labour to endure hunger and yet not put away wrong wishes; to afflict oneself by curtailing food, and yet not to flee from sinful thoughts. That is a carnal, not a spiritual fast, where the body only is stinted, and those things persisted in, which are more harmful than all delights. What profit is it to the soul to act outwardly as mistress and inwardly to be a captive and a slave, to issue orders to the limbs and to lose the right to her own liberty? That soul for the most part (and deservedly) meets with rebellion in her servant, which does not pay to

God the service that is due. When the body therefore fasts from food, let the mind fast from vices, and pass judgment upon all earthly cares and desires according to the law of its King

III. Thus Fasting in Mind as Well as Body, and Giving Alms Freely, We Shall Win God's Highest Favour.

Let us remember that we owe love first to God, secondly to our neighbour, and that all our affections must be so regulated as not to draw us away from the worship of God, or the benefiting our fellow slave. But how shall we worship God unless that which is pleasing to Him is also pleasing to us? For, if our will is His will, our weakness will receive strength from Him, from Whom the very will came; "for it is God," as the Apostle says, "who worketh in us both to will and to do for (His) good pleasure . And so a man will not be puffed up with pride, nor crushed with despair, if he uses the gifts which God gave to His glory, and withholds his inclinations from those things, which he knows will harm him. For in abstaining from malicious envy, from luxurious and dissolute living, from the perturbations of anger, from the lust after vengeance, he will be made pure and holy by true fasting, and will be fed upon the pleasures of incorruptible delights, and so he will know how, by the spiritual use of his earthly riches, to transform them into heavenly treasures, not by hoarding up for himself what he has received, but by gaining a hundred-fold on what he gives.

And hence we warn you, beloved, in fatherly affection, to make this winter fast fruitful to yourselves by bounteous alms, rejoicing that by you the Lord feeds and clothes His poor, to whom assuredly He could have given the possessions which He has bestowed on you, had He not in His unspeakable mercy wished to justify them for their patient labour, and you for your works of love. Let us therefore fast on Wednesday and Friday, and on Saturday keep vigil with the most blessed Apostle Peter, and he will deign to assist with his own prayers our supplications and fastings and alms which our Lord Jesus Christ presents, Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

I. All Share in the Joy of Christmas.

Our Saviour, dearly-beloved, was born today: let us be glad. For there is no proper place for sadness, when we keep the birthday of the Life, which destroys the fear of mortality and brings to us the joy of promised eternity. No one is kept from sharing in this happiness. There is for all one common measure of joy, because as our Lord the destroyer of sin and death finds none free from charge, so is He come to free us all. Let the saint exult in that he draws near to victory. Let the sinner be glad in that he is invited to pardon. Let the gentile take courage in that he is called to life. For the Son of God in the fulness of time which the inscrutable depth of the Divine counsel has determined, has taken on him the nature of man, thereby to reconcile it to its Author: in order that the inventor of death, the devil, might be conquered through that (nature) which he had conquered. And in this conflict undertaken for us, the fight was fought on great and wondrous principles of fairness; for the Almighty Lord enters the lists with His savage foe not in His own majesty but in our humility, opposing him with the same form and the same nature, which shares indeed our mortality, though it is free from all sin.

Truly foreign to this nativity is that which we read of all others, ”no one is clean from stain, not even the infant who has lived but one day upon earth . Nothing therefore of the lust of the flesh has passed into that peerless nativity, nothing of the law of sin has entered. A royal Virgin of the stem of David is chosen, to be impregnated with the sacred seed and to conceive the Divinely-human offspring in mind first and then in body. And lest in ignorance of the heavenly counsel she should tremble at so strange a result , she learns from converse with the angel that what is to be wrought in her is of the Holy Ghost. Nor does she believe it loss of honour that she is soon to be the Mother of God . For why should she be in despair over the novelty of such conception, to whom the power of the most High has promised to effect it. Her implicit faith is confirmed also by the attestation of a precursory miracle, and Elizabeth receives unexpected fertility: in order that there might be no doubt that He who had given conception to the barren, would give it even to a virgin.

II. The Mystery of the Incarnation is a Fitting Theme for Joy Both to Angels and to Men.

Therefore the Word of God, Himself God,the Son of God who ”in the beginning was with God,” through whom ”all things were made” and ”without” whom ”was nothing made ,” with the purpose of delivering man from eternal death, became man: so bending Himself to take on Him our humility without decrease in His own majesty, that remaining what He was and assuming what He was not, He might unite the true form of a slave to that form in which He is equal to God the Father, and join both natures together by such a compact that the lower should not be swallowed up in its exaltation nor the higher impaired by its new associate. Without detriment therefore to the properties of either substance which then came together in one person, majesty took on humility, strength weakness, eternity mortality: and for the paying off of the debt, belonging to our condition, inviolable naturewas united with possible nature, and true God and true man were combined to form one Lord, SO that, as suited the needs of our case, one and the same Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, could both die with the one and rise again with the other .

Rightly therefore did the birth of our Salvation impart no corruption to the Virgin’s purity, because the bearing of the Truth was the keeping of honour. Such then beloved was the nativity which became the Power of God and the Wisdom of God even Christ, whereby He might be one with us in manhood and surpass us in Godhead. For unless He were true God, He would not bring us a remedy, unless He were true Man, He would not give us an example. Therefore the exulting angel’s song when the Lord was born is this, ”Glory to God in the Highest,” and their message, ”peace on earth to men of good will .” For they see that the heavenly Jerusalem is being built up out of all the nations of the world: and over that indescribable work of the Divine love how ought the humbleness of men to rejoice, when the joy of the lofty angels is so great?

III. Christians Then Must Live Worthily of Christ Their Head.

Let us then, dearly beloved, give thanks to God the Father, through His Son, in the Holy Spirit , Who ”for His great mercy, wherewith He has loved us,” has had pity on us: and ”when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together in Christ ,” that we might be inHim a new creation and a new production. Let us put off then the old man with his deeds: and having obtained a share in the birth of Christ let us renounce the works of the flesh. Christian, acknowledge thy dignity, and becoming a partner in the Divine nature, refuse to return to the old baseness by degenerate conduct. Remember the Head and the Body of which thou art a member. Recollect that thou wert rescued from the power of darkness and brought out into God’s light and kingdom. By the mystery of Baptism thou weft made the temple of the Holy Ghost: do not put such a denizen to flight from thee by base acts, and subject thyself once more to the devil’s thraldom: because thy purchase money is the blood of Christ, because He shall judge thee in truth Who ransomed thee in mercy, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Mystery of the Incarnation Demands Our Joy.

Let us be glad in the Lord, dearly-beloved, and rejoice with spiritual joy that there has dawned for us the day of ever-new redemption. of ancient preparation , of eternal bliss. For as the year rolls round, there recurs for us the commemoration of our salvation, which promised from the beginning, accomplished in the fulness of time will endure for ever; on which we are bound with hearts up-lifted to adore the divine mystery: so that what is the effect of God's great gift may be celebrated by the Church's great rejoicings. For God the almighty and merciful, Whose nature as goodness, Whose will is power, Whose work is mercy: as soon as the devil's malignity killed us by the poison of his hatred, foretold at the very beginning of the world the remedy His piety had prepared for the restoration of us mortals: proclaiming to the serpent that the seed of the woman should come to crush the lifting of his baneful head by its power, signifying no doubt that Christ would come in the flesh, God and man, Who born of a Virgin should by His uncorrupt birth condemn the despoiler of the human stock. Thus in the whole and perfect nature of true man was true God born, complete in what was His own, complete in what was ours. And "ours" we call what the Creator formed in us from the beginning and what He undertook to repair. For what, the deceiver brought in and the deceived admitted had no trace in the Saviour Nor because He partook of man's weaknesses, did He therefore share our faults. He took the form of a slave without stain of sin, increasing the human and not diminishing the Divine: because that "emptying of Himself" whereby the Invisible made Himself visible and Creator and Lord Of all things as He was, wished to be mortal, was the condescension of Pity not the failing of Power .

II. The New Character of the Birth of Christ Explained.

Therefore, when the time came, dearly beloved, which had been fore-ordained for men's redemption , there enters these lower parts of the world, the Son of God, descending from His heavenly throne and yet not quitting His Father's glory, begotten in a new order, by a new nativity. In a new order, because being invisible in His own nature He became visible in ours, and He whom nothing could contain, was content to be contained: abiding before all time He began to be in time: the Lord of all things, He obscured His immeasurable majesty and took on Him the form of a servant: being God, that cannot suffer, He did not disdain to be man that can, and immortal as He is, to subject Himself to the laws of death . And by a new nativity He was begotten, conceived by a Virgin, born of a Virgin, without paternal desire, without injury to the mother's chastity: because such a birth as knew no taint of human flesh, became One who was to be the Saviour of men, while it possessed in itself the nature of human substance. For when God was born in the flesh, God Himself was the Father, as the archangel witnessed to the Blessed Virgin Mary: "because the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee: and therefore, that which shall be born of thee shall be called holy, the Son of God . The origin is different but the nature like:

not by intercourse with man but by the power of God was it brought about: for a Virgin conceived, a Virgin bare, and a Virgin she remained. Consider here not the condition of her that bare but the will of Him that was born; for He was born Man as He willed and was able. If you inquire into the truth of His nature, you must acknowledge the matter to be human: if you search for the mode of His birth, you must confess the power to be of God. For the Lord Jesus Christ came to do away with not to endure our pollutions: not to succumb to our faults but to heal them . He came that He might cure every weakness of oar corruptness and all the sores of our defiled souls: for which reason it behoved Him to be born by a new order, who brought to men's bodies the new gift of unsullied purity. For the uncorrupt nature of Him that was born had to guard the primal virginity of the Mother, and the infused power of the Divine Spirit had to preserve in spotlessness and holiness that sanctuary which He had chosen for Himself: that Spirit (I say) who had determined to raise the fallen, to restore the broken, and by overcoming the allurements of the flesh to bestow

on us in abundant measure the power of chastity: in order that the virginity which in others cannot be retained in child-bearing, might be attained by them at their second birth.

III. Justice Required that Satan Should Be Vanquished by God Made Man.

And, dearly beloved, this very fact that Christ chose to be born of a Virgin does it not appear to be part of the deepest design? I mean, that the devil should not be aware that Salvation had been born for the human race, and through the obscurity of that spiritual conception, when he saw Him no different to others, should believe Him born in no different way to others. For when he observed that His nature was like that of all others, he thought that He had the same origin as all had: and did not understand that He was free from the bonds of transgression because he did not find Him a stranger to the weakness of mortality. For though the true mercy of God had infinitely many schemes to hand for the restoration of mankind, it chose that particular design which put in force for destroying the devil's work, not the efficacy of might but the dictates of justice. For the pride of the ancient foe not undeservedly made good its despotic rights over all men, and with no unwarrantable supremacy tyrannized over those who had been of their own accord lured away from God's commands to be the slaves of his will. And so there would be no justice in his losing the immemorial slavery of the human race, were he not conquered by that which he had subjugated. And to this end, without male seed Christ was conceived of a Virgin, who was fecundated not by human intercourse but by the Holy Spirit.

And whereas in all mothers conception does not take place without stain of sin, this one received purification from the Source of her conception. For no taint of sin penetrated, where no intercourse occurred. Her unsullied virginity knew no lust when it ministered the substance. The Lord took from His mother our nature, not our fault . The slave's form is, created without the slave's estate, because the New Man is so commingled with the old, as both to assume the reality of our race and to remove its ancient flaw.

IV. The Incarnation Deceived the Devil and Caused Him to Break the Bond Under Which He Held Men.

When, therefore, the merciful and almighty Saviour so arranged the commencement of His human course as to hide the power of His Godhead which was inseparable from His manhood under the veil of our weakness, the crafty foe was taken off his guard and he thought that the nativity of the Child, Who was born for the salvation of mankind, was as much subject to himself as all others are at their birth. For he saw Him crying and weeping, he saw Him wrapped in swaddling clothes, subjected to circumcision, offering the sacrifice which the law required. And then he perceived in Him the usual growth of boyhood, and could have had no doubt of His reaching man's estate by natural steps. Meanwhile, he inflicted insults, multiplied injuries, made use of curses, affronts, blasphemies, abuse, in a word, poured upon Him all the force of his fury and exhausted all the varieties of trial: and knowing how he had poisoned man's nature, had no conception that He had no share in the first transgression Whose mortality he had ascertained by so many proofs. The unscrupulous thief and greedy robber persisted in assaulting Him Who had nothing of His own, and in carrying out the general sentence on original sin, went beyond the bond on which he rested , and required the punishment of iniquity from Him in Whom he found no fault. And thus the malevolent terms of the deadly compact are annulled, and through the injustice of an overcharge the whole debt is cancelled.

The strong one is bound by his own chains, and every device of the evil one recoils on his own head. When the prince of the world is bound, all that he held in captivity is released . Our nature cleansed from its old contagion regains its honourable estate, death is destroyed by death, nativity is restored by nativity: since at one and the same time redemption does away with slavery, regeneration changes our origin, and faith justifies the sinner.

V. The Christian is Exhorted to Share in the Blessings of the Incarnation.

Whoever then thou art that devoutly and faithfully boastest of the Christian name, estimate this atonement at its right worth. For to thee who wast a castaway, banished from the realms of paradise, dying of thy weary exile, reduced to dust and ashes, without further hope of living, by the Incarnation of the Word was given the power to return from afar to thy Maker, to recognize thy parentage, to become free after slavery, to be promoted from being an outcast to sonship: so that, thou who wast born of corruptible flesh, mayest be reborn by the Spirit of God, and obtain through grace what thou hadst not by nature, and, if thou acknowledge thyself the son of God by the spirit of adoption, dare to call God Father. Freed from the accusings of a bad conscience, aspire to the kingdom of heaven, do God's will supported by the Divine help, imitate the angels upon earth, feed on the strength of immortal sustenance, fight fearlessly on the side of piety against hostile temptations, and if thou keep thy allegiance in the heavenly warfare, doubt not that thou wilt be crowned for thy victory in the triumphant camp of the Eternal King, when the resurrection that is prepared for the faithful has raised thee to participate in the heavenly Kingdom.

VI. The Festival Has Nothing to Do with Sunworship, as Some Maintain.

Having therefore so confident a hope, dearly beloved, abide firm in the Faith in which you are built: lest that same tempter whose tyranny over you Christ has already destroyed, win you back again with any of his wiles, and mar even the joys of the present festival by his deceitful art, misleading simpler souls with the pestilential notion of some to whom this our solemn feast day seems to derive its honour, not so much from the nativity of Christ as, according to them, from the rising of the new sun . Such men's hearts are wrapped in total darkness, and have no growing perception of the true Light: for they are still drawn away by the foolish errors of heathendom, and because they cannot lift the eyes of their mind above that which their carnal sight beholds, they pay divine honourto the luminaries that minister to the world.Let not Christian souls entertain any suchwicked superstition and portentous lie. Beyond all measure are things temporal removed from the Eternal, things corporeal from the Incorporeal, things governed from the Governor. For though they possess a wondrous beauty, yet they have no Godhead to be worshipped. That power then, that wisdom, that majesty is to be adored which created the universe out of nothing, and framed by His almighty methods the substance of the earth and sky into what forms and dimensions He willed. Sun, moon, and stars may be most useful to us, most fair to look upon;

but only if we render thanks to their Maker for them and worship God who made them, not the creation which does Him service. Then praise God, dearly beloved, in all His works and judgments. Cherish an undoubting belief in the Virgin's pure conception. Honour the sacred and Divine mystery of man's restoration with holy and sincere service. Embrace Christ born in our flesh, that you may deserve to see Him also as the God of glory reigning in His majesty, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit remains in the unity of the Godhead for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Truths of the Incarnation Never Suffer from Being Repeated.

The things which are connected with the mystery of to-day's solemn feast are well known to you, dearly-beloved, and have frequently been heard: but as yonder visible light affords pleasure to eyes that are unimpaired, so to sound hearts does the Saviour's nativity give eternal joy; and we must not keep silent about it, though we cannot treat of it as we ought. For we believe that what Isaiah says, "who shall declare his generation ? applies not only to that mystery, whereby the Son of God is co-eternal with the Father, but also to this birth whereby "the Word became flesh. And SO God, the Son of God, equal and of the same nature from the Father and with the Father, Creator and Lord of the Universe, Who is completely present everywhere, and completely exceeds all things, in the due course of time, which runs by His own disposal, chose for Himself this day on which to be born of the blessed virgin Mary for the salvation of the world, without loss of the mother's honour. For her virginity was violated neither at the conception nor at the birth: "that it might be fulfilled," as the Evangelist says, "which was spoken by the Lord through Isaiah the prophet, saying, behold the virgin shall conceive in the womb, and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is interpreted, God with us .

For this wondrous child-bearing of the holy Virgin produced in her offspring one person which was truly human and truly Divine , because neither substance so retained their properties that there could be any division of persons in them; nor was the creature taken into partnership with its Creator in such a way that the One was the in-dweller, and the other the dwelling; but so that the one nature was blended with the other. And although the nature which is taken is one, and that which takes is another, yet these two diverse natures come together into such close union that it is one and the same Son who says both that, as true Man, "He is less than the Father," and that, as true God, "He is equal with the Father."

II.the Arians Could Not Comprehend the Union of God And Man.

This union, dearly beloved, whereby the Creator is joined to the creature, Arian blindness could not see with the eyes of intelligence, but, not believing that the Only-begotten of God was of the same glory and substance with the Father, spoke of the Son's Godhead as inferior, drawing its arguments front those words which are to be referred to the "form of a slave," in respect of which, in order to show that it belongs to no other or different person in Himself, the same Son of God with the same form, says, "The Father is greater than I ," just as He says with the same form, "I and my Father are one . For in "the form of a slave," which He took at the end of the ages for our restoration, He is inferior to the Father: but in the form of God, in which He was before the ages, He is equal to the Father. In His human humiliation He was "made of a woman, made under the Law : in His Divine majesty He abides the Word of God, "through whom all things were made . Accordingly, He Who in the form of God made man, in the form of a slave was made man. For both natures retain their own proper character without loss: and as the form of God did not do away with the form of a slave, so the form of a slave did not impair the form of God .

And so the mystery of power united to weakness, in respect of the same human nature, allows the Son to be called inferior to the Father: but the Godhead, which is One in the Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, excludes all notion of inequality. For the eternity of the Trinity has nothing temporal, nothing dissimilar in nature: Its will is one, Its substance identical, Its power equal, and yet there are not three Gods, but one God ; because it is a true and inseparable unity, where there can be no diversity . Thus in the whole and perfect nature of true man was true God born, complete in what was His own, complete in what was ours. And by "ours" we mean what the Creator formed in us from the beginning, and what He undertook to repair. For what the deceiver brought in, and man deceived committed, had no trace in the Saviour; nor because He partook of man's weaknesses, did He therefore share our faults. He took the form of a slave without stain of sin, increasing the human

and not diminishing the divine: for that ”emptying of Himself,” whereby the Invisible made Himself visible, was the bending down of pity, not the failing of power.

III. The Incarnation Was Necessary to the Taking Away of Sin.

In order therefore that we might be called to eternal bliss from our original bond and from earthly errors, He came down Himself to us to Whom we could not ascend, because, although there was in many the love of truth, yet the variety of our shifting opinions was deceived by the craft of misleading demons, and man's ignorance was dragged into diverse and conflicting notions by a falsely-called science. But to remove this mockery, whereby men's minds were taken captive to serve the arrogant devil, the teaching of the Law was not sufficient, nor could our nature be restored merely by the Prophets' exhortations; but the reality of redemption had to be added to moral injunctions, and our fundamentally corrupt origin had to be re-born afresh. A Victim had to be offered for our atonement Who should be both a partner of our race and free from our contamination, so that this design of God whereby it pleased Him to take away the sin of the world in the Nativity and Passion of Jesus Christ, might reach to all generations : and that we should not be disturbed but rather strengthened by these mysteries, which vary with the character of the times, since the Faith, whereby we live, has at no time suffered variation.

IV.the Blessings of the Incarnation Stretch Backwards as Well as Reach Forward.

Accordingly let those men cease their complaints who with disloyal murmurs speak against the dispensations of God, and babble about the lateness of the Lord's Nativity as if that, which was fulfilled in the last age of the world, had no bearing upon the times that are past. For the Incarnation of the Word did but contribute to the doing of that which was done : and the mystery ofman's salvation was never in the remotest age at a standstill. What the apostles foretold, that the prophets announced: nor was that fulfilled too late which has always been believed. But the Wisdom and Goodness of God made us more receptive of His call by thus delaying the work which brought salvation: so that what through so many ages had been foretold by many signs, many utterances, and many mysteries, might not be doubtful in these days of the Gospel: and that the Saviour's nativity, which was to exceed all wonders and all the measure of human knowledge, might engender in us a Faith so much the firmer, as the foretelling of it had been ancient and oft-repeated. And so it was no new counsel, no tardy pity whereby God took thought for men: but from the constitution of the world He ordained one and the same Cause of Salvation for all. For the grace of God, by which the whole body of the saints is ever justified, was augmented, not begun, when Christ was born: and this mystery of God's great love, wherewith the whole world is now filled, was so effectively presignified that those who believed that promise obtained no less than they, who were the actual recipients.

V. The Coming of Christ in Our Flesh Corresponds with Our Becoming Members of His Body.

Wherefore since the loving-kindness is manifest, dearly beloved, wherewith all the riches of Divine goodness are showered on us, whose call to eternal life has been assisted not only by the profitable examples of those who went before, but also by the visible and bodily appearing of the Truth Itself, we are bound to keep the day of the Lord's Nativity with no slothful nor carnal joy. And we shall each keep it worthily and thoroughly, if we remember of what Body we are members, and to what a Head we are joined, lest any one as an ill-fitting joint cohere not with the rest of the sacred building. Consider, dearly beloved and by the illumination of the Holy Spirit thoughtfully bear in mind Who it was that received us into Himself, and that we have received in us: since, as the Lord Jesus became our flesh by being born, so we also became His body by being re-born. Therefore are we both members of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Ghost: and for this reason the blessed Apostle says, "Glorify and carry God in your body : for while suggesting to us the standard of His own gentleness and humility, He fills us with that power whereby He redeemed us, as the Lord Himself promises: "come unto Me all ye who labour and are heavy-laden, and I will refresh you.

Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls " Let us then take the yoke, that is not heavy nor irksome, of the Truth that rules us, and let us imitate His humility, to Whose glory we wish to be conformed: He Himself helping us and leading us to His promises, Who, according to His great mercy, is powerful to blot out our sins, and to perfect His gifts in us, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Incarnation Fulfils All Its Types and Promises.

The Divine goodness, dearly beloved, has indeed always taken thought for mankind in divers manners, and in many portions, and of His mercy has imparted many gifts of His providence to the ages of old; but in these last times has exceeded all the abundance of His usual kindness, when in Christ the very Mercy has descended to sinners, the very Truth to those that are astray, the very Life to those that are dead: so that Word, which is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father, might take our humble nature into union with His Godhead, and, being born God of God, might also be bern Man of man. Tiffs was indeed promised from the foundation of the world, and had always been prophesied by many intimations of facts and words : but how small a portion of mankind would these types and fore-shadowed mysteries have saved, had not the coming of Christ fulfilled those long and secret promises: and had not that which then benefited but a few believers in the prospect, now benefited myriads of the faithful in its accomplishment. Now no longer then are we led to believe by signs and types, but being confirmed by the gospel story we worship that which we believe to have been done; the prophetic lore assisting our knowledge, so that we have no manner of doubt about that which we know to have been predicted by such sure oracles. For hence it is that the Lord says to Abraham: ”In thy seed shall all nations be blessed :

hence David, in the spirit of prophecy, sings, saying: ”The Lord swore truth to David, and He shall not frustrate it: of the fruit of thy loins will I set upon thy seat ; hence the Lord again says through Isaiah: ”behold a virgin shall conceive in her womb, and shall bear a Son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel, which is interpreted, God with us ,” and again, ”a rod shall come forth from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall arise from his root . In which rod, no doubt the blessed Virgin Mary is predicted, who sprung from the stock of Jesse and David and fecundated by the Holy Ghost, brought forth a new flower of human flesh, becoming a virgin-mother.

II. The Incarnation Was the Only Effective Remedy to the Fall.

Let the righteous then rejoice in the Lord, and let the hearts of believers turn to God's praise, and the sons of men confess His wondrous acts; since in this work of God especially our humble estate realizes how highly its Maker values it: in that, after His great gift to mankind in making us after His image, He contributed far more largely to our restoration when the Land Himself took on Him "the form of a slave. For though all that the Creator expends upon His creature is part of one and the same Fatherly love, yet it is less wonderful than man should advance to divine things than that God should descend to humanity. But unless the Almighty God did deign to do this, no kind of righteousness, no form of wisdom could rescue any one from the devil's bondage and from the depths of eternal death. For the condemnation that passes with sin from one upon all would remain, and our nature, corroded by its deadly wound, would discover no remedy, because it could not alter its state in its own strength. For the first man received the substance of flesh from the earth, and was quickened with a rational spirit by the in-breathing of his Creator , so that living after the image and likeness of his Maker, he might preserve the form of God's goodness and righteousness as in a bright mirror.

And, if he had perseveringly maintained this high dignity of his nature by observing the Law that was given him, his uncorrupt mind would have raised the character even Of his earthly body to heavenly glory. But because in unhappy rashness he trusted the envious deceiver, and agreeing to his presumptuous counsels, preferred to forestall rather than to win the increase of honour that was in storefor him, not only did that one man, but in him all that came after him also hear the verdict: "earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou go ; "as in the earthy," therefore, "such are they also that are earthy ," and no one is immortal, because no one is heavenly.

III. We All Became Partakers in the Birth of Christ, by the Re-Birth of Baptism.

And so to undo this chain of sin and death, the Almighty Son of God, that fills all things and contains,all things, altogether equal to the Father and co-eternal in one essence from Him and with Him, took on Him man's nature, and the Creator and Land of all things deigned to be a mortal: choosing for His mother one whom He had made, one who, without loss of her maiden honour, supplied so much of bodily substance, that without the pollution of human seed the New Man might be possessed of purity and truth. In Christ, therefore, born of the Virgin's womb, the nature does not differ from ours, because His nativity is wonderful. For He Who is true God, is also true man: and there is no lie in either nature. "The Word became flesh" by exaltation of the flesh, not by failure of the Godhead: which so tempered its power and goodness as to exalt our nature by taking it, and not to lose His own by imparting it. In this nativity of Christ, according to the prophecy of David, "truth sprang out of the earth, and righteousness looked down from heaven ." In this nativity also, Isaiah's saying is fulfilled, "let the earth produce and bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together ." For the earth of human flesh, which in the first transgressor, was cursed, in this Offspring of the Blessed Virgin only produced a seed that was blessed and free from the fault of its stock. And each one is a partaker of this spiritual origin in regeneration; and to every one when he is re-born, the water of baptism is like the Virgin's womb; for the same Holy Spirit fills the font, Who filled the Virgin, that the sin, which that sacred conception overthrew, may be taken away by this mystical washing.

IV. The Manichaeans, by Rejecting the Incarnation, Have Fallen into Terrible Iniquities.

In this mystery, dear beloved, the mad error of the Manichaeans has no part, nor have they any partnership in the regeneration of Christ, who say that He was corporeally born of the Virgin Mary: so that, as they do not believe in His real nativity, they do not accept His real passion either; and, not acknowledging Him really buried, they reject His genuine resurrection. For, having entered on the perilous path of their abominable dogma, where all is dark and slippery, they rush into the abyss of death over the precipice of falsehood, and find no sure ground on which to rest; because, besides all their other diabolical enormities, on the very chief feast of Christ's worship, as their latest confession has made manifest , they revel in bodily as well as mental pollution, losing their own modesty as well as the purity of their Faith; so that they are found to be as filthy in their rites as they are blasphemers in their doctrines.

V. Other Heresies Contain Some Portion of Truth, But the Manichoeans Contain None Whatever.

Other heresies, dearly beloved, although they are all rightly to be condemned in their variety, yet have each in some part of them that which is true. Arius, in laying down that the Son of God is less than the Father and a creature, and in thinking that the Holy Spirit was like all else made by the same (Father), has lost himself in great blasphemy; but he has not denied the eternal and unchangeable Godhead in the essence of the Father, though he could not see it in the Unity of the Trinity. Macedonius was devoid of the light of the Truth when he did not receive the Godhead of the Holy Spirit, but he did acknowledge one power and the same nature in the Father and the Son. Sabellius was plunged into inextricable error by holding the unity of substance to be inseparable in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but granted to a singleness of nature what he should have attributed to an equality of nature , and because he could not understand a true Trinity, he believed in one and the same person under a threefold appellation. Photinus, misled by his mental blindness, acknowledged in Christ true man of our substance, but did not believe Him born God of God before all ages, and so losing the entirety of the Faith, believed the Son of God tO have taken on Him the true nature of human flesh in such a way as to assert that there was no soul in it, because the Godhead Itself took its place . Thus, if all the errors which the catholic Faith has anathematized are recanted, something is found in one after another which can be separated from its damnable setting. But in the detestable dogma of the Manicheans there is absolutely nothing which can be adjudged tolerable in any degree.

VI. Christians Must Cling to the One Faith and Not Be Led Astray.

But you, dearly beloved, whom I address in no less earnest terms than those of the blessed Apostle Peter, ”a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession ,” built upon the impregnable rock, Christ, and joined to the Lord our Saviour by His true assumption of our flesh, remain firm in that Faith, which you have professed before many witnesses, and in which you were reborn through water and the Holy Ghost, and received the anointing of salvation, and the seal of eternal life . But ”if any one preach to you any thing beside that which you have learnt, let him be anathema : refuse to put wicked fables before the clearest truth, and what you may happen to read or hear contrary to the rule of the catholic and Apostolic creed, judge it altogether deadly and diabolical. Be not carried away by their deceitful keepings of sham and pretended fasts which tend not to the cleansing, but to the destroying of men’s souls. They put on indeed a cloke of piety and chastity, but under this deceit they conceal the filthiness of their acts, and from the recesses of their ungodly heart hurl shafts to wound the simple; that, as the prophet says, ”they may shoot in darkness at the upright in heart . A mighty bulwark is a sound faith, a true faith, to which nothing has to be added or taken away:

because unless it is one, it is no faith, as the Apostle says, ”one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all . Cling to this unity, dearly beloved, with minds unshaken, and in it ”follow after” all ”holiness ,” in it carry out the Lord’s commands, because ”without faith it is impossible to please God ,” and without it nothing is holy, nothing is pure, nothing alive: ”for the just lives by faith ,” and he who by the devil’s deception loses it, is dead though living, because as righteousness is gained by faith, so too by a true faith is eternal life gained, as says our Lord and Saviour. And this is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent . May He make you to advance and persevere to the end, Who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

I. Christmas Morning is the Most Appropriate Time for Thoughts on the Nativity.

On all days and at all times, dearly beloved, does the birth of our Lord and Saviour from the Virgin-mother occur to the thoughts of the faithful, who meditate on divine things, that the mind may be aroused to the acknowledgment of its Maker, and whether it be occupied in the groans of supplication, or in the shouting of praise, or in the offering of sacrifice, may employ its spiritual insight on nothing more frequently and more trustingly than on the fact that God the Son of God, begotten of the co-eternal Father, was also born by a human birth. But this Nativity which is to be adored in heaven and on earth is suggested to us by no day more than this when, with the early light still shedding its rays on nature , there is borne in upon our senses the brightness of this wondrous mystery. For the angel Gabriel's converse with the astonished Mary and her conception by the Holy Ghost as wondrously promised as believed, seem to recur not only to the memory but to the very eyes. For to day the Maker of the world was born of a Virgin's womb, and He, who made all natures, became Son of her, whom He created. To-day the Word of God appeared clothed in flesh, and That which had never been visible to human eyes began to be tangible to our hands as well. Today the shepherds learnt from angels' voices that the Saviour was born in the substance of our flesh and soul; and to-day the form of the Gospel message was pre-arranged by the leaders of the Lord's flocks , so that we too may say with the arm), of the heavenly host: "Glory in the highest to God, and on earth peace to men of good will."

II. Christians are Essentially Participators in the Nativity of Christ.

Although, therefore, that infancy, which the majesty of God's Son did not disdain, reached mature manhood by the growth of years and, when the triumph of His passion and resurrection was completed, all the actions of humility which were undertaken for us ceased, yet to-day's festival renews for us the holy childhood of Jesus born of the Virgin Mary: and in adoring the birth of our Saviour, we find we are celebrating the commencement of our own life. For the birth of Christ is the source of life for Christian folk, and the birthday of the Head is the birthday of the body. Although every individual that is called has his own order, and all the sons of the Church are separated from one another by intervals of time, yet as the entire body of the faithful being born in the font of baptism is crucified with Christ in His passion, raised again in His resurrection, and placed at the Father's right hand in His ascension, so with Him are they born in this nativity. For any believer in whatever part of the world that is re-born in Christ, quits the old paths of his original nature and passes into a new man by being re-born; and no longer is he reckoned of his earthly father's stock but among the seed of the Saviour, Who became the Son of man in order that we might have the power to be the sons of God.

For unless He came down to us in this humiliation, no one would reach His presence by any merits of his own. Let not earthly wisdom shroud in darkness the hearts of the called on this point, and let not the frailty of earthly thoughts raise itself against the loftiness of God's grace, for it will soon return to the lowest dust. At the end of the ages is fulfilled that which was ordained from all eternity: and in the presence of realities, when signs and types have ceased, the Law and prophecy have become Truth: and so Abraham is found the father of all nations, and the promised blessing is given to the world in his seed: nor are they only Israelites whom blood and flesh begot, but the whole body of the adopted eater into possession of the heritage prepared for the sons of Faith. Be not disturbed by the cavils of silly questionings, and let not the effects of the Divine word be dissipated by

human calculation; we with Abraham believe in God and ”waver not through unbelief ” but ”know most assuredly that what the Lord promised, He is able to perform.”

III. Peace with God Is His Best Gift to Man.

The Saviour then, dearly beloved, is born not of fleshly seed but of the Holy Spirit, in such wise that the condemnation of the first transgression did not touch Him. And hence the very greatness of the boon conferred demands of us reverence worthy of its splendour. For, as the blessed Apostle teaches, ”we have received not the spirit of this world but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which are given us by God : and that Spirit can in no other way be rightly worshipped, except by offering Him that which we received from Him. But in the treasures of the Lord’s bounty what can we find so suitable to the honour of the present feast as the peace, which at the Lord’s nativity was first proclaimed by the angel-choir? For that it is which brings forth the sons of God, the nurse of love and the mother of unity: the rest of the blessed and our eternal home; whose proper work and special office it is to join to God those whom it removes from the world. Whence the Apostle incites us to this good end, in saying, ”being justified therefore by faith let us have peace towards God . In which brief sentence are summed up nearly all the commandments; for where true peace is, there can be no lack of virtue. But what is it, dearly beloved, to have peace towards God, except to wish what He bids, and not to wish what He forbids?

For if human friendships seek out equality of soul and similarity of desires, and difference of habits can never attain to full harmony, how will he be partaker of divine peace, who is pleased with what displeases God and desires to get delight from what he knows to be offensive to God? That is not the spirit of the sons of God; such wisdom is not acceptable to the noble family of the adopted. That chosen and royal race must live up to the dignity of its regeneration, must love what the Father loves, and in nought disagree with its Maker, lest the Lord should again say: ”I have begotten and raised up sons, but they have scorned Me: the ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel hath not known Me and My people hath not acknowledged Me .”

IV. We Must Be Worthy of Our Calling as Sans and Friends of God.

The mystery of this boon is great, dearly beloved, and this gift exceeds all gifts that God should call man son, and man should name God Father: for by these terms we perceive and learn the love which reached so great a height. For if in natural progeny and earthly families those who are born of noble parents are lowered by the faults of evil intercourse, and unworthy offspring are put to shame by the very brilliance of their ancestry; to what end will they come who through love of the world do not fear to be outcast from the family of Christ? But if it gains the praise of men that the father's glory should shine again in their descendants, how much more glorious is it for those who are born of God to regain the brightness of their Maker's likeness and display in themselves Him Who begat them, as saith the Lord: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven ?

We know indeed, as the Apostle John says that "the whole world lieth in the evil one ," and that by the stratagems of the Devil and his angels numberless attempts are made either to frighten man in his struggle upwards by adversity or to spoil him by prosperity, but "greater is He that is in us, than he that is against us ," and they who have peace with God and are always saying to the Father with their whole hearts "thy will be done " can be overcome in no battles, can be hurt by no assaults. For accusing ourselves in our confessions and refusing the spirit's consent to our fleshly lusts, we stir up against us the enmity of him who is the author of sin, but secure a peace with God that nothing can destroy, by accepting His gracious service, in order that we may not only surrender ourselves in obedience to our King but also be united to Him by our free-will. For if we are like-minded, if we wish what He wishes, and disapprove what He disapproves, He will finish all our wars for us, He Who gave the will, will also give the power: so that we may be fellow-workers in His works, and with the exultation of Faith may utter that prophetic song: "the Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? the Lord is the defender of my life: of whom shall I be afraid ?"

V. The Birth of Christ is the Birth of Peace to the Church.

They then who ”are born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God ,” must offer to. the Father the unanimity of peace-loving sons, and all the members of adoption must meet in the First-begotten of the new creation, Who came to do not His own Will but His that sent Him; inasmuch as the Father in His gracious favour has adopted as His heirs not those that are discordant nor those that are unlike Him, but those that are in feeling and affection one. They that are re-modelled after one pattern must have a spirit like the model. The birthday of the Lord is the birthday of peace: for thus says the Apostle, ”He is our peace, who made both one ; since whether we be Jew or Gentile, ”through Him we have access in one Spirit to the Father . And it was this in particular that He taught His disciples before the day of His passion which He had of His own free-will fore-ordained, saying, ”My peace I give unto you, My peace I leave for you ; and lest under the general term the character of His peace should escape notice, He added. ”not as the world give I unto you . The world, He Says, has its friendships, and brings many that are apart into loving harmony. There are also minds which are equal in vices. and similarity of desires produces equality of affection.

And if any are perchance to be found who are not pleased with what is mean and dishonourable, and who exclude from the terms of their connexion unlawful compacts, yet even such if they be either Jews, heretics or heathens , belong not to God’s friendship but to this world’s peace. But the peace of the spiritual and of catholics coming down from above and leading upwards refuses to hold communion with the lovers of the world resists all obstacles and flies from pernicious pleasures to true joys, as the Lord says: ”Where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also : that is, if what you love is below you will descend to the lowest depth: if what you love is above, you will reach the topmost height: thither may the Spirit of peace lead and bring us, whose wishes and feeling are at one, and who are of one mind in faith and hope and in charity: since ”as many as are led by the Spirit of God these are sons of God ” Who reigneth with the Son and Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

I. It is Equally Dangerous to Deny the Godhead or the Manhood in Christ.

He is a true and devout worshipper, dearly-beloved, of to-day's festival who thinks nothing that is either false about the Lord's Incarnation or unworthy about His Godhead. For it is an equally dangerous evil to deny in Him the reality of our nature and the equality with the Father in glory. When, therefore, we attempt to understand the mystery of Christ's nativity, wherein He was born of the Virgin-mother, let all the clouds of earthly reasonings be driven far away and the smoke of worldly wisdom be purged from the eyes of illuminated faith: for the authority on which we trust is divine, the teaching which we follow is divine. Inasmuch as whether it be the testimony of the Law, or the oracles of the prophets, or the trumpet of the gospel to which we apply our inward ear, that is true which the blessed John full of the Holy Spirit uttered with his voice of thunder : "in the beginning was the Word: and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was nothing made . And similarly is it true what the same preacher added: "the Word became flesh and dwelt in us: and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father . Therefore in both natures it is the same Son of God taking what is ours and not losing what is His own;

renewing man in His manhood, but enduring unchangeable in Himself. For the Godhead which is His in common with the Father un lerwent no loss of omnipotence, nor did the "form of a slave" do despite to the "form of God," because the supreme and eternal Essence, which lowered Itself for the salvation of mankind, transferred us into Its glory, but did not cease to be what It was. And hence when the Only-begotten of God confesses Himself less than the Father , and yet calls Himself equal with Him , He demonstrates the reality of both forms in Himself: so thai the inequality proves the human nature, and the equality the Divine.

II. The Incarnation Has Changed All the Possibilities of Man's Existence.

The bodily Nativity therefore of the Son of God took nothing from and added nothing to His Majesty because His unchangeable substance could be neither diminished nor increased. For that "the Word became flesh" does not signify that the nature of God was changed into flesh, but that the Word took the flesh into the unity of His Person: and therein undoubtedly the whole man was received, with which within the Virgin's womb fecundated by the Holy Spirit, whose virginity was destined never to be lost , the Son of God was so inseparably united that He who was born without time of the Father's essence was Himself in time born of the Virgin's womb. For we could not otherwise be released from the chains of eternal death but by Him becoming humble in our nature, Who remained Almighty in His own. And so our Lord Jesus Christ, being at birth true man though He never ceased to be true God, made in Himself the beginning of a new creation, and in the "form" of His birth started the spiritual life of mankind afresh, that to abolish the taint of our birth according to the flesh there might be a possibility of regeneration without our sinful seed for those of whom it is said, "Who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God . What mind can grasp this mystery, what tongue can express this gracious act? Sinfulness returns to guiltlessness and the old nature becomes new;

strangers receive adoption and outsiders enter upon an inheritance. The ungodly begin to be righteous, the miserly benevolent, the incontinent chaste, the earthly heavenly. And whence comes this change, save by the right hand of the Most High? For the Son of God came to "destroy the works of the devil ,"and has so united Himself with us and us with Him that the descent of God to man's estate became the exaltation of man to God's.

III. The Devil Knows Exactly What Temptations to Offer to Each Several Person.

But in this mercifulness of God, dearly beloved, the greatness of which towards us we cannot explain, Christians must be extremely careful lest they be caught again in the devil's wiles and once more entangled in the errors which they have renounced. For the old enemy does not cease to "transform himself into an angel of light ," and spread everywhere the snares of his deceptions, and make every effort to corrupt the faith of believers. He knows whom to ply with the zest of greed, whom to assail with the allurements of the belly, before whom to set the attractions of self-indulgence, in whom to instil the poison of jealousy: he knows whom to overwhelm with grief, whom to cheat with joy, whom to surprise with fear, whom to bewilder with wonderment: there is no one whose habits he does not sift, whose cares he does not winnow, whose affections he does not pry into: and wherever he sees a man most absorbed in occupation, there he seeks opportunity to injure him. Moreover he has many whom he has bound still more tightly because they are suited for his designs, that he may use their abilities and tongues to deceive others. Through them are guaranteed the healing of sicknesses, the prognosticating of future, events, the appeasing of demons and the driving away of apparitions . They also are to be added who falsely allege that the entire condition of human life depends on the influences of the stars, and that that which is really either the divine will or ours rests with the unchangeable fates. And yet, in order to do still greater harm, they promise that they can be changed if supplication is made to those constellations which are adverse. And thus their ungodly fabrications destroy themselves; for if their predictions are not reliable, the fates are not to be feared: if they are, the stars are not to be venerated.

IV. The Foolish Practice of Some Who Turn to the Sun and Bow to It is Reprehensible.

From such a system of teaching proceeds also the ungodly practice of certain foolish folk who worship the sun as it rises at the beginning of daylight from elevated positions: even some Christians think it is so proper to do this that, before entering the blessed Apostle Peter's basilica, which is dedicated to the One Living and true God, when they have mounted the steps which lead to the raised platform , they turn round and bow themselves towards the rising sun and with bent neck do homage to its brilliant orb. We are full of grief and vexation that this should happen, which is partly due to the fault of ignorance and partly to the spirit of heathenism: because although some of them do perhaps worship the Creator of that fair light rather than the Light itself, which is His creature, yet we must abstain even flora the appearance of this observance: for if one who has abandoned the worship of gods, finds it in our own worship, will he not hark back again to this fragment of his old superstition, as if it were allowable, when he sees it to be common both to Christians and to infidels?

V. The Sun and Moon Were Created for Use, Not for Worship.

This objectionable practice must be given up therefore by the faithful, and the honour due to God alone must not be mixed up with those men's rites who serve their fellow-creatures. For the divine Scripture says: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve ." Anti the blessed Job, "a man without complaint," as the Lord says, "and one that eschews every evil ," said, "Have I seen the sun when it shone or the moon walking brightly, and my heart hath rejoiced in secret, and I have kissed my hand: what is my great iniquity and denial against the most High God ?" But what is the sun or what is the moon but elements of visible creation and material light: one of which is of greater brightness and the other of lesser light? For as it is now day time and now night time, so the Creator has constituted divers kinds of luminaries, although even before they were made there had been days without the sun and nights without the moon . But these were fashioned to serve in making man, that he who is an animal endowed with reason might be sure of the distinction of the months, the recurrence of the year, and the variety of the seasons, since through the unequal length of the various periods, and the clear indications given by the changes in its risings, the sun doses the year and the moon renews the months. For on the fourth day, as we read, God said: "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, and let them shine upon the earth, and let them divide between day and night, and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, and let them be in the firmament of heaven that they may shine upon earth."

VI. Let Us Awake to the Proper Use of All Our Parts and Facilities.

Awake, O man, and recognize the dignity of thy nature. Recollect thou wast made in the image of God, which although it was corrupted in Adam, was yet re-fashioned in Christ. Use visible creatures as they should be used, as thou usest earth, sea, sky, air, springs, and rivers: and whatever in them is fair and wondrous, ascribe to the praise and glory of the Maker. Be not subject to that light wherein birds and serpents, beasts and cattle, flies and worms delight. Confine the material light to your bodily senses, and with all your mental powers embrace that ”true light which lighteth every man that cometh into this world ,” and of which the prophet says, ”Come unto Him and be enlightened, and your faces shall not blush . For if we ”are a temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in ” us, what every one of the faithful has in his own heart is more than what he wonders at in heaven. And so, dearly beloved, we do not bid or advise you to despise God’s works or to think there is anything opposed to your Faith in what the good God has made good, but to use every kind of creature and the whole furniture of this world reasonably and moderately: for as the Apostle says, ”the things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal .

Hence because we are born for the present and reborn for the future, let us not give ourselves up to temporal goods, but to eternal: and in order that we may behold our hope nearer, let us think on what the Divine Grace has bestowed on our nature on the very occasion when we celebrate the mystery of the Lord’s birthday. Let us hear the Apostle, saying: ”for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. But when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory : who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Ghost for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Incarnation an Unceasing Source a Joy.

Though all the divine utterances exhort us, dearly beloved, to ”rejoice in the Lord always ,” yet to-day we are no doubt incited to a full spiritual joy, when the mystery of the Lord’s nativity is shining brightly upon us , so that we may have recourse to that unutterable condescension of the Divine Mercy, whereby the Creator of men deigned to become man, and be found ourselves in His nature whom we worship in ours. For God the Son of God, the only-begotten of the eternal and not-begotten Father, remaining eternal ”in the form of God,” and unchangeably and without time possessing the property of being no way different to the Father He received ”the form of a slave” without loss of His own majesty, that He might advance us to His state and not lower Himself to ours. Hence both natures abiding in possession of their own properties such unity is the result of the union that whatever of Godhead is there is inseparable from the manhood: and whatever of manhood, is indivisible from the Godhead.

II. The Virgin's Conception Explained.

In celebrating therefore the birthday of our Lord and Saviour, dearly beloved, let us entertain pure thoughts of the blessed Virgin's child-bearing, so as to believe that at no moment of time was the power of the Word wanting to the flesh and soul which she conceived, and that the temple of Christ's body did not previously receive its form and soul that its Inhabitant might come and take possession but through Himself and in Himself was the beginning given to the New Man, so that in the one Son of God and Man there might be Godhead without a mother, and Manhood without a Father. For her virginity fecundated by the Holy Spirit at one and the same time brought forth without trace of corruption both the offspring and the Maker of her race. Hence also the same Lord, as the Evangelist relates, asked of the Jews whose son they had learnt Christ to be on the authority of the Scriptures, and when they replied that the tradition was He would come of David's seed, "How," saith He, "doth David in the Spirit call Him Lord, saying, the Lord said to my Lord: sit thou on My right hand till I place thy enemies as the footstool of thy feet ?" And the Jews could not solve the question put, because they did not understand that in the one Christ both the stock of David and the Divine nature were there prophesied.

III. In Redeeming Man, Justice as Well as Mercy Ad to Be Considered.

But the majesty of the Son of God in which He is equal with the Father in its garb of a slave's humility feared no diminution, required no augmentation: and the very effect of His mercy which He expended on the restitution of man, He was able to bring about solely by the power of His Godhead; so as to rescue the creature that was made in the image of God from the yoke of his cruel oppressor. But because the devil had not shown himself so violent in his attack on the first man as to bring him over to his side without the consent of His free will, man's voluntary sin and hostile desires had to be destroyed in such wise that the standard of justice should not stand in the way of the gift of Grace. And therefore in the general ruin of the entire human race there was but one remedy in the secret of the Divine plan which could succour the fallen, and that was that one of the sons of Adam should be born free and innocent of original transgression, to prevail for the rest both by His example and His merits. Still further, because this was not permitted by natural generation, and because there could be no offspring from our faulty stock without seed, of which the Scripture saith, "Who can make a clean thing conceived of an unclean seed? is it not Thou who art alone ?" David's Lord was made David's Son, and from the fruit of the promised branch sprang. One without fault, the twofold nature coining together into one Person, that by one and the same conception and birth might spring our Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom was present both true Godhead for the performance of mighty works and true Manhood for the endurance of sufferings.

IV. All Heresies Proceed from Failure to Believe the Twofold Nature of Christ.

The catholic Faith then, dearly beloved, may scorn the errors of the heretics that bark against it, who, deceived by the vanity of worldly wisdom, have forsaken the Gospel of Truth, and being unable to understand the Incarnation of the Word, have constructed for themselves out of the source of enlighten-merit occasion of blindness. For after investigating almost all false believers' opinions, even those which presume to deny the Holy Spirit, we come to the conclusion that hardly any one has gone astray, unless he has refused to believe the reality of the two natures in Christ under the confession of one Person. For some have ascribed to the Lord only manhood , others only Deity . Some have said that, though there was in the true Godhead, His flesh was unreal . Others have acknowledged that He took true flesh but say that He had not the nature of God the Father; and by assigning to His Godhead what belonged to His human substance, have made for themselves a greater and a lesser God, although there can be in true Godhead no grades: seeing that whatever is less than God, is not God . Others recognizing that there is no difference between Father and Son, because they could not understand unity of Godhead except in unity of Person, have maintained that the Father is the same as the Son :

so that to be born and nursed, to suffer and die, to be buried and rise again, belonged to the same Father who sustained throughout the Person of both Man and the Word. Certain have thought that our Lord Jesus Christ had a body not of our substance but assumed from higher and subtler elements : whereas certain others have considered that in the flesh of Christ there was no human soul, but that the Godhead of the Word Itself fulfilled the part of soul . But their unwise assertion passes into this form that, though they acknowledge the existence of a soul in the Lord, yet they say it was devoid of mind, because the Godhead of Itself was sufficient for all purposes of reason to the Man as well as to the God in Christ. Lastly the same people have dared to assert that a certain portion of the Word was turned into Flesh, so that in the manifold varieties of this one dogma, not only the nature of the flesh and of the soul but also the essence of the Word Itself is dissolved.

V.nestorianism and Eutychianism are Particularly to Be Avoided at the Present Time.

There are many other astounding falsehoods also which we must not weary your ears, beloved, with enumerating. But after all these various impieties, which are closely connected by the relationship that exists between one form of blasphemy and another, we call your devout attention to the avoiding of these two errors in particular: one of which, with Nestorius for its author, some time ago attempted to gainground, but ineffectually; the other, which is equally damnable, has more recently sprung up with Eutyches as its propounder. The former dared to maintain that the blessed Virgin Mary was the mother of Christ's manhood only, so that in her conception and childbearing no union might be believed to have taken place of the Word and the Flesh: because the Son of God did not Himself become Son of Man, but of His mere condescension linked Himself with created man. This can in no wise be tolerated by catholic ears, which are so imbued with the gospel of Truth that they know of a surety there is no hope of salvation for mankind unless He were Himself the Son of the Virgin who was His mother's Creator. On the other hand this blasphemous propounder of more recent profanity has confessed the union of the two Natures in Christ, but has maintained that the effect of this very union is that of the two one remained while the substance of the other no longer existed, which of course could not have been brought to an end except by either destruction or separation .

But this is so opposed to sound faith that it cannot be entertained without loss of one's Christian name. For if the Incarnation of the Word is the uniting of the Divine and human natures, but by the very fact of their coming together that which was twofold became single, it was only the Godhead that was born of the Virgin's womb, and went through the deceptive appearance of receiving nourishment and bodily growth: and to pass over all the changes of the human state, it was only the Godhead that was crucified, dead, and buried: so that according to those who thus think, there is no reason to hope for the resurrection, and Christ is not "the first-begotten from the dead ; because He was not One who ought to have been raised again, if He had not been One who could be slain.

VI. The Deity and the Manhood Were Present in Christ from the Very First.

Keep far from your hearts, dearly beloved, the poisonous lies of the devil's inspirations, and knowing that the eternal Godhead of the Son underwent no growth while with the Father, be wise and consider that to the same nature to which it was said in Adam, "Thou art earth, and unto earth shall thou go ," it is said in Christ, "sit Thou on My right hand ." According to that Nature, whereby Christ is equal to the Father, the Only-begotten was never inferior to the sublimity of the Father; nor was the glory which He had with the Father a temporal possession; for He is on the very right hand of the Father, of which it is said in Exodus, "Thy right hand, O Lord, is glorified in power ;" and in Isaiah, "Lord, who hath believed our report? and the arm of the Lord, to whom is it revealed ?" The man, therefore, assumed into the Son of God, was in such wise received into the unity of Christ's Person from His very commencement in the body, that without the Godhead He was not conceived, without the Godhead He was not brought forth, without the Godhead He was not nursed. It was the same Person in the wondrous acts, and in the endurance of insults; through His human weakness crucified, dead and buried: through His Divine power, being raised the third day, He ascended to the heavens, sat down at the right hand of the Father, and in His nature as man received from the Father that which in His nature as God He Himself also gave .

VII. The Fulness of the Godhead is Imparted to the Body (the Church) Through the Head, (Christ).

Meditate, dearly beloved on these things with devout hearts, and be always mindful of the apostle's injunction, who admonishes all men, saying, "See lest any one deceive you through philosophy and vain deceit according to the tradition of men, and not according to Christ; for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye have been filled in Him ." He said not "spiritually" but "bodily," that we may understand the substance of flesh to be real, where there is the dwelling in the body of the fulness of the Godhead: wherewith, of course, the whole Church is also filled, which, clinging to the Head, is the body of Christ; who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, God for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Epiphany a Necessary Sequel to the Nativity.

After celebrating but lately the day on which immaculate virginity brought forth the Saviour of mankind, the venerable feast of the Epiphany, dearly beloved, gives us continuance of joy, that the force of our exultation and the fervour of our faith may not grow cool, in the midst of neighbouring and kindred mysteries . For it concerns all men's salvation, that the infancy of the Mediator between God and men was already manifested to the whole world, while He was still detained in the tiny town. For although He had chosen the Israelitish nation, and one family out of that nation, from whom to assume the nature of all mankind, yet He was unwilling that the early days of His birth should be concealed within the narrow limits of His mother's home: but desired to be soon recognized by all, seeing that He deigned to be born for all. To three wise men, therefore, appeared a star of new splendour in the region of the East, which, being brighter and fairer than the other stars, might easily attract the eyes and minds of those that looked on it, so that at once that might be observed not to be meaningless, which had so unusual an appearance. He therefore who gave the sign, gave to the beholders understanding of it, and caused inquiry to be made about that, of which He had thus caused understanding, and after inquiry made, offered Himself to be found.

II. Herod's Evil Designs Were Fruitless. The Wise Men's Gifts Were Consciously Symbolical.

These three men follow the leading of the light above, and with stedfast gaze obeying the indications of the guiding splendour, are led to the recognition of the Truth by the brilliance of Grace, for they supposed that a king's birth was notified in a human sense , and that it must be sought in a royal city. Yet He who had taken a slave's form, and had come not to judge, but to be judged, chose Bethlehem for His nativity, Jerusalem for His passion. But Herod, hearing that a prince of the Jews was born, suspected a successor, and was in great terror: and to compass the death of the Author of Salvation, pledged himself to a false homage. How happy had he been, if he had imitated the wise men's faith, and turned to a pious use what he designed for deceit. What blind wickedness of foolish jealousy, to think thou canst overthrow the Divine plan by thy frenzy. The Lord of the works, who offers an eternal Kingdom, seeks not a temporal. Why dost thou attempt to change the unchangeable order of things ordained, and to forestall others in their crime? The death of Christ belongs not to thy time. The Gospel must be first set on foot, the Kingdom of God first preached, healings first given to the sick, wondrous acts first performed.

Why dost thou wish thyself to have the blame of what will belong to another's work, and why without being able to effect thy wicked design, dost thou bring on thyself alone the charge of wishing the evil? Thou gainest nothing and cattiest out nothing by this intriguing. He that was born voluntarily shall die of His own free will. The Wise men, therefore, fulfil their desire, and come to the child, the Lord Jesus Christ, the same star going before them. They adore the Word in flesh, the Wisdom in infancy, the Power in weakness, the Lord of majesty in the reality of man: and by their gifts make open acknowledgment of what they believe in their hearts, that they may show forth the mystery of their faith and understanding . The incense they offer to God, the myrrh to Man, the gold to the King, consciously paying honour to the Divine and human Nature in union: because while each substance had its own properties, there was no difference in the power of either.

III. The Massacre of the Innocents is in Harmony with the Virgin's Conception, Which Again Teaches Us Purity of Life.

And when the wise men had returned to their own land, and Jesus had been carried into Egypt at the Divine suggestion, Herod's madness blazes out into fruitless schemes. He orders all the little ones in Bethlehem to be slain, and since he knows not which infant to fear, extends a general sentence against the age he suspects. But that which the wicked king removes from the world, Christ admits to heaven: and on those for whom He had not yet spent His redeeming blood, He already bestows the dignity of martyrdom. Lift your faithful hearts then, dearly-beloved, to the gracious blaze of eternal light, and in adoration of the mysteries dispensed for man's salvation give your diligent heed to the things which have been wrought on your behalf. Love the purity of a chaste life, because Christ is the Son of a virgin. "Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul ," as the blessed Apostle, present in his words as we read, exhorts us, "In malice be ye children ," because the Lord of glory conformed Himself to the infancy of mortals. Follow after humility which the Son of God deigned to teach His disciples. Put on the power of patience, in which ye may be able to gain your souls; seeing that He who is the Redemption of all, is also the Strength of all. "Set your minds on the things which are above, not on the things which are on the earth ." Walk firmly along the path of truth and life: let not earthly things hinder you for whom are prepared heavenly things through our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

I. When We Were Yet Sinners, Christ Came to Save.

Although I know, dearly-beloved, that you are fully aware of the purpose of to-day's festival, and that the words of the Gospel have according to use unfolded it to you, yet that nothing may be omitted on our part, I shall venture to say on the subject what the Lord has put in my mouth: so that in our common joy the devotion of our hearts may be so much the more sincere as the reason of our keeping the feast is better understood. The providential Mercy of God, having determined to succour the perishing world in these latter times, fore-ordained the salvation of all nations in the Person of Christ; in order that, because all nations had long been turned aside from the worship of the true God by wicked error, and even God's peculiar people Israel had well-nigh entirely fallen away from the enactments of the Law, now that all were shut up under sin , He might have mercy upon all.

For as justice was everywhere failing and the whole world was given over to vanity and wickedness, if the Divine Power had not deferred its judgment, the whole of mankind would have received the sentence of damnation. But wrath was changed to forgiveness, and, that the greatness of the Grace to be displayed might be the more conspicuous, it pleased God, to apply the mystery of remission to the abolishing of men's sins at a time when. no one could boast of his own merits.

II. The Wise Men from the East are Typical Fulfilments of God's Promise to Abraham.

Now the manifestation of this unspeakable mercy, dearly-beloved, came to pass when Herod held the royal power in Judea, where the legitimate succession of Kings having failed and the power of the High-priests having been overthrown, an alien-born had gained the sovereignty: that the rising of the true King might be attested by the voice of prophecy, which had said: "a prince shall not fail from Juda, nor a leader from his loins, until He come for whom it is reserved , and He shall be the expectation of the nations." Concerning which an innumerable succession was once promised to the most blessed patriarch Abraham to be begotten not by fleshly seed but by fertile faith; and therefore it was compared to the stars in multitude that as father of all the nations he might hope not for an earthly but for a heavenly progeny. And therefore, for the creating of the promised posterity, the heirs designated under the figure of the stars are awakened by the rising of a new star, that the ministrations of the heaven might do service in that wherein the witness of the heaven had been adduced. A star more brilliant than the other stars arouses wise men that dwell in the far East, and from the brightness of the wondrous light these men, not unskilled in observing such things, appreciate the importance of the sign: this doubtless being brought about in their hearts by Divine inspiration, in order that the mystery of so great a sight might not be hid from them, and, what was an unusual appearance to their eyes, might not be obscure to their minds. In a word they scrupulously set about their duty and provide themselves with such gifts that in worshipping the One they may at the same time show their belief in His threefold function: with gold they honour the Person of a King, with myrrh that of Man, with incense that of God .

III. The Chosen Race is No Longer the Jews, But Believers of Every Nation.

And so they enter the chief city of the Kingdom of Judaea, and in the royal city ask that He should be shown them Whom they had learnt was begotten to be King. Herod is perturbed: he fears for his safety, he trembles for his power, he asks of the priests and teachers of the Law what the Scripture has predicted about the birth of Christ, he ascertains what had been prophesied: truth enlightens the wise men, unbelief blinds the experts: carnal Israel understands not what it reads, sees not what it points out; refers to the pages, whose utterances it does not believe. Where is thy boasting, O Jew? where thy noble birth drawn from the stem of Abraham? is not thy circumcision become uncircumcision ? Behold thou, the greater servest the less , and by the reading of that covenant which thou keepest in the letter only, thou becomest the slave of strangers born, who enter into the lot of thy heritage. Let the fulness of the nations enter into the family of the patriarchs, yea let it enter, and let the sons of promise receive in Abraham's seed the blessing which his sons, according to the flesh, renounce their claim to. In the three Magi let all people worship the Author of the universe: and let God be known not in Judaea alone, but in all the world, so that everywhere "His name" may be "great in Israel ." For while the dignity of the chosen race is proved to be degenerate by unbelief in its descend ants, it is made common to all alike by our belief.

IV. The Massacre of the Innocents Through the Consequent Flight of Christ, Brings the Truth into Egypt.

Now when the wise men had worshipped the Lord and finished all their devotions, according to the warning of a dream, they return not by the same route by which they had come. For it behoved them now that they believed in Christ not to walk in the paths of their old line of life, but having entered on a new way to keep away from the errors they had left: and it was also to baffle Herod's design, who, under the cloke of homage, was planning a wicked plot against the Infant Jesus. Hence when his crafty hopes were overthrown, the king's wrath rose to a greater fury. For reckoning up the time which the wise men had indicated, he poured out his cruel rage on all the men-children of Bethlehem, and in a general massacre of the whole of that city slew the infants, who thus passed to their eternal glory, thinking that, if every single babe was slain there, Christ too would be slain. But He Who was postponing the shedding of His blood for the world's redemption till another time, was carried and brought into Egypt by his parents' aid, and thus sought the ancient cradle of the Hebrew race, and in the power of a greater providence dispensing the princely office of the true Joseph, in that He, the Bread of Life and the Food of reason that came down from heaven, removed that worse than all famines under which the Egyptians' minds were labouring, the lack of truth , nor without that sojourn would the symbolism of that One Victim have been complete ; for there first by the slaying of the lamb was fore-shadowed the health-bringing sign of the Cross and the Lord's Passover.

V. We Must Keep This Festival as Thankful Sons of Light.

Taught then, dearly-beloved, by these mysteries of Divine grace, let us with reasonable joy celebrate the day of our first-fruits and the commencement of the nations' calling: ”giving thanks to” the merciful God ”who made us worthy,” as the Apostle says, ”to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light: who delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love : since as Isaiah prophesied, ”the people of the nations that sat in darkness, have seen a great light, and they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined . Of whom he also said to the Lord, ”nations which knew not thee, shall call on thee: and peoples which were ignorant of thee, shall run together unto thee . This day ”Abraham saw and was glad ,” when he understood that the sons of his faith would be blessed in his seed that is in Christ, and foresaw that by believing he should be the father of all nations, ”giving glory to God and being fully assured that What He had promised, He was able also to perform . This day David sang of in the psalms saying: ”all nations that thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord: and they shall glorify Thy name ; and again: ”The Lord hath made known His salvation: His righteousness hath He openly showed in the sight of the nations .

This in good truth we know to have taken place ever since the three wise men aroused in their far-off land were led by a star to recognize and worship the King of heaven and earth,[which to those who gaze aright ceases not daily to appear. And if it could make Christ known when concealed in infancy, how much more able was it to reveal Him when reigning in majesty] . And surely their worship of Him exhorts us to imitation; that, as far as we can, we should serve our gracious God who invites us all to Christ. For whosoever lives religiously and chastely in the Church and ”sets his mind on the, things which are above, not on the things that are upon the earth ,” is in some measure like the heavenly light: and whilst he himself keeps the brightness of a holy life, he points out to many the way to the Lord like a star. In which regard, dearly-beloved, ye ought all to help one another in turn, that in the kingdom of God, which is reached by right faith and good works, ye may shine as the sons of light: through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Yearly Observance of the Epiphany is Profitable to Christians.

It is the right and reasonable duty of true piety, dearly-beloved, on the days which bear witness to the works of Divine mercy, to rejoice with the whole heart and to celebrate with all honour the things which have been wrought for our salvation: for the very law of recurring seasons calls us to such devout observance, and has now brought before us the feast of the Epiphany, consecrated by the Lord's appearance soon after the clay on which the Son of God co-eternal with the Father was born of a Virgin. And herein the providence. of God has established a great safeguard to our faith, so that, whilst the worship of the Saviour's earliest infancy is repeated year by year, the production of true man's nature in Him might be proved by the original verifications themselves. For this it is that justifies the ungodly, this it is that makes sinners saints, to wit the belief in the true Godhead and the true Manhood of the one Jesus Christ, our Lord: the Godhead, whereby being before all ages "in the form of God" He is equal with the Father: the Manhood whereby in the last days He is united to Man in the "form of a slave.

For the confirmation therefore of this Faith which was to be fore-armed against all errors, it was a wondrous loving provision of the Divine plan that a nation which dwelt in the far-off country of the East and was cunning in the art of reading the stars, should receive the sign of the infant's birth who was to reign over all Israel. For the unwonted splendour of a bright new star appeared to the wise men and filled their mind with such wonder, as they gazed upon its brilliance, that they could not think they ought to neglect what was announced to them with such distinctness. And, as the event showed, the grace of God was the disposing cause of this wondrous thing: who when the whole of Bethlehem itself was still unaware of Christ's birth, brought it to the knowledge of the nations who would believe, and declared that which human words could not yet explain, through the preaching of the heavens.

II. Both Herod and the Wise Men Originally Had an Earthly Conception of the Kingdom Signified; But the Latter Learnt the Truth, the Former Did Not.

But although it was the office of the Divine condescension to make the Saviour's Nativity recognizable to the nations, yet for the under standing of the wondrous sign the wise men could have had intimation even from the ancient prophecies of Balaam, knowing that it was predicted of old and by constant repetition spread abroad: "A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a man shall rise out of Israel, and shall rule the nations . And so the three men aroused by God through the shining of a strange star, follow the guidance of its twinkling light, thinking they will find the babe designated at Jerusalem in the royal city. But finding themselves mistaken in this opinion, through the scribes and teachers of the Jews they learnt what the Holy Scripture had foretold of the birth of Christ; so that confirmed by a twofold witness, they sought with still more eager faith Him whom both the brightness of the star and the sure word of prophecy revealed. And when the Divine oracle was proclaimed through the chief priests' answers and the Spirit's voice declared, which says: "And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Judah, art not least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a leader to rule My people Israel ," how easy and how natural it was that the leading men among the Hebrews should believe what they taught! But it appears that they held material notions with Herod, and reckoned Christ's kingdom as on the same level as the powers of this world:

so that they hoped for a temporal leader while he dreaded an earthly rival. The fear that racks thee, Herod, is wasted; in vain dost thou try to vent thy rage on the infant thou suspectest. Thy realm cannot hold Christ; the Lord of the world is not satisfied with the narrow limits of thy sway. He, whom thou dost not wish to reign in Judaea, reigns everywhere: and thou wouldst rule more happily thyself, if thou wert to submit to His command. Why dost thou not do with sincerity what in treacherous falseness thou dost promise? Come with

the wise men, and in suppliant adoration worship the true King. But thou, from too great fondness for Jewish blindness, wilt not imitate the nations' faith, and directest thy stubborn heart to cruel wiles, though thou art doomed neither to stay Him whom thou fearest nor to harm them whom thou slayest.

III. The Perseverance of the Magi Has Led to the Most Important Results.

Led then, dearly beloved, into Bethlehem by obeying the guidance of the star, the wise men ”rejoiced with very great joy,” as the evangelist has told us: ”and entering the house, found the child with Mary, His mother; and falling down they worshipped Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh . What wondrous faith of perfect knowledge, which was taught them not by earthly wisdom, but by the instruction of the Holy Spirit! Whence came it that these men, who had quitted their country without having seen Jesus, and had not noticed anything in His looks to enforce such systematic adoration, observed this method in offering their gifts? unless it were that besides the appearance of the star, which attracted their bodily eyes, the more refulgent rays of truth taught their hearts that before they started on their toilsome road, they must understand that He was signified to Whom was owed in gold royal honour, in incense Divine adoration, in myrrh the acknowledgment of mortality. Such a belief and understanding no doubt, as far as the enlightenment of their faith went, might have been sufficient in themselves and have prevented their using their bodily eyes in inquiring into that which they had beheld with their mind’s fullest gaze. But their sagacious diligence, persevering till they found the child, did good service for future peoples and for the men of our own time:

so that, as it profited us all that the apostle Thomas, after the Lord’s resurrection, handled the traces of the wounds in His flesh, so it was of advantage to us that His infancy should be attested by the visit of the wise men. And so the wise men saw and adored the Child of the tribe of Judah, ”of the seed of David according to the flesh ,” ”made from a woman, made under the law ,” which He had come ”not to destroy but to fulfil . They saw and adored the Child, small in size, powerless to help others , incapable of speech, and in nought different to the generality of human children. Because, as the testimonies were trustworthy which asserted in Him the majesty of invisible Godhead, so it ought to be impossible to doubt that ”the Word became flesh,” and the eter- nal essence of the Son of God took man’s true nature: lest either the inexpressible marvels of his acts which were to follow or the

infliction of sufferings which He had to bear should overthrow the mystery of our Faith by their inconsistency: seeing that no one at all can be justified save those who believe the Lord Jesus to be both true God and true Man.

IV. The Manichoean Heresy Corrupts the Scriptures in Order to Disprove the Truth.

This peerless Faith, dearly-beloved, this Truth proclaimed throughout all ages, is opposed by the devilish blasphemies of the Manichaeans: who to murder the souls of the deceived have woven a deadly tissue of wicked doctrine out of impious and forged lies, and over the ruins of their mad opinions men have fallen headlong to such depths as to imagine a Christ with a fictitious body, who presented nothing solid, nothing real to the eyes and touch of men , but displayed an empty shape of fancy-flesh. For they wish it to be thought unworthy of belief that God the Son of God placed Himself within a woman's body and subjected His majesty to such a degradation as to be joined to our fleshly nature and be born in the true body of human substance although this is entirely the outcome of His power, not of His ill-treatment, and it is His glorious condescension, not His being polluted that should be believed in. For if yonder visible light is not marred by any of the uncleannesses with which it is encompassed, and the brightness of the sun's rays, which is doubtless a material creature, is not contaminated by any of the dirty or muddy places to which it penetrates, is there anything whatever its quality which could pollute the essence of that eternal and immaterial Light?

seeing that by allying Himself to that creature which He had made after His own image He furnished it with purification and received no stain, and healed the wounds of its weakness without suffering loss of power. And because this great and unspeakable mystery of divine Godliness was announced by all the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures, those opponents of the Truth of which we speak have rejected the law that was given through Moses and the divinely inspired utterances of the prophets, and have tampered with the very pages of the gospels and apostles, by removing or inserting certain things: forging for themselves under the Apostles' names and under the words of the Saviour Himself many volumes of falsehood, whereby to fortify their lying errors and instil deadly poison into the minds of those to be deceived. For they saw that everything contradicted and made against them and that not only by the New but also by the Old Testament their blasphemous and treacherous folly

was confuted. And yet persisting in their mad lies they cease not to disturb the Church of God with their deceits, persuading those miserable creatures whom they can ensnare to deny that man's nature was truly taken by the Lord Jesus Christ; to deny that He was truly crucified for the world's salvation: to deny that from His side wounded by the spear flowed the blood of Redemption and the water of baptism : to deny that He was buried and raised again the third day:

to deny that in sight of the disciples He was lifted above all the heights of the skies to take His seat on the right hand of the Father; and in order that when all the truth of the Apostles' Creed was destroyed, there may be nothing to frighten the wicked or inspire the saints with hope, to deny that the living and the dead must be judged by Christ; so that those whom they have robbed of the power of these great mysteries may learn to worship Christ in the sun and moon, and under the name of the Holy Spirit to adore Manichaeus himself, the inventor of all these blasphemies.

V. Avoid All Dealings with the Heretics, But Intercede with God For Them.

To confirm your hearts therefore, dearly-beloved, in the Faith and Truth, let to-day's festival help you all, and let the catholic confession be fortified by the testimony of the manifestation of the Saviour's infancy, while we anathematize the blasphemy of those who deny the flesh of our nature in Christ: about which the blessed Apostle John has forewarned us in no doubtful utterance, saying, "every spirit which confesses Christ Jesus to have come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit which destroys Jesus is not of God, and this is Antichrist . Consequently let no Christian have aught in common with men of this kind, let him have no alliance or intercourse with such. Let it advantage the whole Church that many of them in the mercy of God have been discovered, and that their own confession has disclosed how sacrilegious their lives were. Let no one be deceived by their discriminations between food and food, by their soiled raiment, by their pale faces. Fasts are not holy which proceed not on the principle of abstinence but with deceitful de sign. Let this be the end of their harming the unwary, and deluding the ignorant; henceforth no one's fall shall be excusable: no longer must he be held simple but extremely worthless and perverse who hereafter shall be found entangled in detestable error. A practice countenanced by the Church and Divinely instituted, not only do we not forbid, we even incite you to, that you should supplicate the Lord even for such:

since we also with tears and mourning feel pity for the ruins of cheated souls, carrying out the Apostles' example of loving-kindness , so as to be weak with those that are weak and to "weep with those that weep . For we hope that God's mercy can be won by the many tears and due amendment of the fallen: because so long as life remains in the body no man's restoration must be despaired of, but the reform of all desired with the Lord's help, "who raiseth up them that are crushed, looseth them that are chained, giveth light to the blind : to whom is honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Story of the Magi Not Only a Byegone Fact in History, But of Everyday Application to Ourselves.

The day, dearly-beloved, on which Christ the Saviour of the world first appeared to the nations must be venerated by us with holy worship: and to-day those joys must be entertained in our hearts which existed in the breasts of the three magi, when, aroused by the sign and leading of a new star, which they believed to have been promised, they fell down in presence of the King of heaven and earth. For that day has not so passed away that the mighty work, which was then revealed, has passed away with it, and that nothing but the report of the thing has come down to us for faith to receive and memory to celebrate; seeing that, by the oft-repeated gift of God, our times daily enjoy the fruit of what the first age possessed. And therefore, although the narrative which is read to us from the Gospel properly records those days on which the three men, who had neither been taught by the prophets' predictions nor instructed by the testimony of the law, came to acknowledge God from the furthest parts of the East, yet we behold this same thing more clearly and abundantly carried on now in the enlightenment of all those who are called, since the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled when he says, "the Lord has laid bare His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the nations upon earth have seen the salvation which is from the Lord our God ;

and again, "and those to whom it has not been announced about Him shall see, and they who have not heard, shall understand . Hence when we see men devoted to worldly wisdom and far from belief in Jesus Christ brought out of the depth of their error and called to an acknowledgment of the true Light, it is undoubtedly the brightness of the Divine grace that is at work: and whatever of new light illumines the darkness of their hearts, comes from the rays of the same star: so that it should both move with wonder, and going before lead to the adoration of God the minds which it visited with its splendour. But if with careful thought we wish to see how their threefold kind of gift is also offered by all who come to Christ with the foot of faith, is not the same offering repeated in the hearts of true believers? For he that acknowledges Christ the King of the universe brings gold from the treasure of his heart: he that believes the Only-begotten of God to have united man's true nature to Himself, offers

myrrh; and he that confesses Him in no wise inferior to the Father's majesty, worships Him in a manner with incense.

II. Satan Still Carries on the Wiles of Herod, And, as It Were, Personates Him in His Opposition to Christ.

These comparisons, dearly-beloved, being thoughtfully considered, we find Herod's character also not to be wanting, of which the devil himself is now an unwearied imitator, just as he was then a secret instigator. For he is tortured at the calling of all the nations, and racked at the daily destruction of his power, grieving at his being everywhere deserted, and the true King adored in all places. He prepares devices, he hatches plots, he bursts out into murders, and that he may make use of the remnants of those whom he still deceives, is consumed with envy in the persons of the Jews, lies treacherously in wait in the persons of heretics, blazes out into cruelty in the persons of the heathen. For he sees that the power of the eternal King is invincible Whose death has extinguished the power of death itself; and therefore he has armed himself with all his skill of injury against those who serve the true King; hardening some by the pride that knowledge of the law engenders, debasing others by the lies of false belief, and inciting others to the madness of persecution. Yet the madness of this "Herod" is vanquished, and brought to nought by Him who has crowned even infants with the glory of martyrdom, and has endued His faithful ones with so unconquerable a love that in the Apostle's words they dare to say, "who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or want, or persecution, Or hunger, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? as it is written, For thy sake are we killed all the day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. But in all these things we overcome on account of Him who loved us ."

III. The Cessation of Active Persecution Does Not Do Away with the Need of Continued Vigilance : Satan Has Only Changed His Tactics.

Such courage as this, dearly-beloved, we do not believe to have been needful only at those times in which the kings of the world and all the powers of the age were raging against God's people in an outburst of wickedness, thinking it to redound to their greatest glory if they removed the Christian name from the earth, but not knowing that God's Church grows through the frenzy of their cruelty, since in the tortures and deaths of the martyrs, those whose number was reckoned to be diminished were augmented through the force of example . In fine, so much strength has our Faith gained by the attacks of persecutors that royal princedoms have no greater ornament than that the lords of the world are members of Christ; and their boast is not so much that they were born in the purple as that they have been re-born in baptism. But because the stress of former blasts has lulled, and with a cessation of fightings a measure of tranquillity has long seemed to smile upon us, those divergences are carefully to be guarded against which arise from the very reign of peace. For the adversary having been proved ineffective in open persecutions now exercises a hidden skill in doing cruel hurt, in order to overthrow by the stumbling-block of pleasure those whom he could not strike with the blow of affliction.

And so seeing the faith of princes opposed to him and the indivisible Trinity of the one Godhead as devoutly worshipped in palaces as in churches, he grieves at the shedding of Christian blood being forbidden, and attacks the mode of life of those whose death he cannot compass. The terror of confiscations he changes into the fire of avarice, and corrupts with covetousness those whose spirit he could not break by losses. For the malicious haughtiness which long use has ingrained into his very nature has not laid aside its hatred, but changed its character in order to subjugate the minds of the faithful by blandishments. He inflames

those with covetous desires whom he cannot distress with tortures: he sows strifes, kindles passions, sets tongues a-wagging, and, lest more cautious hearts should draw back from his lawless wiles, facilitates opportunities for accomplishing crimes: because this is the only fruit of all his devices that he who is not worshipped with the sacrifice of cattle and goats, and the burning of incense, should be paid the homage of divers wicked deeds .

IV. Timely Repentance Gains God's Merciful Consideration.

Our state of peace , therefore, dearly-beloved, has its dangers, and it is vain for those who do not withstand vicious desires to feel secure of the liberty which is the privilege of their Faith. Men's hearts are shown by the character of their works, and the fashion of their minds is betrayed by the nature of their actions. For there are some, as the Apostle says, "who profess that they know God, but deny Him by their deeds . For the charge of denial is truly incurred when the good which is heard in the sound of the voice is not present in the conscience. Indeed, the frailty of man's nature easily glides into faults: and because no sin is without its attractiveness, deceptive pleasure is quickly acquiesced in. But we should run for spiritual succour from the desires of the flesh: and the mind that has knowledge of its God should turn away from the evil suggestion of the enemy. Avail thyself of the long-suffering of God, and persist not in cherishing thy sin, because its punishment is put off. The sinner must not feel secure of his impunity, because if he loses the time for repentance he will find no place for mercy, as the prophet says, "in death no one remembers thee; and in the realms below who will confess to thee ?

But let him who experiences the difficulty of self-amendment and restoration betake himself to the mercy of a befriending God, and ask that the chains of evil habit may be broken off by Him "who lifts up those that fall and raises all the crushed . The prayer of one that confesses will not be in vain since the merciful God "will grant the desire of those that fear Him ," and will give what is asked, as He gave the Source from Which to ask. Through our Lend Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Benefits of Abstinence Shown by the Example of the Hebrews.

In former days, when the people of the Hebrews and all the tribes of Israel were oppressed for their scandalous sins by the grievous tyranny of the Philistines, in order that they might be able to overcome their enemies, as the sacred story declares, they restored their powers of mind and body by the injunction of a fast. For they understood that they had deserved that hard and wretched subjection for their neglect of God's commands, and evil ways, and that it was in vain for them to strive with arms unless they had first withstood their sin. Therefore abstaining from food and drink, they applied the discipline of strict correction to themselves, and in order to conquer their foes, first conquered the allurements of the palate in themselves. And thus it came about that their fierce enemies and cruel taskmasters yielded to them when fasting, whom they had held in subjection when full. And so we too, dearly beloved, who are set in the midst of many oppositions and conflicts, may be cured by a little carefulness, if only we will use the same means. For our case is almost the same as theirs, seeing that, as they were attacked by foes in the flesh so are we chiefly by spiritual enemies. And if we can conquer them by God's grace enabling us to correct our ways, the strength of our bodily enemies also will give way before us, and by our self-amendment we shall weaken those who were rendered formidable to us, not by their own merits but by our shortcomings.

II. Use Lent to Vanquish the Enemy, and Be Thus Preparing for Eastertide.

Accordingly, dearly-beloved, that we may be able to overcome all our enemies, let us seek Divine aid by the observance of the heavenly bidding, knowing that we cannot otherwise prevail against our adversaries, unless we prevail against our own selves. For we have many encounters with our own selves: the flesh desires one thing against the spirit, and the spirit another thing against the flesh . And in this disagreement, if the desires of the body be stronger, the mind will disgracefully lose its proper dignity, and it will be most disastrous for that to serve which ought to have ruled. But if the mind, being subject to its Ruler, and delighting in gifts from above, shall have trampled under foot the allurements of earthly pleasure, and shall not have allowed sin to reign in its mortal body , reason will maintain a well-ordered supremacy, and its strongholds no strategy of spiritual wickednesses will cast down: because man has then only true peace and true freedom when the flesh is ruled by the judgment of the mind, and the mind is directed by the will of God. And although this state of preparedness, dearly-beloved, should always be maintained that our ever-watchful foes may be overcome by unceasing diligence, yet now it must be the more anxiously sought for and the more zealously cultivated when the designs of our subtle foes themselves are conducted with keener craft than ever. For knowing that the most hollowed days of Lent are now at hand, in the keeping of which all past slothfulnesses are chastised, all negligences alerted for, they direct all the force of their spite on this one thing, that they who intend to celebrate the Lord's holy Passover may be found unclean in some matter, and that cause of offence may arise where propitiation ought to have been obtained.

III. Fights are Necessary to Prove Our Faith.

As we approach then, dearly-beloved, the beginning of Lent, which is a time for the more careful serving of the Lord, because we are, as it were, entering on a kind of contest in good works, let us prepare our souls for fighting with temptations, and understand that the more zealous we are for our salvation, the more determined must be the assaults of our opponents. But ”stronger is He that is in us than He that is against us ,” and through Him are we powerful in whose strength we rely: because it was for this that the Lord allowed Himself to be tempted by the tempter, that we might be taught by His example as well as fortified by His aid. For He conquered the adversary, as ye have heard , by quotations from the law, not by actual strength, that by this very thing He might do greater honour to man, and inflict a greater punishment on the adversary by conquering the enemy of the human race not now as God but as Man. He fought then, therefore, that we too might fight thereafter: He conquered that we too might likewise conquer. For there are no works of power, dearly-beloved, without the trials of temptations, there is no faith without proof, no contest without a foe, no victory without conflict. This life of ours is in the midst of snares, in the midst of battles; if we do not wish to be deceived, we must watch: if we want to overcome, we must fight. And therefore the most wise Solomon says, ”My son in approaching the service of God prepare thy soul for temptation .” For He being a man full of the wisdom of God, and knowing that the pursuit of religion involves laborious struggles, foreseeing too the danger of the fight, forewarned the intending combatant; lest haply, if the tempter came upon him in his ignorance, he might find him unready and wound him unawares.

IV. The Christian's Armour is Both for Defence and for Attack.

So, dearly-beloved, let us who instructed in Divine learning come wittingly to the present contest and strife, hear the Apostle when he says, "for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of this dark world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly things ," and let us not forget that these our enemies feel it is against them all is done that we strive to do for our salvation, and that by the very fact of our seeking after some good thing we are challenging our foes. For this is an old-standing quarrel between us and them fostered by the devil's ill-will, so that they are tortured by our being justified, because they have fallen from those good things to which we, God helping us, are advancing. If, therefore, we are raised, they are prostrated: if we are strengthened, they are weakened. Our cures are their blows, because they are wounded by our wounds' cure. "Stand, therefore," dearly-beloved, as the Apostle says, "having the loins of your mind girt in truth, and your feet shod in the preparation of the gospel of peace, in all things taking the shield of faith in which ye may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the evil one, and put on the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God .

See, dearly-beloved, with what mighty weapons, with what impregnable defences we are armed by our Leader, who is famous for His many triumphs, the unconquered Master of the Christian warfare. He has girt our loins with the belt of chastity, He has shod our feet with the bonds of peace: because the unbelted soldier is quickly vanquished by the suggester of immodesty, and he that is unshod is easily bitten by the serpent. He has given the shield of faith for the protection of our whole body; on our head has He set the helmet of salvation; our right hand has He furnished with a sword, that is with the word of Truth: that the spiritual warrior may not only be safe from wounds, but also may have strength to wound his assailant.

V. Abstinence Not Only from Food But from Other Evil Desires, Especially from Wrath, is Required in Lent.

Relying, therefore, dearly-beloved, on these arms, let us enter actively and fearlessly on the contest set before us: so that in this fasting struggle we may not rest satisfied with only this end, that we should think abstinence from food alone desirable. For it is not enough that the substance of our flesh should be reduced, if the strength of the soul be not also developed. When the outer man is somewhat subdued, let the inner man be somewhat refreshed; and when bodily excess is denied to our flesh, let our mind be invigorated by spiritual delights. Let every Christian scrutinise himself, and earth severely into his inmost heart: let him see that no discord cling there, no wrong desire be harboured. Let chasteness drive incontinence far away; let the light of truth dispel the shades of deception; let the swellings of pride subside; let wrath yield to reason; let the darts of ill-treatment be shattered, and the chidings of the tongue be bridled; let thoughts of revenge fall through, and injuries be given over to oblivion. In fine, let ”every plant which the heavenly Father hath not planted be removed by the roots . For then only are the seeds of virtue well nourished in us, when every foreign germ is uprooted from the field of wheat.

If any one, therefore, has been fired by the desire for vengeance against another, so that he has given him up to prison or bound him with chains, let him make haste to forgive not only the innocent, but also one who seems worthy of punishment, that he may with confidence make use of the clause in the Lord’s prayer and say, ”Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors . Which petition the Lord marks with peculiar emphasis, as if the efficacy of the whole rested on this condition, by saying, ”For if ye forgive men their sins, your Father which is in heaven also will forgive you: but if ye forgive not men, neither will your Father forgive you your Sins .”

VI. The Right Use of Lent Will Lead to a Happy Participation in Easter.

Accordingly, dearly-beloved, being mindful of our weakness, because we easily fall into all kinds of faults, let us by no means neglect this special remedy and most effectual healing of our wounds. Let us remit, that we may have remission: let us grant the pardon which we crave: let us not be eager to be revenged when we pray to be forgiven. Let us not pass over the groans of the poor with deaf ear, but with prompt kindness bestow our mercy on the needy, that we may deserve to find mercy in the judgment. And he that, aided by God's grace, shall strain every nerve after this perfection, will keep this holy fast faithfully; free from the leaven of the old wickedness, in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth , he will reach the blessed Passover, and by newness of life will worthily rejoice in the mystery of man's reformation through Christ our Lord Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

I. Progress and Improvement Always Possible.

Although, dearly-beloved, as the Easter festival approaches, the very recurrence of the season points out to us the Lenten fast, yet our words also must add their exhortations which, the Lord helping us, may be not useless to the active nor irksome to the devout. For since the idea of these days demands the increase of all our religious performances, there is no one, I am sure, that does not feel glad at being incited to good works. For though our nature which, so long as we are mortal, will be changeable, is advancing to the highest pursuits of virtue, yet always has the possibility of filling back, so has it always the possibility of advancing. And this is the true justness of the perfect that they should never assume themselves to be perfect, lest flagging in the purpose of their yet unfinished journey,they should fall into the danger of failure, through giving up the desire for progress.

And, therefore, because none of us, dearly beloved, is so perfect and holy as not to be able to be more perfect and more holy, let us all together, without difference of rank, without distinction of desert, with pious eagerness pursue our race from what we have attained to what we yet aspire to, and make some needful additions to our regular devotions. For he that is not more attentive than usual to religion in these days, is shown at other times to be not attentive enough.

II. Satan Seeks to Subtly His Numerous Lasses by Fresh Gains.

Hence the reading of the Apostle's proclamation has sounded opportunely in our ears, saying, "Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation ." For what is more accepted than this time, what more suitable to salvation than these days, in which war is proclaimed against vices and progress is made in all virtues? Thou hadst indeed always to keep watch, O Christian soul, against the enemy of thy salvation, lest any spot should be exposed to the tempter's snares: but now greater wariness and keener prudence must be employed by thee when that same foe of thine rages with fiercer hatred. For now in all the world the power of his ancient sway is taken from him, and the countless vessels of captivity are rescued from his grasp. The people of all nations and of all tongues are breaking away from their cruel plunderer, and now no race of men is found that does not struggle against the tyrant's laws, while through all the borders of the earth many thousands of thousands are being prepared to be reborn in Christ : and as the birth of a new creature draws near, spiritual wickedness is being driven out by those who were possessed by it. The blasphemous fury of the despoiled foe frets, therefore, and seeks new gains because it has lost its ancient right. Unwearied and ever wakeful, he snatches at any sheep he finds straying carelessIy from the sacred folds, intent on leading them over the steeps of treasure anti down the slopes of luxury into the abodes of death. And so he inflames their wrath, feeds their hatreds, whets their desires, mocks at their continence, arouses their gluttony.

III. The Twofold Nature of Christ Shown at the Temptation.

For whom would he not dare to try, who did not keep from his treacherous attempts even on our Lord Jesus Christ? For, as the story of the Gospel has disclosed , when our Saviour, Who was true God, that He might show Himself true Man also, and banish all wicked and erroneous opinions, after the fast of 40 days and nights, had experienced the hunger of human weakness, the devil, rejoicing at having found in Him a sign of possible and mortal nature, in order to test the power which he feared, said, "If Thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread ." Doubtless the Almighty could do this, and it was easy that at the Creator's command a creature of any kind should change into the form that it was commanded: just as whenHe willed it, in the marriage feast, Hechanged the water into wine: but here it better agreed with His purposes of salvation that His haughty foe's cunning should be vanquished by the Lord, not in the power of His Godhead, but by the mystery of His humiliation. At length, when the devil had been put to flight and the tempter baffled in all his arts, angels came to the Lord and ministered to Him, that He being true Man and true God, His Manhood might be unsullied by those crafty questions, and His Godhead displayed by those holy ministrations. And so let the sons and disciples of the devil be confounded, who, being filled with the poison of vipers, deceive the simple, denying in Christ the presence of both true natures, whilst they rob either His Godhead of Manhood, or His Manhood of Godhead, although both falsehoods are destroyed by a twofold and simultaneous proof: for by His bodily hunger His perfect Manhood was shown, and by the attendant angels His perfect Godhead.

IV. The Fast Should Not End with Abstinence Front Food, But Lead to Good Deeds.

Therefore, dearly-beloved, seeing that, as we are taught by our Redeemer's precept, "man lives not in bread alone, but in every word of God ," and it is right that Christian people, whatever the amount of their abstinence, should rather desire to satisfy themselves with the "Word of God" than with bodily food, let us with ready devotion and eager faith enter upon the celebration of the solemn fast, not with barren abstinence flora food, which is often imposed on us by weakliness of body, or the disease of avarice, but in bountiful benevolence: that in truth we may be of those of whom the very Truth speaks, "blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled ." Let works of piety, therefore, be our delight, and let us be filled with those kinds of food which feed us for eternity. Let us rejoice in the replenishment of the poor, whom our bounty has satisfied. Let us delight in the clothing of those whose nakedness we have covered with needful raiment. Let our humaneness be felt by the sick in their illnesses, by the weakly in their infirmities, by the exiles in their hardships, by the orphans in their destitution, and by solitary widows in their sadness: in the helping of whom there is no one that cannot carry out some amount of benevolence. For no one's income is small, whose heart is big: and the measure of one's mercy and goodness does not depend on the size of one's means. Wealth of goodwill is never rightly lacking, even in a slender purse. Doubtless the expenditure of the rich isgreater, and that of the poor smaller, but there is no difference in the fruit of their works, where the purpose of the workers is the same.

V. And Still Further It Should Lead to Personal Amendment and Domestic Harmony.

But, beloved, in this opportunity for the virtues' exercise there are also other notablecrowns, to be won by no dispersing abroad of granaries, by no disbursement of money, if wantonness is repelled, if drunkenness is abandoned, and the lusts of the flesh tamed by the laws of chastity: if hatreds pass into affection, if enmities be turned into peace, if meekness extinguishes wrath, if gentleness forgives wrongs, if in fine the conduct of master and of slaves is so well ordered that the rule of the one is milder, and the discipline of the other is more complete. It is by such observances then, dearly-beloved, that God's mercy will be gained, the charge of sin wiped out, and the adorable Easter festival devoutly kept. And this the pious Emperors of the Roman world have long guarded with holy observance; for in honour of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection they bend their lofty power, and relaxing the severity of their decrees set free many of their prisoners: so that on the clays when the world is saved by the Divine mercy, their clemency, which is modelled on the Heavenly goodness, may be zealously followed by us. Let Christian peoples then imitate their princes, and be incited to forbearance in their homes by these royal examples. For it is not right that private laws should be severer than public. Let faults be forgiven, let bonds be loosed offences wiped out, designs of vengeance fall through, that the holy festival through the Divine and human grace may find all happy, all innocent: through our Lord Jesus Christ Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth God for endless ages of ages. Amen.

I. The Lenten Fast an Opportunity for Restoring Our Purely.

In proposing to preach this most holy and important fast to you, dearly beloved, how shall I begin more fitly than by quoting the words of the Apostle, in whom Christ Himself was speaking, and by reminding you of what we have read : "behold, now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation." For though there are no seasons which are not full of Divine blessings, and though access is ever open to us to God's mercy through His grace, yet now all men's minds should be moved with greater zeal to spiritual progress, and animated by larger confidence, when the return of the day, on which we were redeemed, invites us to all the duties of godliness: that we may keep the super-excellent mystery of the Lord's passion with bodies and hearts purified. These great mysteries do indeed require from us such unflagging devotion and unwearied reverence that we should remain in God's sight always the same, as we ought to be found on the Easter feast itself. But because few have this constancy, and, because so long as the stricter observance is relaxed in consideration of the frailty of the flesh, and so long as one's interests extend over all the various actions of this life, even pious hearts must get some soils from the dust of the world, the Divine Providence has with great beneficence taken care that the discipline of the forty days should heal us and restore the purity of our minds, during which the faults of other times might be redeemed by pious acts and removed by chaste fasting.

II. Lent Must Be Used Far Removing All Our Defilements, and of Good Works There Must Be No Stint.

As we are therefore, dearly-beloved, about to enter on those mystic days which are dedicated to the benefits of fasting, let us take care to obey the Apostle's precepts, cleansing "ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit : that by controlling the struggles that go on between our two natures, the spirit which, if it is under the guidance of God, should be the governor of the body, may uphold the dignity of its rule: so that we may give no offence to any, nor be subject to the chidings of reprovers. For we shall be rightly attacked with rebukes, and through our fault ungodly tongues will arm themselves to do harm to religion, if the conduct of those that fast is at variance with the standard of perfect purity. For our fast does not consist chiefly of mere abstinence from food, nor are dainties withdrawn from our bodily appetites with profit, unless the mind is recalled from wrong-doing and the tongue restrained from slandering. This is a time of gentleness and long-suffering, of peace and tranquillity: when all the pollutions of vice are to be eradicated and continuance of virtue is to be attained by us. Now let godly minds boldly accustom themselves to forgive faults, to pass over insults, and to forget wrongs.

Now let the faithful spirit train himself with the armour of righteousness on the fight hand and on the left, that through honour and dishonour, through ill repute and good repute, the conscience may be undisturbed in unwavering uprightness, not puffed up by praise and not wearied out by revilings. The self-restraint of the religious should not be gloomy, but sincere; no murmurs of complaint should be heard from those who are never without the consolation of holy joys. The decrease of worldly means should not be feared in the practice of works of mercy. Christian poverty is always rich, because what it has is more than what it has not. Nor does the poor man fear to labour in this world, to whom it is given to possess all things in the Lord of all things. Therefore those who do the things which are good must have no manner of fear lest the power of doing should fail them; since in the gospel the widow's

devotion is extolled in the case of her two mites, and voluntary bounty gets its reward for a cup of cold water . For the measure of our charitableness is fixed by the sincerity of our feelings, and he that shows mercy on others will never want for mercy himself.

The holy widow of Sarepta discovered this, who offered the blessed Elias in the time of famine one day's food, which was all she had, and putting the prophet's hunger before her own needs, ungrudgingly gave up a handful of corn and a little oil . But she did not lose what she gave in all faith, and in the vessels emptied by her godly bounty a source of new plenty arose, that the fulness of her substance might not be diminished by the holy purpose to which she had put it, because she had never dreaded being brought to want.

III. As with the Saviour, So with Us, the Devil Tries to Make Our Very Piety Its Own Snare.

But, dearly-beloved, doubt not that the devil, who is the opponent of all virtues, is jealous of these good desires, to which we are confident you are prompted of your own selves, and that to this end he is arming the force of his malice in order to make your very piety its own snare, and endeavouring to overcome by boastfulness those whom he could not defeat by distrustfulness. For the vice of pride is a near neighbour to good deeds, and arrogance ever lies in wait hard by virtue: because it is hard for him that lives praise-worthily not to be caught by man's praise unless, as it is written, "he that glorieth, glorieth in the Lord . Whose intentions would that most naughty enemy not dare to attack? whose fasting would he not seek to break down? seeing that, as has been shown in the reading of the Gospel , he did not restrain his wiles even against the Saviour of the world Himself. For being exceedingly afraid of His fast, which lasted 40 days and nights, he wished most cunningly to discover whether this power of abstinence was given Him or His very own: for he need not fear the defeat of all his treacherous designs, if Christ were throughout subject to the same conditions as He is in body . And so he first craftily examined whether He were Himself the Creator of all things, such that He could change the natures of material things as He pleased:

secondly, whether under the form of human flesh the Godhead lay concealed, to Whom it was easy to make the air His chariot, and convey His earthly limbs through space. But when the Lord preferred to resist him by the uprightness of His true Manhood, than to display the power of His Godhead, to this he turns the craftiness of his third design, that he might tempt by the lust of empire Him in Whom the signs of Divine power had failed, and entice Him to the worship of himself by promising the kingdoms of the world. But the devil's cleverness was rendered foolish by God's wisdom, so that the proud foe was bound by that which he had formerly bound, and did not fear to assail Him Whom it behoved to be slain for the world.

IV. The Perverse Turn Even Their Fasting into Sin.

This adversary's wiles then let us beware of, not only in the enticements of the palate, but also in our purpose of abstinence. For he who knew how to bring death upon mankind by means of food, knows also how to harm us through our very fasting, and using the Manichaeans as his tools, as he once drove men to take what was forbidden, so in the opposite direction he prompts them to avoid what is allowed. It is indeed a helpful observance, which accustoms one to scanty diet, and checks the appetite for dainties: but woe to the dogmatizing of those whose very fasting is turned to sin. For they condemn the creature's nature to the Creator's injury, and maintain that they are defiled by eating those things of which they contend the devil, not God, is the author: although absolutely nothing that exists is evil, nor is anything in nature included in the actually bad. For the good Creator made all things good and the Maker of the universe is one, "Who made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is in them ." Of which whatever is granted to man for food and drink,' is holy and clean after its kind. But if it is taken with immoderate greed, it is the excess that disgraces the eaters and drinkers, not the nature of the food or drink that defiles them. "For all things," as the Apostle says, "are clean to the clean. But to the defiled and unbelieving nothing is clean, but their mind and conscience is defiled ."

V. Be Reasonable and Seasonable in Your Fasting.

But ye, dearly-beloved, the holy offspring of the catholic Mother, who have been taught in the school of Truth by God's Spirit, moderate your liberty with due reasonableness, knowing that it is good to abstain even from things lawful, and at seasons of greater strictness to distinguish one food from another with a view to giving up the use of some kinds, not to condemning their nature. And so be not infected with the error of those who are corrupted merely by their own ordinances, "serving the creature rather than the Creator ," and offering a foolish abstinence to the service of the lights of heaven: seeing that they have chosen to fast on the first and second days of the week in honour of the sun and moon, proving themselves in this one instance of their perverseness twice disloyal to God, twice blasphemous, by setting up their fast not only in worship of the stars but also in contempt of the Lord's Resurrection. For they reject the mystery of man's salvation and refuse to believe that Christ our Lord in the true flesh of our nature was truly born, truly suffered, was truly buried and was truly raised. And in consequence, condemn the day of our rejoicing by the gloom of their fasting.

And since to conceal their infidelity they dare to be present at our meetings, at the Communion of the Mysteries they bring themselves sometimes, in order to ensure their concealment, to receive Christ's Body with unworthy lips, though they altogether refuse to drink the Blood of our Redemption. And this we make known to you, holy brethren, that men of this sort may be detected by you by these signs, and that they whose impious pretences have been discovered may be driven from the society of the saints by priestly authority. For of such the blessed Apostle Paul in his foresight warns God's Church, saying: "but we beseech you, brethren, that ye observe those who make discussions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye learnt and turn away from them. For such persons serve not Christ the Lord but their own belly, and by sweet words and fair speeches beguile the hearts of the innocent ."

VI. Make Your Fasting a Reality by Amendment in Your Lives.

Being therefore, dearly-beloved, fully instructed by these admonitions of ours, which we have often repeated in your ears in protest against abominable error, enter upon the holy days of Lent with Godly devoutness, and prepare yourselves to win God's mercy by your own works of mercy. Quench your anger, wipe out enmities, cherish unity, and vie with one another in the offices of true humility. Rule your slaves and those who are put under you with fairness, let none of them be tortured by imprisonment or chains. Forego vengeance, forgive offences: exchange severity for gentleness, indignation for meekness, discord for peace. Let all men find us self-restrained, peaceable, kind: that our fastings may be acceptable to God. For in a word to Him we offer the sacrifice of true abstinence and true Godliness, when we keep ourselves from all evil: the Almighty God helping us through all, to Whom with the Son and Holy Spirit belongs one Godhead and one Majesty, for ever and ever. Amen:

I. Lent Must Be Kept Not Only by Avoiding Bodily Impurity But Also by Avoiding Errors of Thought and Faith.

We know indeed, dearly-beloved, your devotion to be so warm that in the fasting, which is the forerunner of the Lord's Easter, many of you will have forestalled our exhortations. But because the right practice of abstinence is needful not only to the mortification of the flesh but also to the purification of the mind, we desire your observance to be so complete that, as you cut down the pleasures that be long to the lusts of the flesh, so you should banish the errors that proceed from the imaginations of the heart. For he whose heart is polluted with no misbelief prepares himself with true and reasonable purification for the Paschal Feast, in which all the mysteries of our religion meet together. For, as the Apostle says, that "all that is not of faith is sin ," the fasting of those will be unprofitable and vain, whom the father of lying deceives with his delusions, and who are not fed by Christ's true flesh. As then we must with the whole heart obey the Divine commands and sound doctrine, so we must use all foresight in abstaining from wicked imaginations. For the mind then only keeps holy and spiritual fast when it rejects the food of error and the poison of falsehood, which our crafty and wily foe plies us with more treacherously now, when by the very return of the venerable Festival, the whole church generally is admonished to understand the mysteries of its salvation.

For he is the true confessor and worshipper of Christ's resurrection, who is not confused about His passion, nor deceived about His bodily nativity. For some are so ashamed of the Gospel of the Cross of Christ, as to impudently nullify the punishment which He underwent for the world's redemption, and have denied the very nature of true flesh in the Lord, not understanding how the impossible and unchangeable Deity of God's Word could have so far condescended for man's salvation, as by His power not to lose His own properties, and in His mercy to take on Him ours. And so in Christ, there is a twofold form but one person, and the Son of God, who is at the same time Son of Man, is one Lord, accepting the condition of

a slave by the design of loving-kindness, not by the law of necessity, because by His power He became humble, by His power passible, by His power mortal; that for the destruction of the tyranny of sin and death, the weak nature in Him might be capable of punishment, and the strong nature not lose aught of its glory.

II. All the Actions of Christ Reveal the Presence of the Twofold Nature.

And so, dearly-beloved, when in reading or hearing the Gospel you find certain things in our Lord Jesus Christ subjected to injuries and certain things illumined by miracles, in such a way that in the same Person now the Humanity appears, and now the Divinity shines out, do not put down any of these things to a delusion, as if in Christ there is either Manhood alone or Godhead alone, but believe both faithfully, worship both right humbly; so that in the union of the Word and the Flesh there may be no separation, and the bodily proofs may not seem delusive, because the divine signs were evident in Jesus. The attestations to both natures in Him are true and abundant, and by the depth of the Divine purpose all concur to this end, that the inviolable Word not being separated from the passible flesh, the Godhead may be understood as in all things partaker with the flesh and flesh with the Godhead. And, therefore, must the Christian mind that would eschew lies and be the disciple of truth, use the Gospel-story confidently, and, as if still in company with the Apostles themselves, distinguish what is visibly done by the Lord, now by the spiritual understanding and now by the bodily organs of sight. Assign to the man that He is born a boy of a woman: assign to God that His mother's virginity is not harmed, either by conception or by bearing.

Recognize "the form of a slave" enwrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, but acknowledge that it was the Lord's form that was announced by angels, "proclaimed by the elements ," adored by the wise men. Understand it of His humanity that he did not avoid the marriage feast confess it Divine that he turned water into wine. Let your own feelings explain to you why He shed tears over a dead friend: let His Divine power be realized, when that same friend, after mouldering in the grave four days, is brought to life and raised only by the command of His voice. To make clay with spittle and earth was a work of the body: but to anoint therewith and enlighten the eyes of the blind is an undoubted mark of that power which had reserved for the revelation of its glory that which it had not allowed to the early part ofHis natural life. It is truly human to relievebodily fatigue with rest in sleep: but it is truly Divine to quell the violence of raging storms by a rebuking command. To set

food before the hungry denotes human kindness and a philanthropic spirit: but with five loaves and two fishes to satisfy 5,000 men, besides women and children, who would dare deny that to be the work of Deity? a Deity which, by the co-operation of the functions of true flesh, showed not only itself in Manhood, but also Manhood in itself;

for the old, original wounds in man's nature could not be healed, except by the Word of God taking to Himself flesh from the Virgin's womb, whereby in one and the same Person flesh and the Word co-existed.

III. Hold Fast to the Statements of the Creed.

This belief in the Lord's Incarnation, dearly-beloved, through which the whole Church is Christ's body , hold firm with heart unshaken and abstain from all the lies of heretics, and remember that your works of mercy will only then profit you, and your strict continence only then bear fruit, when your minds are unsoiled by any defilement from wrong opinions. Cast away the arguments of this world's wisdom, for God hates them, and none can arrive by them at the knowledge of the Truth, and keep fixed in your mind that which you say in the Creed. Believe the Son of God to be co-eternal with the Father by Whom all things were made and without Whom nothing was made, born also according to the flesh at the end of the times. Believe Him to have been in the body crucified, dead, raised up, · and lifted above the heights of heavenly powers, set on the Father's right hand, about to come in the same flesh in which He ascended, to judge the living and the dead. For this is what the Apostle proclaims to all the faithful, saying: "if ye be risen with Christ seek the things which are above, where Christ is sitting on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. For when Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory ."

IV. Use Lent for General Improvement in the Whole Round of Christian Duties.

Relying, therefore, dearly-beloved, on so great a promise, be heavenly not only in hope, but also in conduct And though our minds must at all times be set on holiness of mind and body, yet now during these 40 days of fasting bestir yourselves to yet more active works of piety, not only in the distribution of alms, which are very effectual in attesting reform, but also in forgiving offences, and in being merciful to those accused of wrongdoing, that the condition which God has laid down between Himself and us may not be against us when we pray. For when we say, in accordance with the Lord's teaching, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors ," we ought with the whole heart to carry out what we say. For then only will what we ask in the next clause come to pass, that we be not led into temptation and freed from all evils : through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Lenten Fast is Incumbent on All Alike.

On all days and seasons, indeed, dearly-beloved, some marks of the Divine goodness are set, and no part of the year is destitute of sacred mysteries, in order that, so long as proofs of our salvation meet us on all sides, we may the more eagerly accept the never-ceasing calls of God's mercy. But all that is bestowed on the restoration of human souls in the divers works and gifts of grace is put before us more clearly and abundantly now, when no isolated portions of the Faith are to be celebrated, but the whole together. For as the Easter festival approaches, the greatest and most binding of fasts is kept, and its observance is imposed on all the faithful without exception; because no one is so holy that he ought not to be holier, nor so devout that he might not be devouter. For who, that is set in the uncertainty of this life, can be found either exempt from temptation, or free from fault? Who is there who would not wish for additions to his virtue, or removal of his vice? seeing that adversity does us harm, and prosperity spoils us, and it is equally dangerous not to have what we want at all, and to have it in the fullest measure. There is a trap in the fulness of riches, a trap in the straits of poverty. The one lifts us up in pride, the other incites us to complaint. Health tries us, sickness tries us, so long as the one fosters carelessness and the other sadness. There is a snare in security, a snare in fear; and it matters not whether the mind which is given over to earthly thoughts, is taken up with pleasures or with cares; for it is equally unhealthy to languish under empty delights, or to labour under racking anxiety.

II. The Broad Road is Crowded the Narrow Way of Salvation Nearly Empty.

And thus is perfectly fulfilled that assurance of the Truth, by which we learn that ”narrow and steep is the way that leads to life ; and whilst the breadth of the way that leads to death is crowded with a large company, the steps are few of those that tread the path of safety. And wherefore is the left road more thronged than the right, save that the multitude is prone to wordly joys and carnal goods? And although that which it desires is short-lived and uncertain, yet men endure toil more willingly for the lust of pleasure than for love of virtue. Thus while those who crave things visible are unnumbered, those who prefer the eternal to the temporal are hardly to be found. And, therefore, seeing that the blessed Apostle Paul says, ”the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal ,” the path of virtue lies hid and in concealment, to a certain extent, since ”by hope we were saved ,” and true faith loves that above all things, which it attains to without any intervention of the flesh. A great work and toil it is then to keep our wayward heart from all sin, and, with the numberless allurements of pleasure to ensnare it on all sides, not to let the vigour of the mind give way to any attack. Who ”toucheth pitch, and is not defiled thereby ? who is not weakened by the flesh? who is not begrimed by the dust?

who, lastly, is of such purity as not to be polluted by those things without which one cannot live? For the Divine teaching commands by the Apostle’s mouth that ”they who have wives” should ”be as though they had none: and those that weep as though they wept not; and those that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and those that buy as though they possessed not; and those that use this world as though they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away . Blessed, therefore, is the mind that passes the time of its pilgrimage in chaste sobriety, and loiters not in the things through which it has to walk, so that, as a stranger rather than the possessor of its earthly abode, it may not be wanting in human affections, and yet rest on the Divine promises.

III. Satan is Incited to Fresh Efforts at This Season of the Year.

And, dearly-beloved, no season requires and bestows this fortitude more than the present, when by the observance of a special strictness a habit is acquired which must be persevered in. For it is well known to you that this is the time when throughout the world the devil waxes furious, and the Christian army has to combat him, and any that have grown lukewarm and slothful, or that are absorbed in worldly cares, must now be furnished with spiritual armour and their ardour kindled for the fray by the heavenly trumpet, inasmuch as he, through whose envy death came into the world , is now consumed with the strongest jealousy and now tortured with the greatest vexation. For he sees whole tribes of the human race brought in afresh to the adoption of God's sons and the offspring of the New Birth multiplied through the virgin fertility of the Church. He sees himself robbed of all his tyrannic power, and driven from the hearts of those he once possessed, while from either sex thousands of the old, the young, the middle-aged are snatched away from him, and no one is debarred by sin either of his own or original, where justification is not paid for deserts, but simply given as a free gift. He sees, too, those that have lapsed, and have been deceived by his treacherous snares, washed in the tears of penitence and, by the Apostle's key unlocking the gates of mercy, admitted to the benefit of reconciliation . He feels, moreover, that the day of the Lord's Passion is at hand, and that he is crushed by the power of that cross which in Christ, Who was free from all debt of sin, was the world's ransom and not the penalty of sin.

IV.self-Examination by the Standard of God's Commands the Right Occupation in Lent.

And so, tha the malice of the fretting foe may effect nothing by its rage, a keener devotion must be awaked to the performance of the Divine commands, in order that we may enter on the season, when all the mysteries of the Divine mercy meet together, with preparedness both of mind and body, invoking the guidance and help of God, that we may be strong to fulfil all things through Him, without Whom we can do nothing. For the injunction is laid on us, in order that we may seek the aid of Him Who lays it Nor must any one excuse himself by reason of his weakness, since He Who has granted the will, also gives the power, as the blessed Apostle James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, Who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him . Which of the faithful does not know what virtues he ought to cultivate, and what vices to fight against? Who is so partial or so unskilled a judge of his own conscience as not to know what ought to be removed, and what ought to be developed? Surely no one is so devoid of reason as not to understand the character of his mode of life, or not to know the secrets of his heart.

Let him not then please himself in everything, nor judge himself according to the delights of the flesh, but place his every habit in the scale of the Divine commands, where, some things being ordered to be done and others forbidden, he can examine himself in a true balance by weighing the actions of his life according to this standard. For the designing mercy of God has set up the brightest mirror in His commandments, wherein a man may see his mind's face and realize its conformity or dissimilarity to God's image: with the specific purpose that, at least, during the days of our Redemption and Restoration, we may throw off awhile our carnal cares and restless occupations, and betake ourselves from earthly matters to heavenly.

V. Forgiveness of Our Own Sins Requires that We Should Forgive Others.

But because, as it is written, ”in many things we all stumble ,” let the feeling of mercy be first aroused and the faults of others against us be forgotten; that we may not violate by any love of revenge that most holy compact, to which we bind ourselves in the Lord’s prayer, and when we say ”forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors,” let us not be hard in forgiving, because we must be possessed either with the desire for revenge, or with the leniency of gentleness, and for man, who is ever exposed to the dangers of temptations, it is more to be desired that his own faults should not need punishment than that he should get the faults of others punished. And what is more suitable to the Christian faith than that not only in the Church, but also in all men’s homes, there should be forgiveness of sins? Let threats be laid aside; let bonds be loosed, for he who will not loose them will bind himself with them much more disastrously. For whatsoever one man resolves upon against another, he decrees against himself by his own terms. Whereas ”blessed are the merciful, for God shall have mercy on them :” and He is just and kind in His judgments, allowing some to be in the power of others to this end, that under fair government may be preserved both the profitableness of discipline and the kindliness of clemency, and that no one should dare to refuse that pardon to another’s shortcomings, which he wishes to receive for his own.

VI. Reconciliation Between Enemies and Alms-Giving are Also Lenten Duties.

Furthermore, as the Lord says, that ”the peacemakers are blessed, because they shall be called sons of God ,” let all discords and enmities be laid aside, and let no one think to have a share in the Paschal feast that has neglected to restore brotherly peace. For with the Father on high, he that is not in charity with the brethren, will not be reckoned in the number of His sons. Furthermore, in the distribution of alms and care of the poor, let our Christian fast-times be fat and abound; and let each bestow on the weak and destitute those dainties which he denies himself. Let pains be taken that all may bless God with one mouth, and let him that gives some portion of substance understand that he is a minister of the Divine mercy; for God has placed the cause of the poor in the hand of the liberal man; that the sins which are washed away either by the waters of baptism, or the tears of repentance, may be also blotted out by alms-giving; for the Scripture says, ”As water extinguisheth fire, so alms extinguisheth sin .” Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

I. Peter's Confession Shown to Lead Up to the Transfiguration.

The Gospel lesson, dearly-beloved, which has reached the inner hearing of our minds through our bodily ears, calls us to the understanding of a great mystery, to which we shall by the help of God's grace the better attain, if we turn our attention to what is narrated just before.

The Saviour of mankind, Jesus Christ, in founding that faith, which recalls the wicked to righteousness and the dead to life, used to instruct His disciples by admonitory teaching and by miraculous acts to the end that He, the Christ, might be believed to be at once the Only-begotten of God and the Son of Man. For the one without the other was of no avail to salvation, and it was equally dangerous to have believed the Lord Jesus Christ to be either only God without manhood, or only man without Godhead , since both had equally to be confessed, because just as true manhood existed in His Godhead, so true Godhead existed in His Manhood. To strengthen, therefore, their most wholesome knowledge of this belief, the Lord had asked His disciples, among the various opinions of others, what they themselves believed, or thought about Him: whereat the Apostle Peter, by the revelation of the most High Father passing beyond things corporeal and surmounting things human by the eyes of his mind, saw Him to be Son of the living God, and acknowledged the glory of the Godhead, because he looked not at the substance of His flesh and blood alone; and with this lofty faith Christ was so well pleased that he received the fulness of blessing, and was endued with the holy firmness of the inviolable Rock on which the Church should be built and conquer the gates of hell and the laws of death, so that, in loosing or binding the petitions of any whatsoever, only that should be ratified in heaven which had been settled by the judgment of Peter.

II. The Same Continued.

But this exalted and highly-praised understanding, dearly-beloved, had also to be instructed on the mystery of Christ's lower substance, lest the Apostle's faith, being raised to the glory of confessing the Deity in Christ, should deem the reception of our weakness unworthy of the impassible God, and incongruous, and should believe the human nature to be so glorified in Him as to be incapable of suffering punishment, or being dissolved in death. And, therefore, when the Lord said that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and scribes and chief of the priests, and the third day rise again, the blessed Peter who, being illumined with light from above, was burning with the heat of his confession, rejected their mocking insults and the disgrace of the most cruel death, with, as he thought, a loyal and outspoken contempt, but was checked by a kindly rebuke from Jesus and animated with the desire to share His suffering. For the Saviour's exhortation that followed, instilled and taught this, that they who wished to follow Him should deny themselves. and count the loss of temporal flyings as light in the hope of things eternal; because he alone could save his soul that did not fear to lose it for Christ.

In order, therefore, that the Apostles might entertain this happy, constant courage with their whole heart, and have no tremblings about the harshness of taking up the cross, and that they might not be ashamed of the punishment of Christ, nor think what He endured disgraceful for themselves (for the bitterness of suffering was to be displayed without despite to His; glorious power), Jesus took Peter and James and his brother John, and ascending a very high mountain with them apart, showed them the brightness of His glory; because, although they had recognised the majesty of God in Him, yet the power of His body, wherein His Deity was contained, they did not know. And, therefore, rightly and significantly, had He promised that certain of the disciples standing by should not taste death till they saw "the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom ," that is, in the kingly brilliance which, as specially belonging to the nature of His assumed Manhood, He wished to be conspicuous to these three men. For the unspeakable and unapproachable vision of the Godhead Itself which is reserved tilt eternal life for the pure in heart, they could in no wise look upon and see while still surrounded with mortal flesh. The Lord displays His glory, therefore, before chosen witnesses, and invests that bodily shape which He shared with others with such splendour, that His face was like the sun's brightness and His garments equalled the whiteness of snow.

III.the Object and the Meaning of the Transfiguration.

And in this Transfiguration the foremost object was to remove the offence of the cross from the disciple's heart, and to prevent their faith being disturbed by the humiliation of His voluntary Passion by revealing to them the excellence of His hidden dignity. But with no less foresight, the foundation was laid of the Holy Church's hope, that the whole body of Christ might realize the character of the change which it would have to receive, and that the members might promise themselves a share in that honour which had already shone forth in their Head. About which the Lord bad Himself said, when He spoke of the majesty of His coming, "Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in their Father's Kingdom ," whilst the blessed Apostle Paul bears witness to the self-same thing, and says: "for I reckon that the sufferings of this thee are not worthy to be compared with the future glory which shall be revealed in us :" and again, "for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. For when Christ our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory ." But to confirm the Apostles and assist them to all knowledge, still further instruction was conveyed by that miracle.

IV. The Significance of the Appearance of Moses and Elias.

For Moses and Elias, that is the Law and the Prophets, appeared talking with the Lord; that in the presence of those five men might most truly be fulfilled what was said: ”In two or three witnesses stands every word .” What more stable, what more steadfast than this word, in the proclamation of which the trumpet of the Old and of the New Testament joins, and the documentary evidence of the ancient witnesses combine with the teaching of the Gospel?For the pages of both covenants corroborate each other, and He Whom under the veil of mysteries the types that went before had promised, is displayed clearly and conspicously by the splendour of the present glory. Because, as says the blessed John, ”the law was given through Moses: but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ ,” in Whom is fulfilled both the promise of prophetic figures and the purpose of the legal ordinances: for He both teaches the truth of prophecy by His presence, and renders the commands possible through grace.

V. S Peter's Suggestion Contrary to the Divine Order.

The Apostle Peter, therefore, being excited by the revelation of these mysteries, despising things mundane and scorning things earthly, was seized with a sort of frenzied craving for the things eternal, and being filled with rapture at the whole vision, desired to make his abode with Jesus in the place where he had been blessed with the manifestation of His glory. Whence also he says, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt let us make three tabernacles , one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." But to this proposal the Lord made no answer, signifying that what he wanted was not indeed; wicked, but contrary to the Divine order: since the world could not be saved, except; by Christ's death, and by the Lord's example the faithful were called upon to believe that, although there ought not to be any doubt about the promises of happiness, yet we should understand that amidst the trials of this life we must ask for the power of endurance rather than the glory, because the joyousness of reigning cannot precede the times of suffering.

VI. The Import of the Father's Voice from the Cloud.

And so while He was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. The Father was indeed present in the Son, and in the Lord's brightness, which He had tempered to the disciples' sight, the Father's Essence was not separated from the Only-begotten: but, in order to emphasize the two-fold personality, as the effulgence of the Son's body displayed the Son to their sight, so the Father's voice from out the cloud announced the Father to their hearing. And when this voice was heard, "the disciples fell upon their faces, and were sore afraid," trembling at the majesty, not only of the Father, but also of the Son: for they now had a deeper insight into the undivided Deity of Both: and in their fear they did not separate the One from the Other, because they doubted not in their faith . That was a wide and manifold testimony, therefore, and contained a fuller meaning than struck the ear. For when the Father said, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom, &c.," was it not clearly meant, "This is My Son," Whose it is to be eternally from Me and with Me? because the Begetter is not anterior to the Begotten, nor the Begotten posterior to the Begetter. "This is My Son," Who is separated from Me, neither by Godhead, nor by power, nor by eternity.

"This is My Son," not adopted, but true-born, not created from another source, but begotten of Me: nor yet made like Me from another nature, but born equal to Me of My nature. "This is My Son," "through Whom all things were made, and without Whom was nothing made " because all things that I do He doth in like manner: and whatever I perform, He performs with Me inseparably and without difference: for the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son , and Our Unity is never divided: and though I am One Who begot, and He the Other Whom I begot, yet is it wrong for you to think anything of Him which is not possible of Me. "This is My Son," Who sought not by grasping, and seized not in greediness , that equality with Me which He has, but remaining in the form of My glory, that He might carry out Our common plan for the restoration of mankind, He lowered the unchangeable Godhead even to the form of a slave.

VII. Who It is We Have to Hear.

”Here ye Him,” therefore, unhesitatingly, in Whom I am throughout well pleased, and by Whose preaching I am manifested, by Whose humiliation I am glorified; because He is ”the Truth and the Life ,” He is My ”Power and Wisdom .” ”Hear ye Him,” Whom the mysteries of the Law have foretold, Whom the mouths of prophets have sung. ”Hear ye Him,” Who redeems the world by His blood, Who binds the devil, and carries off his chattels, Who destroys the bond of sin, and the compact of the transgression. Hear ye Him, Who opens the way to heaven, and by the punishment of the cross prepares for you the steps of ascent to the Kingdom? Why tremble ye at being redeemed? why fear ye to be healed of your wounds?Let that happen which Christ wills and I will. Cast away all fleshly fear, and arm yourselves with faithful constancy; for it is unworthy that ye should fear in the Saviour’s Passion what by His good gift ye shall not have to fear even at your own end.

VIII. The Father's Words Have a Universal Application to the Whole Church.

These things, dearly-beloved, were said not for their profit only, who heard them with their own ears, but in these three Apostles the whole Church has learnt all that their eyes saw and their ears heard. Let all men's faith then be established, according to the preaching of the most holy Gospel, and let no one be ashamed of Christ's cross, through which the world was redeemed. And let not any one fear to suffer for righteousness' sake, or doubt of the fulfilment of the promises, for this reason, that through toil we pass to rest and through death to life; since all the weakness of our humility was assumed by Him, in Whom, if we abide in the acknowledgment and love of Him, we conquer as He conquered, and receive what he promised, because, whether to the performance of His commands or to the endurance of adversities, I the Father's fore-announcing voice should always be sounding in our ears, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him:" Who liveth and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Two-Fold Nature of Christ Set Forth.

Among all the works of God's mercy, dearly-beloved, which from the beginning have been bestowed upon men's salvation, none is more wondrous, and none more sublime, than that Christ was crucified for the world. For to this mystery all the mysteries of the ages preceding led up, and every variation which the will of God ordained in sacrifices, in prophetic signs, and in the observances of the Law, foretold that this was fixed, and promised its fulfilment: so that now types and figures are at an end, and we find our profit in believing that accomplished which before we found our profit in looking forward to. In all things, therefore, dearly-beloved, which pertain to the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Catholic Faith maintains and demands that we acknowledge the two Natures to have met in our Redeemer, and while their properties remained, such a union of both Natures to have been effected that, from the thee when, as the cause of mankind required, in the blessed Virgin's womb, "the Word became flesh," we may not think of Him asGod without that which is man, nor as man without that which is God. Each Nature does indeed express its real existence by actions that distinguish it, but neither separatesitself from connexion with the other. Nothing is wanting there on either side; in the majesty the humility is complete, in the humility themajesty is complete: and the unity does not introduce confusion, nor does the distinctiveness destroy the unity. The one is passible,the other inviolable; and yet the degradation belongs to the same Person, as does the glory. He is present at once in weakness and in power; at once capable of death and the vanquisher of it. Therefore, God took on Him whole Manhood, and so blended the two Natures together by means of His mercy and power, that each Nature was present in the other, and neither passed out of its own properties into the other.

II. The Two Natures Acted Conjointly, and the Human Sufferings Were Not Compulsory, But in Accordance with the Divine Will.

But because the design of that mystery which was ordained for our restoration before the eternal ages, was not to be carried out without human weakness and without Divine power , both ”form” does that which is proper to it in common with the other, the Word, that is, performing that which is the Word’s and the flesh that which is of the flesh. One of them gleams bright with miracles, the other i succumbs to injuries. The one departs not from equality with the Father’s glory, the other leaves not the nature of our race. But nevertheless even His very endurance of sufferings does not so far expose Him to a participation in our humility as to separate Him from the power of the Godhead. All the mockery and insults, all the persecution and pain which the madness of the wicked inflicted on the Lord, was not endured of necessity, but undertaken of free-will: ”for the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which had perished :” and He used the wickedness of His persecutors for the redemption of all men in such a way that in the mystery of His Death and Resurrection even His murderers could have been saved, if they had believed.

III Judas’ Infamy Has Never Been Exceeded.

And hence, Judas, thou art proved more criminal and unhappier than all; for when repentance should have called thee back to the Lord, despair dragged thee to the halter. Thou shouldest have awaited the completion of thy crime, and have put off thy ghastly death by hanging, until Christ’s Blood was shed for all sinners. And among the many miracles and gifts of the Lords which might have aroused thy conscience, those holy mysteries, at least, might have rescued thee from thy headlong fall, which at the Paschal supper thou hadst received, being even then detected in thy treachery by the sign of Divine knowledge. Why dost thou distrust the goodness of Him, Who did not repel thee from the communion of His

body and blood, Who did not deny thee the kiss of peace when thou camest with crowds and a band of armed men to seize Him. But O man that nothing could convert, O "spirit going and not returning ," thou didst follow thy heart's rage, and, the devil standing at thy right hand, didst turn the wickedness, which thou hadst prepared against the life of all the saints, to thine own destruction, so that, because thy crime had exceeded all measure of punishment, thy wickedness might make thee thine own judge, thy punishment allow thee to be thine own hangman.

IV. Christ Voluntarily Bartered His Glory for Our Weakness.

When, therefore, ”God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself ,” and the Creator Himself was wearing the creature which was to be restored to the image of its Creator; and after the Divinely-miraculous works had been performed, the performance of which the spirit of prophecy had once predicted, ”then shall the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf shall hear; then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be plain ;” Jesus knowing that the thee was now come for the fulfilment of His glorious Passion, said, ”My soul is sorrowful even unto death ;” and again, ”Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me .” And these words, expressing a certain fear, show His desire to heal the affection of our weakness by sharing them, and to check our fear of enduring pain by undergoing it. In our Nature, therefore, the Lord trembled with our fear, that He might fully clothe our weakness and our frailty with the completeness of His own strength. For He had come into this world a rich and merciful Merchant from the skies, and by a wondrous exchange had entered into a bargain of salvation with us, receiving ours and giving His, honour for insults, salvation for pain, life for death: and He Whom more than 12,000 of the angel-hosts might have served for the annihilation of His persecutors, preferred to entertain our fears, rather than employ His own power.

V. S. Peter Was the First To' Benefit by His Master's Humiliation.

And how much this humiliation conferred upon all the faithful, the most blessed Apostle Peter was the first to prove, who, after the fierce blast of threatening cruelty had dismayed him, quickly changed, and was restored to vigour, finding remedy from the great Pattern, so that the suddenly-shaken member returned to the firmness of the Head. For the bond-servant could not be "greater than the Lord, nor the disciple greater than the master ," and he could not have vanquished the trembling of human frailty had not the Vanquisher of Death first feared. The Lord, therefore, "looked back upon Peter ," and amid the calumnies of priests, the falsehoods of witnesses, the injuries of those that scourged and spat upon Him, met His dismayed disciple with those eyes wherewith He had foreseen his dismay: and the gaze of the Truth entered into him, on whose heart correction must be wrought, as if the Lord's voice were making itself heard there, and saying, Whither goest thou, Peter? why retirest thou upon thyself? turn thou to Me, put thy trust in Me, follow Me: this is the thee of My Passion, the hour of thy suffering is not yet come. Why dost thou fear what thou, too, shalt overcome?Let not the weakness, in which I share, confound thee. I was fearful for thee; do thou be confident of Me.

VI. The Mad Counsel of the Jews Was Turned to Their Own Destruction.

”And when morning was come all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death .” This morning, O ye Jews, was for you not the rising, but the setting of the sun, nor did the wonted daylight visit your eyes, but a night of blackest darkness brooded on your naughty hearts. This morning overthrew for you the temple and its altars, did away with the Law and the Prophets, destroyed the Kingdom and the priesthood, turned all your feasts into eternal mourning. For ye resolved on a mad and bloody counsel, ye ”fat bulls,” ye ”many oxen,” ye ”roaring” wild beasts, ye rabid ”dogs ,” to give up to death the Author of life and the Lord of glory; and, as if the enormity of your fury could be palliated by employing the verdict of him, who ruled your province, you lead Jesus bound to Pilate’s judgment, that the terror-stricken judge being overcome by your persistent shouts, you might choose a man that was a murderer for pardon, and demand the crucifixion of the Saviour of the world. After this condemnation of Christ, brought about more by the cowardice than the power of Pilate, who with washed hands but polluted mouth sent Jesus to the cross with the very lips that had pronounced Him innocent, the licence of the people, obedient to the looks of the priests, heaped many insults on the Lord, and the frenzied mob wreaked its rage on Him, Who meekly and voluntarily endured it all. But because, dearly-beloved, the whole story is too long to go through to-day, let us put off the rest till Wednesday, when the reading of the Lord’s Passion will be repeated . For the Lord will grant to your prayers, that of His own free gift we may fulfil our promise: through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Difference Between the Penitence and Blasphemy of the Two Robbers is a Type of the Human Race.

That which we owe to your expectations, dearly-beloved, must be paid through the Lord's bountiful answer to your prayers that He Who has made you eager in the demanding would make us fit for the performing. In speaking but lately of the Lord's Passion we reached the point in the Gospel story, where Pilate is said to have yielded to the Jews' wicked shouts that Jesus should be crucified. And so when all things had been accomplished, which the Godhead veiled in frail flesh permitted, Jesus Christ the Son of God was fixed to the cross which He had also been carrying, two robbers being similarly crucified, one on His right hand, and the other on the left: so that even in the incidentsof the cross might be displayed that difference which in His judgment must be made in the case of all men; for the believing robber's faith was a type of those who are to be saved, and the blasphemer's wickedness prefigured those who are to be damned. Christ's Passion, therefore, contains the mystery of our salvation, and of the instrument which the iniquity of the Jews prepared for His punishment, the Redeemer's power has made for us the stepping-stone to glory : and that Passion the Lord Jesus so underwent for the salvation of all men that, while hanging there nailed to the wood, He entreated the Father's mercy for His murderers, and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know' not what they do ."

II. The Chief Priests Showed Utter Ignorance of Scripture in Their Taunts.

But the chief priests, for whom the Saviour sought forgiveness, rendered the torture of the cross yet worse by the barbs of railery; and at Him, on Whom they could vent no more fury with their hands, they hurled the weapons of their tongues, saying, ”He saved others; Himself he cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we believe Him .” From what spring of error, from what pool of hatred, O ye Jews, do ye drink such poisonous blasphemies? What master informed you, what teaching convinced you that you ought to believe Him to be King of Israel and Son Of God, who should either not allow Himself to be crucified, or should shake Himself free from the binding nails. The mysteries of the Law, the sacred observances of the Passover, the mouths of the Prophets never told you this: whereas you did find truly and oft-times written that which applies to your abominable wicked-doing and to the Lord’s voluntary suffering. For He Himself says by Isaiah, ”I gave My back to the scourges, My cheeks to the palms of the hand, I turned not My face from the shame of spitting .” He Himself says by David, ”They gave Me gall for My food, and in My thirst they supplied Me with vinegar .” and again, ”Many dogs came about Me, the council of evil-doers beset Me. They pierced My hands and My feet, they counted all My bones. But they themselves watched and gazed on Me, they parted My raiment among them, and for My robe they cast lots .” And lest the course of your own evil doings should seem to have been foretold, and no power in the Crucified predicted, ye read not, indeed, that the Lord descended from the cross, but ye did read, ”The Lord reigned on the tree .”

III. The Triumph of the Cross is Immediate and Effective.

The Cross of Christ, therefore, symbolizes the true altar of prophecy, on which the oblation of man's nature should be celebrated by means of a salvation-bringing Victim. There the blood of the spotless Lamb blotted out the consequences of the ancient trespass: there the whole tyranny of the devil's hatred was crushed, and humiliation triumphed gloriously over the lifting up of pride: for so swift was the effect of Faith that of the robbers crucified with Christ, the one who believed in Christ as the Son of God entered paradise justified. Who can unfold the mystery of so great a boon? who can state the power of so wondrous a change? In a moment of thee the guilt of long evil-doing is done away; clinging to the cross, amid the cruel tortures of his struggling soul, he passes over to Christ; and to him, on whom his own wickedness had brought punishment, Christ's grace now gives a crown.

IV. When the Last Act in the Tragedy Was Over How Must the Jews Have Felt?

And then, having now tasted the vinegar, the produce of that vineyard which had degenerated in spite of its Divine Planter, and had turned to the sourness of a foreign vine , the Lord says, ”it is finished;” that is, the Scriptures are fulfilled: there is no more for Me to abide from the fury of the raging people: I have endured all that I foretold I should suffer. The mysteries of weakness are completed, let the proofs of power be produced. And so He bowed the head and yielded up His Spirit and gave that Body, Which should be raised again on the third day, the rest of peaceful slumber. And when the Author of Life was undergoing this mysterious phase, and at so great a condescension of God’s Majesty, the foundations of the whole world were shaken, when all creation condemned their wicked crime by its upheaval, and the very elements of the world delivered a plain verdict against the criminals, what thoughts, what heart-searchings had ye, O Jews, when the judgment of the universe went against you, and your wickedness could not be recalled, the crime having been done? what confusion covered you? what torment seized your hearts?

V. Chastity, and Charity are the Two Things Most Needful in Preparing for Easter Communion.

Seeing therefore, dearly-beloved, that God's Mercy is so great, that He has deigned to justify. by faith many even from among such a nation, and had adopted into the company of the patriarchs and into the number of the chosen people us who were once perishing in the deep darkness of our old ignorance, let us mount to the summit of our hopes not sluggishly nor in sloth; but prudently and faithfully reflecting from what captivity and from how miserable a bondage, with what ransom we were purchased, by how strong an arm led out, let us glorify God in our body: that we may show Him dwelling in us, even by the uprightness of our manner of life: And because no virtues are worthier or more excellent than merciful loving-kindness and unblemished chastity, let us more especially equip ourselves with these weapons, so that, raised from the earth, as it were on the two wings of active charity and shining purity, we may win a place in heaven. And whosoever, aided by God's grace, is filled with this desire and glories not in himself, but in the Lord, over his progress, pays due honour to the Easter mystery. His threshold the angel of destruction does not cross, for it is marked with the Lamb's blood and the sign of the cross . He fears not the plagues of Egypt, and leaves his foes overwhelmed by the same waters by which he himself was saved.

And so, dearly-beloved, with minds and bodies purified let us embrace the wondrous mystery of our salvation, and, cleansed from all "the leaven of our old wickedness, let us keep " the Lord's Passover with due observance: so that, the Holy Spirit guiding us, we may be "separated" by no temptations "from the love of Christ ," Who bringing peace by His blood to all things, has returned to the loftiness of the Father's glory, and yet not forsaken the lowliness of those who serve Him to Whom is the honour and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Reason of Christ Suffering at the Paschal Feast.

I know indeed, dearly-beloved, that the Easter festival partakes of so sublime a mystery as to surpass not only the slender perceptions of my humility, but even the powers of great intellects. But I must not consider the greatness of the Divine work in such a way as to distrust or to feel ashamed of the service which I owe; for we may not hold our peace upon the mystery of man's salvation, even if it cannot be explained. But, your prayers aiding us, we believe God's Grace will be granted, to sprinkle the barrenness of our heart with the dew of His inspira- tion: that by the pastor's mouth things may be proclaimed which are useful to the ears of his holy flock. For when the Lord, the Giver of all good things, says: "open thy mouth, and I will fill it ," we dare likewise to reply in the prophet's words: "Lord, Thou shale open my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise . Therefore beginning, dearly-beloved, to handle once more the Gospel-story of the Lord's Passion, we understand it was part of the Divine plan that the profane chiefs of the Jews and the unholy priests, who had often sought occasion of venting their rage on Christ, should receive the power of exercising their fury at no other time than the Paschal festival. For the things which had long been promised under mysterious figures had to be fulfilled in all clearness;

for instance, the True Sheep had to supersede the sheep which was its antitype, and the One Sacrifice to bring to an end the multitude of different sacrifices. For all those things which had been divinely ordained through Moses about the sacrifice of the lamb had prophesied of Christ and truly announced the slaying of Christ. In order, therefore, that the shadows should yield to the substance and types cease in the presence of the Reality, the ancient observance is removed by a new Sacrament, victim passes into Victim, blood is wiped away by Blood, and the law-ordained Feast is fulfilled by being changed.

II. The Leading Jews Broke Their Own Law, as Well as Failed to Apprehend the New Dispensation in Destroying Christ.

And hence, when the chief priests gathered the scribes and elders of the people together to their council, and the minds of all the priests were occupied with the purpose of doing wrong to Jesus, the teachers of the law put themselves without the law, and by their own voluntary failure in duty abolished their ancestral ceremonies. For when the Paschal feast began, those who ought to have adorned the temple, cleansed the vessels, provided the victims, and employed a holier zeal in the purifications that the law enjoined, seized with the fury of traitorous hate, give themselves upto one work, and with uniform cruelty conspire for one crime, though they were doomed togain nothing by the punishment of innocence and the condemnation of righteousness, except the failure to apprehend the new mysteries and the violation of the old. The chiefs, therefore, in providing against a tumult arising on a holy day , showed zeal not for the festival, but for a heinous crime; and their anxiety served not the cause of religion, but their own incrimination. For these careful pontiffs and anxious priests feared the occurrence of seditious riots on the principal feast-day, not lest the people should do wrong, but lest Christ should escape.

III. Jesus Instituting the Blessed Sacrament Showed Mercy to Thetraitor Judas to the Last.

But Jesus, sure of His purpose and undaunted in carrying out His Father's will, fulfilled the New Testament and founded a new Passover. For while the disciples were lying down with Him at the mystic Supper, and when discussion was proceeding in the hall of Caiaphas how Christ might be put to death, He, ordaining the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, was teaching them what kind of Victim must be offered up to God, and not even from this mystery was the betrayer kept away, in order to show that he was exasperated by no personal wrong, but had determined beforehand of his own free-will upon his treachery. For he was his own source of ruin and cause of perfidy, following the guidance of the devil and refusing to have Christ as director. And so when the Lord said, "Verily I say to you that one of you is about to betray Me," He showed that His betrayer's conscience was well known to Him, not confounding the traitor by harsh or open rebukes, but meeting him with mild and silent warnings that he who had never been sent astray by rejection, might the easier be set right by repentance. Why, unhappy Judas, dose thou not make use of so great long-suffering? Behold, the Lord spares thy wicked attempts; Christ betrays thee to none save thyself. Neither thy name nor thy person is discovered, but only the secrets of thy heart are touched by the word of truth and mercy.

The honour of the apostolic rank is not denied thee, nor yet a share in the Sacraments. Return to thy right mind; lay aside thy madness and be wise. Mercy invites thee, Salvation knocks at the door, Life recalls thee to life. Lo, thy stainless and guiltless fellow-disciples shudder at the hint of thy crime, and all tremble for themselves till the author of the treachery is declared. For they are saddened not by the accusations of conscience, but by the uncertainty of man's changeableness; fearing lest what each knew against himself be less true than what the Truth Himself foresaw. But thou abusest the Lord's patience in this panic of the saints, and believest that thy bold front hides thee. Thou addest impudence to guilt, and art not frightened by so clear a test And when the others refrain from the food

in which the Lord had set His judgment, thou dost not withdraw thy band from the dish, because thy mind is not turned aside from the crime.

IV. Various Incidents of the Passion .further Explained and the Reality of Christ's Sufferings Asserted.

And thus it followed, dearly-beloved, that as John the Evangelist has narrated, when the Lord offered the bread which He had dipped to His betrayer, more clearly to point him out, the devil entirely seized Judas, and now, by his veritable act of wickedness, took possession of one whom he had already bound down by his evil designs.For only in body was he lying there with those at meat: in mind he was arming the hatred of the priests, the falseness of the witnesses, and the fury of the ignorant mob, At last the Lord, seeing on what a gross crime bent says, "What thou doest do Judas was quickly . This is the voice not of command but of permission, and not of fear but of readiness: He, that has power over all times, shows that He puts no hindrance in the way of the traitor, and carries out the Father's will for the redemption of the world in such a way as neither to promote nor to fear the crime which His persecutors were preparing. When Judas, therefore, at the devil's persuasion, departed from Christ, and cut himself off from the unityof the Apostolic body, the Lord, without bring disturbed by any fear, but anxious only for the salvation of those He came to redeem, spent all the time that was free from His persecutors' attack on mystic conversation and holy teaching, as is declared in St. John's gospel:

raising His eyes to heaven and beseeching the Father for the whole Church that all whom the Father had and would give the Son might become one and remain undivided to the Redeemer's glory, and adding lastly that prayer in which He says, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me . Wherein it is not to be thought that the Lord Jesus wished to escape the Passion and the Death, the sacraments of which He had already committed to His disciples' keeping, seeing that He Himself forbids Peter, when he was burning with devoted faith and love, to use the sword, saying, "The cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it ? and seeing that that is certain which the Lord also says, according to John's Gospel, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but have eternal life ; as also what the Apostle Paul says, "Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, a victim to God for a sweet-smelling savour . For

the saving of all through the Cross of Christ was the common will and the common plan of the Father and the Son; nor could that by any means be disturbed which before eternal ages had been mercifully determined and unchangeably fore-ordained. Therefore in assuming true and entire manhood He took the true sensations of the body and the true feelings of the mind.

And it does not follow because everything in Him was full of sacraments, full of miracles, that therefore He either shed false tears or took food from pretended hunger or reigned slumber. It was in our humility that He was despised, with our grief that He was saddened,with our pain that He was racked on thecross. For His compassion underwent the sufferings of our mortality with the purpose of healing them, and His power encountered them with the purpose of conquering them. And this Isaiah has most plainly prophesied, saying, "He carries our sins and is pained for us, and we thought Him to be in pain and in stripes and in vexation. But He was woundedfor our sins, and was stricken for our offences, and with His braises we are healed ."

V. The Resignation of Christ is an Undying Lesson to the Church

And so, dearly beloved, when the Son of God says, ”Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me ,” He uses the outcry of our nature, and pleads the cause of human frailty and trembling: that our patience may be strengthened and our fears driven away in the things which we have to bear. At length, ceasing even to ask this now that He had in a measure palliated our weak fears, though it is not expedient for us to retain them, He passes into another mood, and says, ”Nevertheless, not as I will but as Thou;” and again, ”If this cup can not pass from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done .” These words of the Head are the salvation of the whole Body: these words have instructed all the faithful, kindled the zeal of all the confessors, crowned all the martyrs. For who could overcome the world’s hatred, the blasts of temptations, the terr onsf persecutors, had not Christ, in the name of all and for all, said, to the Father, ”Thy will be done?” Then let the words be learnt by all the Church’s sons who have been purchased at so great a price, so freely justified: and when the shock of some violent temptation has fallen on them, let them use the aid of this potent prayer, that they may conquer their fear and trembling, and learn to suffer patiently. From this point, dearly-beloved, our sermon must pass to the consideration of the details of the Lord’s Passion, and lest we should burden you with prolixity, we will divide our common task, and put off the rest till the fourth day of the week. God’s grace will be vouchsafed to you if you pray Him to give me the power of carrying out my duty: through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

I. Christ's Arrest Fulfils His Own Eternal Purpose.

Having discoursed, dearly beloved, in our last sermon, on the events which preceded the Lord's arrest, it now remains, by the help of God's grace, to discuss, as we promised, the details of the Passion itself. When the Lord had made it clear by the words of His sacred prayer that the Divine and the Human Nature was most truly and fully present in Him, showing that the unwillingness to suffer proceeded from the one, and from the other the determination to suffer by the expulsion of all frail fears and the strengthening of His lofty power, then did He return to His eternal purpose, and "in the form of a" sinless "slave" encounter the devil who was savagely attacking Him by the hands of the Jews: that He in Whom alone was all men's nature without fault, might undertake the cause of all. The sins of darkness, therefore, assailed the true Light, and, for all their torches and lanterns , could not escape the night of their own unbelief, because they did not recognize the Fount of Light. They arrest Him, and He is ready to be seized; they lead Him away, and He is willing to be led; for though, if He had willed to resist, their wicked hands could have done Him no harm, yet thereby the world's redemption would have been impeded, and He, who was to die for all men's salvation, would have saved none at all.

II. How Great Was Pilate's Crime in Allowing Himself to Be Led Astray & the Jews.

Accordingly, permitting the infliction on Himself of all that the people's fury inflamed by the priests dared do, He is brought to Annas, father-in-law to Caiaphas, and thence Annas passes Him on to Caiaphas: and after the calumniators' mad accusations, after the lying falsehoods of suborned witnesses, He is transferred to Pilate's hearing by the delegation of the two high-priests, who in neglecting the Divine law, and exclaiming that they had "no king but Caesar," as if they were devoted to the Roman laws, and had left the whole judgment in the hands of the governor, really sought for an accomplisher of their cruelty rather than an umpire of the case. For they gave up Jesus, bound in hard bonds, bruised by many buffets and blows, spat upon, already condemned by their shouts: so that amidst so many signs of their own verdict Pilate might not dare to acquit One Whom all desired to perish. In fact, the very inquiry shows both that he found in the Accused no fault and that in his judgment he did not adhere to his purpose: for as judge he condemns One Whom he pronounces guiltless, invoking on the unrighteous people the blood of the Righteous Man with Whom he felt by his own conviction, and knew from his wife's dream , he must have nothing to do. That stained soul is not cleansed by the washing of hands, there is no expiation in water-besprinkled fingers for the crime abetted by that wicked mind. Pilate's fault is indeed, less than the Jews' crime; for it was they that terrified him with Caesar's name, chode him with hateful words, and drove him to perpetrate his wickedness. But he also did not escape incrimination for playing into the hands of those that made the uproar, for abandoning his own judgment, and for acquiescing in the charges of others.

III. Yet the Jews' Guilt Was Infinitely Greater.

In bowing, therefore, dearly-beloved, to the madness of the impacable people, in permitting Jesus to be dishonoured by much mocking, and harassed with excessive insults, and in displaying Him to the eyes of His persecutors lacerated with scourges, crowned with thorns, and clothed in a robe of scorn, Pilate doubtless thought to appease the enemies' minds, so that when they had glutted their cruel hate, they might cease further to persecute One Whom they beheld subjected to such a variety of afflictions. But their wrath was still in full blaze, and they cried out to him to release Barabbas and thus, Jesus bear the penalty of the cross, and thus, when with consenting murmur the crowd said "His blood be on us and on our sons ," those wicked folk gained, to their own damnation what they had persistently demanded, "whose teeth," as the prophet bore witness, "were arms and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword ." For in vain did they keep their own hands from crucifying the Lord of glory when they had hurled at Him the tongue's deadly darts and the poisoned weapons of words. On you, on you, false Jews and unholy leaders of the people, falls the full weight of that crime: and although the enormity of the guilt involves the governor and the soldiers also, yet you are the primary and chief offenders. And in Christ's condemnation, whatsoever wrong was done either by Pilate's judgment or by the cohorts carrying out of his commands, makes you only the more deserving of the hatred of mankind, because the impulse of your fury would not let even those be free from guilt who were displeased at your unrighteous acts.

IV. Christ Bearing His Own Cross is an Eternal Lesson to the Church.

And so the Lord was handed over to their savage wishes, and in mockery of His kingly state, ordered to be the bearer of His own instrument of death, that what Isaiah the prophet foresaw might be fulfilled, saying, ”Behold a Child is born, and a Son is given to us whose government is upon His shoulders .” When, therefore, the Lord carried the wood of the cross which should turn for Him into the sceptre of power, it was indeed in the eyes of the wicked a mighty mockery, but to the faithful a mighty mystery was set forth, seeing that He, the glorious vanquisher of the Devil, and the strong defeater of the powers that were against Him, was carrying in noble sort the trophy of His triumph, and on the shoulders of His unconquered patience bore into all realms the adorable sign of salvation: as if even then to confirm all His followers by this mere symbol of His work, and say, ”He that taketh not his cross and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me .”

V. The Transference of the Cross from the Lord To Simon of Cyrene Signifies the Participation of the Gentiles in His Sufferings.

But as the multitudes went with Jesus to the place of punishment, a certain Simon of Cyrene was found on whom to lay the wood of the cross instead of the Lord; that even by this act might be pre-signified the Gentiles' faith, to whom the cross of Christ was to be not shame but glory. It was not accidental, therefore, but symbolical and mystical, that while the Jews were raging against Christ, a foreigner was found to share His sufferings, as the Apostle says, "if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him "; so that no Hebrew nor Israelite, but a stranger, was substituted for the Saviour in His most holy degradation. For by this transference the propitiation of the spotless Lamb and the fulfilment of all mysteries passed from the circumcision to the uncircumcision, from the sons according to the flesh to the sons according to the spirit: since as the Apostle says, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us ," Who offering Himself to the Father a new and true sacrifice of reconciliation, was crucified not in the temple, whose worship was now at an end, and not within the confines of the city which for its sin was doomed to be destroyed, but outside, "without the camp ," that, on the cessation of the old symbolic victims, a new Victim might be placed on a new altar, and the cross of Christ might be the altar not of the temple but of the world.

VI. We are to See Not Only the Crass But the Meaning of It.

Accordingly, dearly-beloved, Christ being lifted up upon the cross, let the eyes of your mind not dwell only on that sight which those wicked sinners saw, to whom it was said by the mouth of Moses, ”And thy life shall be hanging before thine eyes, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt not be assured of thy life .” For in the crucified Lord they could think of nothing but their wicked deed, having not the fear, by which true faith is justified, but that by which an evil conscience is racked. But let our understandings, illumined by the Spirit of Truth, foster with pure and free heart the glory of the cross which irradiates heaven and earth, and see with the inner sight what the Lord meant when He spoke of His coming Passion: ”The hour is come that the Son of man may be glorified :” and below He says, ”Now is My spirit troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Son.” And when the Father’s voice came from heaven, saying, ”I have both glorified it and will glorify it again,” Jesus in reply said to those that stood by, ”This voice came not for Me but for you. Now is the world’s judgment, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things unto Me .”

VII. The Power of the Crass is Universally Attractive.

O wondrous power of the Cross! O in effable glory of the Passion, in which is contained the Lord's tribunal, the world's judgment, and the power of the Crucified! For thou didst draw all things unto Thee, Lord and when Thou hadst stretched out Thy hands all the day, long to an unbelieving people that gainsaid Thee , the whole world at last was brought to confess Thy majesty. Thou didst draw all things unto Thee, Lord, when all the elements combined to pronounce judgment in execration of the Jews' crime, when the lights of heaven were darkened, and the day turned into night, and the earth also was shaken with unwonted shocks, and all creation refused to serve those wicked men. Thou didst draw all things unto Thee, Lord. for the veil of the temple was rent, and the Holy of Holies existed no more for those unworthy high-priests: so that type was turned into Truth, prophecy into Revelation law into Gospel. Thou didst draw all things unto Thee, Lord, so that what before was done in the one temple of the Jews in dark signs, was now to be celebrated everywhere by the piety of all the nations in full and open rite. For now there is a nobler rank of Levites, there are elders of greater dignity and priests of holier anointing: because Thy cross is the fount of all blessings, the source of all graces, and through it the believers receive strength for weakness, glory for shame, life for death. Now, too, the variety of fleshly sacrifices has ceased, and the one offering of Thy Body and Blood fulfils all those different victims: for Thou art the true "Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world ," and in Thyself so accomplishest all mysteries, that as there is but one sacrifice instead of many victims, so there is but one kingdom instead of many nations.

VIII. We Must Live Not for Ourselves But for Christ, Who Died for Us.

Let us, then, dearly-beloved, confess what the blessed teacher of the nations, the Apostle Paul, confessed, saying, ”Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners . For God’s mercy towards us is the more wonderful that Christ died not for the righteous nor for the holy, but for the unrighteous and wicked; and though the nature of the Godhead could not sustain the sting of death, yet at His birth He took from us that which He might offer for us. For of old He threatened our death with the power of His death, saying. by the mouth of Hosea the prophet, ”O death, I will be thy death, and I will be thy destruction, O hell . For by dying He underwent the laws of hell, but by rising again He broke them, and so destroyed the continuity of death as to make it temporal instead of eternal. ”For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive . And so, dearly-beloved, let that come to pass of which S. Paul speaks, ”that they that live, should henceforth not live to themselves but to Him who died for all and rose again . And because the old things have passed away and all things are become new, let none remain in his old carnal life, but let us all be renewed by daily progress and growth in piety.

For however much a man be justified, yet so long as he remains in this life, he can always be more approved and better. And he that is not advancing is going back, and he that is gaining nothing is losing something. Let us run, then, with the steps of faith, by the works of mercy, in the love of righteousness, that keeping the day of our redemption spiritually, ”not in the old leaven of malice and wickedness, but in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth ,” we may deserve to be partakers of Christ’s resurrection, Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Mystery of the Passion Passes Man's Comprehension.

The Feast of the Lord's Passion that we have longed for and that the whole world may well desire, has come, and suffers us not to keep silence in the tumult of our spiritual joys: because though it is difficult to speak often on the same thing worthily and appropriately, yet the priest is not free to withhold from the people's ears instruction by sermon on this great mystery of God's mercy, inasmuch as the subject itself, being unspeakable, gives him ease of utterance, and what is said cannot altogether fail where what is said can never be enough. Let human frailty, then, succumb to God's glory, and ever acknowledge itself unequal to the unfolding of His works of mercy. Let us toil in thought, fail in insight, falter in utterance: it is good that even our right thoughts about the Lord's Majesty should be insufficient. For, remembering what the prophet says, "Seek ye the Lord and be strengthened: seek His face always ," no one must assume that he has found all he seeks, lest he fail of coming near, if he cease his endeavours. And amidst all the works of God which weary out man's wondering contemplation, what so delights and so baffles our mind's gaze as the Saviour's Passion? Ponder as we may upon His omnipotence, which is of one and equal substance with the Father, the humility in God is more stupendous than the power, and it is harder to grasp the complete emptying of the Divine Majesty than the infinite uplifting of the "slave's form" in Him. But we are much aided in our understanding of it by the remembrance that though the Creator and the creature, the Inviolable God and the possible flesh, are absolutely different, yet the properties of both substances meet together in Christ's one Person in such a way that alike in His acts of weakness and of power the degradation belongs to the same Person as the glory.

II. The Creed Takes Up S. Peter's Confession as the Fundamental Doctrine of the Church.

In that rule of Faith, dearly-beloved, which we have received in the very beginning of the Creed, on the authority of apostolic teaching, we acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we call the only Son of God the Father Almighty, to be also born of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost. Nor do we reject His Majesty when we express our belief in His crucifixion, death, and resurrection on the third day. For all that is God's and all that is Man's are simultaneously fulfilled by His Manhood and His Godhead, so that in virtue of the union of the Possible with the Impossible, His power cannot be affected by His weakness, nor His weakness overcome by His power. And rightly was the blessed Apostle Peter praised for confessing this union, who when the Lord was inquiring what the disciples knew of Him, quickly anticipated the rest and said, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God . And this assuredly he saw, not by the revelation of flesh or blood, which might have hindered his inner sight, but by the very Spirit of the Father working in his believing heart, that in preparation for ruling the whole Church he might first learn what he would have to teach, and for the solidification of the Faith, which he was destined to preach, might receive the assurance, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it .

The strength, therefore, of the Christian Faith, which, built upon an impregnable rock, fears not the gates of death, acknowledges the one Lord Jesus Christ to be both true God and true Man, believing Him likewise to be the Virgin's Son, Who is His Mother's Creator: born also at the end of the ages, though He is the Creator of time: Lord of all power, and yet one of mortal stock: ignorant of sin, and yet sacrificed for sinners after the likeness of sinful flesh.

III. The Devil's Devices Were Turned Against Himself.

And in order that He might set the human race free from the bonds of deadly transgression, He hid the power of His majesty from the raging devil, and opposed him with our frail and humble nature. For if the cruel and proud foe could have known the counsel of God's mercy, he would have aimed at soothing the Jews' minds into gentleness rather than at firing them with unrighteous hatred, lest be should lose the thraldom of all his captives in assailing the liberty of One Who owed him nought. Thus he was foiled by his malice: he inflicted a punishment on the Son of God, which was turned to the healing of all the sons of men. He shed righteous Blood, which became the ransom and the drink for the world's atonement. The Lord undertook that which He chose according to the purpose of His own will. He permitted madmen to lay their wicked hands upon Him: hands which, in ministering to their own doom, were of service to the Redeemer's work. And yet so great was His loving compassion for even His murderers, that He prayed to the Father on the cross, and begged not for His own vengeance but for their forgiveness, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do ." And such was the power of that prayer, that the hearts of many of those who had said, "His blood be on us and on our sons ," were turned to penitence by the Apostle Peter's preaching, and on one day there were baptized about 3,000 Jews: and they all were "of one heart and of one soul ," being ready now to die for Him, Whose crucifixion they had demanded.

IV. Why Judas Could Not Obtain Forgiveness Through Christ.

To this forgiveness the traitor Judas could not attain: for he, the son of perdition, at whose right the devil stood , gave himself up to despair before Christ accomplished the mystery of universal redemption. For in that the Lord died for sinners, perchance even he might have found salvation if he had not hastened to hang himself. But that evil heart, which was now given up to thievish frauds, and now busied with treacherous designs, had never entertained aught of the proofs of the Saviour's mercy. Those wicked ears had heard the Lord's words, when He said, "I same not to call the righteous but sinners ," and "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost ," but they conveyed not to his understanding the clemency of Christ, which not only healed bodily infirmities, but also cured the wounds of sick souls, saying to the paralytic man, "Son, be of good cheer,thy sins are forgiven thee ;" saying also to the adulteress that was brought to Him, "neither will I condemn thee; go and sin no more ," to show in all His works that He had come as the Saviour, not the Judge of the world. But the wicked traitor refused to understand this, and took measures against himself, not in the self-condemnation of repentance, but in the madness of perdition, and thus he who had sold the Author of life to His murderers, even in dying increased the amount of sin which condemned him.

V. The Cruelty of Christ's Crucifixion is Lost in Its Wondrous Power.

Accordingly that which false witnesses, cruel leaders of the people, wicked priests did against the Lord Jesus Christ, through the agency of a coward governor and an ignorant band of soldiers, has been at once the abhorrence and the rejoicing of all ages. For though the Lord's cross was part of the cruel purpose of the Jews, yet is it of wondrous power through Him they crucified. The people's fury was directed against One, and the mercy of Christ is for all mankind. That which their cruelty inflicts He voluntarily undergoes. in order that the work of His eternal will may be carried out through their unhindered crime. And hence the whole order of events which is most fully narrated in the Gospels must be received by the faithful in such a way that by implicit belief in the occurrences which happened at the time of the Lord's Passion, we should understand that not only was the remission of sins accomplished by Christ, but also the standard of justice satisfied. But that this may be more thoroughly discussed by the Lord's help, let us reserve this portion of the subject till the fourth day of the week God's grace, we hope, will be vouchsafed at your entreaties to help us to fulfil our promise: through Jesus Christ our Lord, &c. Amen.

I. God Those to Save Man by Strength Made Perfect in Weakness.

The glory, dearly-beloved, of the Lord's Passion, on which we promised to speak again to-day, is chiefly wonderful for its mystery of humility, which has both ransomed and instructed us all, that He, Who paid the price, might also impart His righteousness to us. For the Omnipotence of the Son of God, whereby He is by the same Essence equal to the Father, might have rescued mankind from the dominion of the devil by the mere exercise of Its will, had it not better suited the Divine working to conquer the opposition of the foe's wickedness by that which had been conquered, and to restore our nature's liberty by that very nature by which bondage had come upon the whole race. But, when the evangelist says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt in us ," and the Apostle, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself ," it was shown that the Only-begotten of the Most High Father entered on such a union with human humility, that, when He took the substance of oar flesh and soul, He remained one and the same Son of God by exalting our properties, not His own: because it was the weakness, not the power that had to be reinforced, so that upon the union of the creature with the Creator there should be nothing wanting of the Divine to the assumed, nor of the human to the Assuming.

II. God's Plan Was Always Partially Understood, and is Now of Universal Application.

This plan of God's mercy and justice, though in the ages past it was in a measure enshrouded in darkness, was yet not so completely hidden that the saints, who have most merited praise from the beginning till the coming of the Lord, were precluded from understanding it: seeing that the salvation, which was to come through Christ, was promised both by the words of prophecy and by the significance of events, and this salvation not only they attained who foretold it, but all they also who believed their predictions. For the one Faith justifies the saints of all ages, and to the self-same hope of the faithful pertains all that by Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man, we acknowledge done, or our fathers reverently accepted as to be done. And between Jew and Gentile there is no distinction, since, as the Apostle says, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of God's commands ," and if they be kept in entirety of faith, they make Christians the true sons of Abraham, that is perfect, for the same Apostle says, "For whosoever of you were baptized in Christ Jesus, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither slave nor free: there is neither male nor female. For ye are all one in Christ. But if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise ."

III. The Union of the Divine Head with Its Members Inseparable.

There is no doubt therefore, dearly-beloved, that man's nature has been received by the Son of Go/3 into such a union that not only in that Man Who is the first-begotten of all creatures, but also in all His saints there is one and the self-same Christ, and as the Head cannot be separated from the members, so the members cannot be separated from the Head. For although it is not in this life, but in eternity that God is to be "all in all ," yet even now He is the inseparable Inhabitant of His temple, which is the Church, according as He Himself promised, saying, "Lo! I am with you all the days till the en of the age ." And agreeably therewith the Apostle says, "He is the head of the body, the Church, which is the beginning, the first-begotten from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence, because in Him it was pleasing that all fulness (of the Godhead) should dwell, and that through Him all things should be reconciled in Himself ."

IV. Christ's Passion Provided a Saving Mystery and an Example for Us to Follow.

And what is suggested to our hearts by these and many other references, save that we should in all things be renewed in His image Who, remaining "in the form of God ," deigned to "take the form" of sinful flesh? For all our weaknesses, which come from sin, He took on Him without sharing in sin, so that He felt the sensation of hunger and thirst and sleep and fatigue, and grief and weeping, and suffered the fiercest pangs up to the extremity of death, because no one could be loosed from the snares of death, unless He in Whom alone all men's nature was guileless allowed Himself to be slain by the hands of wicked men. And hence our Saviour the Son of God provided for all that believe in Him both a mystery and an example , that they might apprehend the one by being born again, and follow the other by imitation. For the blessed Apostle Peter teaches this, saying, "Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that ye should follow His steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Who when He was reviled, reviled not: when He suffered, threatened not, but gave Himself up to His unjust judge. Who Himself bare our sins in His body on the tree, that being dead to sins, we may live to righteousness ."

V. Christ Not Destroyed, But Fulfilled and Elevated the Law.

As therefore there is no believer, dearly-beloved, to whom the gifts of grace are denied, so there is no one who is not a debtor in the matter of Christian discipline; because, although the severity of the mystic Law is done away, yet the benefits of its voluntary observance have increased, as the evangelist John says, ”Because the Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ .” For all things that, according to the Law, went before, whether in the circumcision of the flesh, or in the multitude of victims, or in the keeping of the Sabbath, testified of Christ, and foretold the grace of Christ. And He is ”the end of the Law ,” not by annulling, but by fulfilling its meanings. For although He is at once the Author of the old and of the new, yet He changed the symbolic rites connected with the promises, because He accomplished the promises and put an end to the announcement by the coming of the Announced. But in the matter of moral precepts, no decrees of the earlier Testament are rejected, but many of them are amplified by the Gospel teaching: so that the things which give salvation are more perfect and clearer than those which promise a Saviour.

VI. The Present Effect of Christ's Passion is Daily Realized by Christians, Especially in Hall, Baptism.

All therefore that the Son of God did and taught for the world's reconciliation, we not only know as a matter of past history, but appreciate in the power of its present effect. It is He Who, born of the Virgin Mother by the Holy Ghost, fertilizes His unpolluted Church with the same blessed Spirit, that the birth of Baptism an innumerable multitude of sons may be born to God, of Whom it is said, "who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God . It is He, in Whom the seed of Abraham is blessed by the adoption of the whole world , and the patriarch becomes the father of nations by the birth. through faith not flesh, of the sons of promise. It is He Who, without excluding any nation, makes one flock of holy sheep from every nation under heaven, and daily fulfils what He promised, saying, "Other sheep also I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My: voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd . For though to the blessed Peter first and foremost He says, "Feed My sheep ;

yet the one Lord directs the charge of all the shepherds, and feeds those that come to the rock with such glad and well-watered pastures, that countless sheep are nourished by the richness of His love, and hesitate not to perish for the Shepherd's sake, even as the good Shepherd Himself was content to lay down His life for His sheep. It is He whose sufferings are shared not only by the martyrs' glorious courage, but also in the very act of regeneration by the faith of all the new-born. For the renunciation of the devil and belief in God , the passing from the old state into newness of life, the casting off of the earthly image, and the putting on of the heavenly form-all this is a sort of dying and rising again, whereby he that is received by Christ and receives Christ is not the same after as he was before he came to the font, for the body of the regenerate becomes the flesh of the Crucified .

VII. The Good Works of Christians are Only Part of Christ's Good Works.

This change, dearly-beloved, is the handiwork of the Most High , Who "worketh all things in all," so that by the good manner of life observed in each one of the faithful, we know Him to be the Author of all just works, and give thanks to God's mercy, Who so adorns the whole body of the Church with countless gracious gifts, that through the many rays of the one Light the same brightness is everywhere diffused, and that which is well done by any Christian whatsoever cannot but be part the glory of Christ. This is that true which justifies and enlightens every man. This it is that rescues from the power of darkness and transfers us into the Kingdom of the Son of God. This it is that by newness of life exalts the desires of the mind and quenches the lusts of the flesh. This it is whereby the Lord's Passover is duly kept "With the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" by the casting away of "the old leaven of wickedness " and the inebriating and feeding of the new creature with the very Lord. For naught else is brought about by the partaking of the and Blood of Christ than that we pass into that which we then take , and both in spirit and in body carry everywhere Him, in and with Whom we were dead, buried, and rose again, as the Apostle says, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. For when Christ, your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory ." Who with the Father, &c.

I. The Contemplation of the Prophecies of Christ's Suffering are a Great Source of Pious Delight.

The minds of the faithful, beloved, ought indeed always to be occupied with wonder atGod's works and their reasoning faculties devoted particularly to those reflexions by which they may gain increase of faith. For so long as the pious heart's attention is directed either to the benefits which all enjoy, or to special gifts of His grace, it keeps aloof from many vanities and retires from bodily cares into a spiritual seclusion. But this must be the more eagerly and thoroughly done at the season of the Lord Passion, that what is then read in the sacred lections may surely be received with the ears of understanding, and that the themes which are great in word may be seen to be yet greater from the mysterious realities which underlie them. For the first reason for our lifting up our hearts is that the voices of the prophets have sung of the things which the truth of the Gospel has also narrated, not as destined to happen, but as having happened, and that what man's ears had not yet learnt was to be accomplished, was already being proclaimed as fulfilled by the (Holy) Spirit. For King David, whose seed according to the flesh is Christ, completed his lifetime more than 1,100 years before the day of the Lord's Crucifixion, and endured none of those punishments which he relates as inflicted upon himself. But because by his mouth One spoke Who was to take suffering flesh of his stock, the story of the cross is tightly anticipated in the person of him who was the bodily ancestor of the Saviour. For David truly suffered in Christ, because Jesus was truly crucified in the flesh which He had from David.

II. The Divine Foreknowledge Does Not Account for the Jews'wickedness So as to Excuse Them.

Since then all things which Jewish ungodliness committed against the Lord of Majesty were foretold so long before , and the language of the prophets is concerned not so much with things to come as with things last, what else is thereby revealed to us but the unchangeable order of God's eternal decrees, with Whom the things which are to be decided are already determined, and what will be is already accomplished? For since both the character of our actions and the fulfilment of all our wishes are fore-known to God,. how much better known to Him are His own works? And He was rightly pleased that things should be recorded as if done which nothing could hinder from being done. And hence when the Apostles also, being full of the Holy Ghost, suffered the threats and cruelty of Christ's enemies, they said to God with one consent, "For truly in this city against Thy holy Servant Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel were gathered together to do what Thy hand and Thy counsel ordained to come to pass ." Did then the wickedness of Christ's persecutors spring from God's plan, and was that unsurpassable crime prefaced and set in motion by the hand of God? Clearly we must not think this of the highest Justice: that which was fore-known in respect of the Jews' malice is far different, indeed quite contrary to what was ordained in respect of Christ's Passion. Their desire to slay Him did not proceed from the same source as His to die: nor were their atrocious crime and the Redeemer's endurance the offspring of One Spirit. The Lord did not incite but permit those madmen's naughty hands: nor in His foreknowledge of what must be accomplished did He compel its accomplishment, even though it was in order to its accomplishment that He had taken flesh.

III. Christ Was in No Sense the Author of His Murderer's Guilt.

In fact, the case of the Crucified is so different from that of His crucifiers that what Christ undertook could not be reversed, while what they did could be wiped out. For He Who came to save sinners did not refuse mercy even to His murderers, but changed the evil of the wicked into the goodness of the believing, that God's grace might be the more wonderful, being mercifully put in force, not according to men's merits, but according to the multitude of the riches of God's wisdom anti knowledge, seeing that they also who had shed the Saviour's blood were received into the baptismal flood. For, as says the Scripture, which contains the Apostles' acts when the preaching of the blessed Apostle Peter pierced the hearts of the Jews, and they acknowledged the iniquity of their crime, saying, "what shall we do, brethren? the same Apostle said, "Repent and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For to you is the promise, and to your sons, and to all that are afar off, whomsoever our Lord God has called," and soon after the Scripture goes on to say: "they therefore that received his word were baptized, and there were added on that day about 3,000 souls . And so, in being willing to suffer their furious rage, the Lord Jesus Christ was in no way the Author of their crimes;

nor did He force them to desire this, but permitted them to be able, and used the madness of the blinded people just as He did also the treachery of His betrayer, whom by kindly acts and words He vouchsafed to recall from the awful crime he had conceived, by taking him for a disciple, by promoting him to be an apostle, by warning him with signs, by admitting him to the revelation of holy mysteries , that one who had lacked no degree of kindness to correct him, might have no pretext for his crime at all.

IV. The Enormity Ofjudas' Crime is Set Forth.

But O ungodliest of men, "thou seed of Chanaan and not of Juda ," and no longer "a vessel of election," but "a son of perdition" and death, thou didst think the devil's instigations would profit thee better, so that, inflamed with the torch of greed, thou wert ablaze to gain 30 pieces of silver and sawest not what riches thou wouldst lose. For even if thou didst not think the Lord's promises were to be believed, what reason was there for preferring so small a sum of money to what thou hadst already received? Thou wast wont to command the evil spirits, to heal the sick, to receive honour with the rest of the apostles, and that thou mightest satisfy thy thirst for gain, it was open to thee to steal from the box that was in thy charge . But thy mind, which lusted after forbidden things, was more strongly stimulated by that which was less allowed: and the amount of the price pleased thee not so much as the enormity of the sin. Wherefore thy wicked bargain is not so detestable merely because thou countedst the Lord sO cheap, but because thou didst sell Him Who was the Redeemer, yea, even thieve, and badst no pity on thyself . And justly was thy punishment put into thine own hands because none could be found more cruelly bent on thy destruction than thyself.

V. Christ's Passion Was for Our Redemption by Mysteryand Example.

The fact, therefore, that at the time appointed, according to the purpose of His will, jesus Christ was crucified, dead, and buried was not the doom necessary to His own condition, but the method of redeeming us from captivity. For "the Word became flesh" in order that from the Virgin's womb He might take our suffering nature, and that what could not be inflicted on the Son of God might be inflicted on the Son of Man. For although at His very birth the signs of Godhead shone forth in Him, and the whole course of His bodily growth was full of wonders, yet had He truly assumed our weaknesses, and without share in sin had spared Himself no human frailty, that He might impart what was His to us and heal what was ours in Himself. For He, the Almighty Physician, had prepared a two-fold remedy for us in our misery, of which the one part consists of mystery and the other of example , that by the one Divine powers may be bestowed, by the other human weaknesses driven out . Because as God is the Author of our justification, so man is a debtor to pay Him devotion.

VI.we Can Only Attain to Christ's Perfection by Following in His Steps.

Therefore, dearly-beloved, by this unspeakable restoration of our health no place is left us for pride or for idleness: because we have nothing which we did not receive , and we are expressly warned not to treat the gifts of God's grace with negligence . For He that comes so timely to our aid justly urges us with precept, and He that leads us to glory mercifully incites us to obedience. Wherefore the Lord Himself is rightly made our way, because save through Christ there is no coming to Christ. But through Him and to Him does he take his way who treads the path of His endurance and humiliation, and on that road you may be sure there are not wanting the heats of toil, the clouds of sadness, the storms of fear. The snares of the wicked, the persecutions of the unbelieving, the threats of the powerful, the insults of the proud are I there; and all these things the Lord of hosts and King of glory passed through in the form of our weakness and in the likeness of sinful flesh, to the end that amid the danger of this present life we might desire not so much to avoid and escape them as to endure and overcome them.

VII. Christ Cry of ”Forsaken” On the Cross Was to Teach Us the Insufficiency of the Human Nature Without the Divine.

Hence it is that the Lord Jesus Christ, our Head, representing all the members of His body in Himself, and speaking for those whom He was redeeming in the punishment of the cross, uttered that cry which He had once uttered in the psalm, ”O God, My God, look upon Me: why hast Thou forsaken Me ? That cry, dearly-beloved, is a lesson, not a complaint. For since in Christ there is oneperson of God and man, and He could not have been forsaken by Him, from Whom He could not be separated, it is on behalf of us, trembling and weak ones, that He asks why the flesh that is afraid to suffer has not been heard. For when the Passion was beginning, to cure anti correct our weak fear He had said, ”Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will but as Thou; and again, ”Father, if this cup cannot pass except I drink it, Thy will be done .

As therefore He had conquered the tremblings of the flesh, and had now accepted the Father’s will, and trampling all dread of death under foot, was then carrying out the work of His design, wily at the very time of His triumph over such a victory does He seek the cause and reason of His being forsaken, that is, not heard, save to show that the feeling which He entertained in excuse of His human fears is quite different from the deliberate choice which, in accordance with the Father’s eternal decree, He had made for the reconciliation of the world? And thus the very cry of ”Unheard” is the exposition of a mighty Mystery, because the Redeemer’s power would have conferred nothing on mankind if our weakness in Him had obtained what it sought. Let these words dearly-beloved, suffice to-day, lest we burden you by the length of our discourse: let us put off the rest till Wednesday. The Lord shall hear you if you pray that we may keep our promise through the bounty of Him Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

I. Christ's Godhead Never Forsook Him in His Passion.

The last discourse, dearly-beloved, of which we desire now to give the promised portion, had reached that point in the argument where we were speaking of that cry which the crucified Lord uttered to the Father: we bade the simple and unthinking hearer not take the words "My Con, &c.," in a sense as if, when Jesus was fixed upon the wood of the cross, the Omnipotence of the Father's Deity had gone away from Him; seeing that God's and Man's Nature were so completely joined in Him that the union could not be destroyed by punishment nor by death. For while each substance retained its own properties, God neither held aloof from the suffering of His body nor was made passible by the flesh, because the Godhead which was in the Sufferer did not actually suffer. And hence, in accordance with the Nature of the Word made Man, He Who was made in the midst of all is the same as He through Whom all things were made. He Who is arrested by the hands of wicked men is the same as He Who is bound by no limits. He Who is pierced with nails is the same as He Whom no wound can affect. Finally, He Who underwent death is the same as He Who never ceased to be eternal, so that both facts are established by indubitable signs, namely, the truth of the humiliation in Christ and the truth of the majesty;

because Divine power joined itself to human frailty to this end, that God, while making what was ours His, might at the same time make what was His ours. The Son, therefore, was not separated from the Father, nor the Father from the Son; and the unchangeable Godhead and the inseparable Trinity did not admit of any division. For although the task of undergoing Incarnation belonged peculiarly to the Only-begotten Son of God, yet the Father was not separated from the Son any more than the flesh was separated from the Word .

II. Christ's Death Was Voluntary an His Part, and Yet in Saving Others He Could Not Save Himself.

Jesus, therefore, cried with a loud voice, saying, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me? in order to notify to all how it behoved Him not to be rescued, not to be defended, but to be given up into the hands of cruel men, that is to become the Saviour of the world and the Redeemer of all men, not by misery but by mercy; and not by the failure of succour but by the determination to die. But what must we feel to be the intercessory power of His life Who died and rose again by His own inherent power For the blessed Apostle saysthe Father "spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all ; and again, he says, "For Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify it . And hence the giving up of the Lord to His Passion was as much of the Father's as of His own will, so that not only did the Father "forsake" Him, but He also abandoned Himself in a certain sense, not in hasty flight, but in voluntary withdrawal. For the might of the Crucified restrained itself from those wicked men, and in order to avail Himself of a secret design, He refused to avail Himself of His open power. For how would He who had come to destroy death and the author of death by His Passion have saved sinners, if he had resisted His persecutors?

This, then, had been the Jews' belief, that Jesus had been forsaken by God, against Whom they had been able to commit such unholy cruelty; for not understanding the mystery of His wondrous endurance, they said in blasphemous mockery: "He saved others, Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we believe Him . Not at your blind will, O foolish scribes and wicked priests, was the Saviour's power to be displayed, nor in obedience to blasphemers' evil tongues was the Redemption of mankind to be delayed; for if you had wished to recognize the Godhead of the Son of God, you would have observed His numberless works, and they must have confirmed you in that faith, which you so deceitfully promise. But if, as you yourselves acknowledge, it is true that He saved others, why have those many, great miracles, which have been done under the public gaze, done nothing to soften the hardness of your hearts, unless it be because you have always so resisted the Holy Ghost as to turn all God's benefits towards you into your

destruction? For even though Christ should descend from the cross, youwould yet remain in your crime.

III. A Transition Was Then Being Effect from the Old to the New Dispensation.

Therefore the insults of empty exultation were scorned, and the Lord's mercy in restoring the lost and the fallen was not turned from the path of its purpose by contumely or reviling. For a peerless victim was being offered to God for the world's salvation, and the slaying of Christ the true Lamb, predicted through so many, ages, was transferring the sons of promise into the liberty of the Faith. The New Testament also was being ratified, and in the blood of Christ the heirs of the eternal Kingdom were being enrolled; the High Pontiff was entering the Holy of Holies, and to intercede with God the spotless Priest was passing in through the veil of His flesh . In fine, so evident a transition was being effected fromthe Law to the Gospel, from the from the synagogue to Sc the Church, from many sacrifices to the One Victim , that, when the Lord gave up the ghost, that mystic veil which hung before and shut out the inner part of the Temple and its holy recess was by sudden force torn from top to bottom , for the reason that Truth was displacing figures, and forerunners were needless in the presence of Him they announced. Tothis was added a terrible confusion of all the elements, and nature herself withdrew her support from Christ's crucifiers. And although the centurion in charge of the crucifixion, in fright at what he had seen, said "truly this man was the Son of God ," yet the wicked hearts of the Jews, which were harder than all tombs and rocks, is not reported to have been pierced by any compunction: so that it seems the Roman soldiers were then readier to recognize the Son of God than the priests of Israel.

IV. Let Us Profit by Fasting and Good Works at This Sacred Season of the Year.

Because, then, the Jews, deprived of all the sanctification imparted by these mysteries, turned their light into darkness and their ”feasts into mourning ,” let us, dearly-beloved, prostrate our bodies and our souls and worship God’s Grace, which has been poured out upon all nations, beseeching the merciful Father and the rich Redeemer from day to day to give us His aid and enable us to escape all the dangers of this life. For the crafty tempter is present everywhere, and leaves nothing free from his snares. Whom, God’s mercy helping us, which is stretched out to us amid all dangers, we must ever with stedfast faith resist so that, though he never ceases to asail, he may never succeed in carrying the assault. Let all, dearly-beloved, religiously keep and profit by the fast, and let no excesses mar the benefits of such self-restraint as we have proved convenient both for soul and body. For the things which pertain to sobriety and temperance must be the more diligently observed at this season, that a lasting habit may be contracted from a brief zeal; and whether in works of mercy or in strict self-denial, no hours may be left idle by the faithful, seeing that, as years increase and time glides by, we are bound to increase our store of works, and not squander our opportunities. And to devout wills and religious souls God’s Mercy will be granted, that He may enable us to obtain that which He enabled us to desire, Who liveth and reigneth with our Lord Jesus Christ His Son, and with the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

I. We Must All Be Partakers in Christ's Resurrection Life.

In my last sermon , dearly-beloved, not in- appropriately, as I think, we explained to you our participation in the cross of Christ, whereby the life of believers contains in itself the mystery of Easter, and thus what is honoured at the feast is celebrated by our practice. And how useful this is you yourselves have proved, and by your devotion have learnt, how greatly benefited souls and bodies are by longer fasts, more frequent prayers, and more liberal alms. For there can be hardly any one who has not profited by this exercise, and who has not stored up in the recesses of his conscience something over which he may rightly rejoice. But these advantages must be retained with persistent care, lest our efforts fall away into idleness, and the devil's malice steal what God's grace gave. Since, therefore, by our forty days' observance we have wished to bring about this effect, that we should feel something of the Cross at the time of the Lord's Passion, we must strive to be found partakers also of Christ's Resurrection, and "pass from death unto life ," while we are in this body. For when a man is changed by some process from one thing into another, not to be what he was is to him an ending, and to be what he was not is a beginning. But the question is, to what a man either dies or lives:

because there is a death, which is the cause of living, and there is a life, which is the cause of dying. And nowhere else but in this transitory world are both sought after, so that upon the character of our temporal actions depend the differences of the eternal retributions. We must die, therefore, to the devil and live to God: we must perish to iniquity that we may rise to righteousness.Let the old sink, that the new may rise; and since, as says the Truth, "no one can serve two masters ," let not him be Lord who has caused the overthrow of those that stood, but Him Who has raised the fallen to victory.

II. God Did Not Leave His Soul in Hell, Nor Suffer His Flesh to See Corruption.

Accordingly, since the Apostle says, ”the first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is from heaven heavenly. As is the earthy, such also are they that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such also are they that are heavenly. As we have borne the image of the earthy, so let us also bear the image of Him Who is from heaven ,” we must greatly rejoice over this change, whereby we are translated from earthly degradation to heavenly dignity through His unspeakable mercy, Who descended into our estate that He might promote us to His, by assuming not only the substance but also the conditions of sinful nature, and by allowing the impossibility of Godhead to be affected by all the miseries which are the lot of mortal manhood. And hence that the disturbed minds of the disciples might not be racked by prolonged grief, He with such wondrous speed shortened the three days’ delay which He had announced, that by joining the last part of the first and the first part of the third day to the whole of the second, He cut off a considerable portion of the period, and yet did not lessen the number of days. The Saviour’s Resurrection therefore did not long keep His soul in Hades, nor His flesh in the tomb; and so speedy was the quickening of His uncorrupted flesh that it bore a closer resemblance to slumber than to death, seeing that the Godhead, Which quitted not either part of the Human Nature which He had assumed, reunited by Its power that which Its power had separated .

III. Christ's Manifestation After the Resurrection Showed that His Person Was Essentially the Same as Before.

And then there followed many proofs, whereon the authority of the Faith to be preached through the whole world might be based. And although the rolling away of the stone, the empty tomb, the arrangement of the linen cloths, and the angels who narrated the whole deed by themselves fully built up the truth of the Lord's Resurrection, yet did He often appear plainly to the eyes both of the women and of the Apostles not only talking with them, but also remaining and eating with them, and allowing Himself to be handled by the eager and curious hands of those whom doubt assailed. For to this end He entered when the doors were closed upon the disciples, and gave them the Holy Spirit by breathing on them, and after giving them the light of understanding opened the secrets of the Holy Scriptures, and again Himself showed them the wound in the side, the prints of the nails, and all the marks of His most recent Passion, whereby it might be acknowledged that in Him the properties of the Divine and Human Nature remained undivided, and we might in such sort know that the Word was not what the flesh is, as to confess God's only Son to be both Word and Flesh.

IV. But Though It is the Same, It is Also Glorified.

The Apostle of the Gentiles, Paul, dearly. beloved, does not disagree with this belief, when he says, ”even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him so no more .” For the Lord’s Resurrection was not the ending, but the changing of the flesh, and His substance was not destroyed by His increase of power. The quality altered, but the nature did not cease to exist: the body was made impassible, which it had been possible to crucify: it was made incorruptible, though it had been possible to wound it. And properly is Christ’s flesh said not to be known in that state in which it had been known, because nothing remained passible in it, nothing weak, so that it was both the same in essence and not the same in glory. But what wonder if S. Paul maintains this about Christ’s body, when he says of all spiritual Christians ”wherefore henceforth we know no one after the flesh.” Henceforth, he says, we begin to experience the resurrection in Christ, since the time when in Him, Who died for all, all our hopes were guaranteed to us. We do not hesitate in diffidence, we are not under the suspense of uncertainty, but having received an earnest of the promise, we now with the eye of faith see the things which will be, and rejoicing in the uplifting of our nature, we already possess what we believe.

V. Being Saved by Hope, We Must Not Fulfil the Lasts of the Flesh.

Let us not then be taken up with the appearances of temporal matters, neither let our contemplations be diverted from heavenly to earthly things. Things which as yet have for the most part not come to pass must be reckoned as accomplished: and the mind intent on what is permanent must fix its desires there, where what is offered is eternal. For although ”by hope we were saved ,” and still bear about with us a flesh that is corruptible and mortal, yet we are rightly said not to be in the flesh, if the fleshly affections do not dominate us, and are justified in ceasing to be named after that, the will of which we do not follow. And so, when the Apostle says, ”make not provision for the flesh in the lusts thereof ,” we understand that those things are not forbidden us, which conduce to health and which human weakness demands, but because we may not satisfy all our desires nor indulge in all that the flesh lusts after, we recognizethat we are warned to exercise such self-restraint as not to permit what is excessive nor refuse what is necessary to the flesh, which is placed under the mind’s control . And hence the same Apostle says in another place, ”For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it ;” in so far, of course, as it must be nourished and cherished not in vices and luxury, but with a view to its proper functions, so that nature may recover herself and maintain due order, the lower parts not prevailing wrongfully and debasingly over the higher, nor the higher yielding to the lower, lest if vices overpower the mind, slavery ensues where there should be supremacy.

VI. Our Godly Resolutions Must Continue All the Year Round, Not Be Confined to Easier Only.

Let God's people then recognize that they are a new creation in Christ, and with all vigilance understand by Whom they have been adopted and Whom they have adopted . let not the things, which have been made new, return to their ancient instability; and let not him who has "put his hand to the plough " forsake his work, but rather attend to that which he sows than look back to that which he has left behind. Let no one fall back into that from which he has risen, but, even though from bodily weakness he still languishes under certain maladies, let him urgently desire to be healed and raised up. For this is the path of health through imitation of the Resurrection begun in Christ, whereby, notwithstanding the many accidents and falls to which in this slippery life the traveller is liable, his feet may be guided from the quagmire on to solid ground, for, as it is written, "the steps of a man are directed by the Lord,and He will delight in his way. When the just man falls he shall not be overthrown, because the Lord will stretch out His hand ." These thoughts, dearly-beloved, must be kept in mind not only for the Easter festival, but also for the sanctification of the whole life, and to this our present exercise ought to be directed, that what has delighted the souls of the faithful by the experience of a short observance may pass into a habit and remain unalterably, and if any fault creep in, it may be destroyed by speedy repentance. And because the cure of old-standing diseases is slow and difficult, remedies should be applied early, when the wounds are fresh, so that rising ever anew from all downfalls, we may deserve to attain to the incorruptible Resurrection of our glorified flesh in Christ Jesus our Lord, Who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Ghost for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Cross is Not Only the Mystery of Salvation, But an Example to Follow.

The whole of the Easter mystery, dearly-beloved, has been brought before us in the Gospel narrative, and the ears of the mind have been so reached through the ear of flesh that none of you can fail to have a picture of the events: for the text of the Divinely-inspired story has clearly shown the treachery of the Lord Jesus Christ's betrayal, the judgment by which He was condemned, the barbarity of His crucifixion, and glory of His resurrection. But a sermon is still required of us, that the priests' exhortation may be added to the solemn reading of Holy Writ, as I am sure you are with pious expectation demanding of us as your accustomed due. Because therefore there is no place for ignorance in faithful ears, the seed of the Word which consists of the preaching of the Gospel, ought to grow in the soil of your heart, so that, when choking thorns and thistles have been removed, the plants of holy thoughts and the buds of right desires may spring up freely into fruit. For the cross of Christ, which was set up for the salvation of mortals, is both a mystery and an example : a sacrament where by the Divine power takes effect, an example whereby man's devotion is excited: for to those who are rescued from the prisoner's yoke Redemption further procures the power of following the way of the cross by imitation. For if the world's wisdom so prides itself in its error that every one follows the opinions and habits and whole manner of life of him whom he has chosen as his leader, how shall we share in the name of Christ save by being inseparably united to Him, Who is, as He Himself asserted, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life ?" the Way that is of holy living, the Truth of Divine doctrine, and the Life of eternal happiness.

II. Christ Look Our Nature Upon Him for Our Salvation.

For when the whole body of mankind had fallen in our first parents, the merciful God purposed so to succour, through His only-begotten Jesus Christ, His creatures made after His image, that the restoration of our nature should not be effected apart from it, and that our new estate should be an advance upon our original position. Happy, if we had not fallen from that which God made us; but happier, if we remain that which He has re-made us. It was much to have received form from Christ; it is more to have a substance in Christ . For we were taken up into its own proper self by that Nature (which condescended to those limitations which loving-kindness dictated and which yet incurred no sort of change. We were taken up by that Nature , which destroyed not what was His in what was ours, nor what was ours in what was His; which made the person of the Godhead and of the Manhood so one in Itself that by co-ordination of weakness and power, the flesh could not be rendered inviolable through the Godhead, nor the Godhead passible through the flesh. We were taken up by that Nature, which did not break off the Branch from the common stock of our race, and yet excluded all taint of the sin which has passed upon all men.

That is to say, weakness and mortality, which were not sin, but the penalty of sin, were undergone by the Redeemer of the World in the way of punishment, that they might be reckoned as the price of redemption. What therefore in all of us is the heritage of condemnation, is in Christ "the mystery of godliness . For being free from debt, He gave Himself up to that most cruel creditor, and suffered the hands of Jews to be the devil's agents in torturing His spotless flesh. Which flesh He willed to be subject to death, even up to His(speedy) resurrection, to this end, that believers in Him might find neither perse- cution intolerable, nor death terrible, by the remembrance that there was no more doubt about their sharing His glory than there was about His sharing their nature.

III. The Presence of the Risen and Ascended Lord Is Still with Us.

And so, dearly-beloved, if we unhesitatingly believe with the heart what we profess with the mouth, in Christ we are crucified, we are dead, we are buried; on the very third day, too, we are raised. Hence the Apostle says, ”If ye have risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting on God’s right hand: set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. For when Christ, your life, shall have appeared, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory .” But that the hearts of the faithful may know that they have that whereby to spurn the lusts of the world and be lifted to the wisdom that is above, the Lord promises us His presence, saying, ”Lo! I am with you all the days, even till the end of the age .” For not in vain had the Holy Ghost said by Isaiah: ”Behold! a virgin shall conceive and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, God wire us .” Jesus, therefore, fulfils the proper meaning of His name, and in ascending into the heavens does not forsake His adopted brethren, though ”He sitteth at the right hand of the Father,” yet dwells in the whole body, and Himself from above strengthens them for patient waiting while He summons them upwards to His glory.

IV. We Must Have the Same Mind as Was in Christ Jesus.

We must not, therefore, indulge in folly amid vain pursuits, nor give way to fear in the midst of adversities. On the one side, no doubt, we are flattered by deceits, and on the other weighed down by troubles; but because ”the earth is full of the mercy of the Lord ,” Christ’s victory is assuredly ours, that what He says may be fulfilled, ”Fear not, for I have overcome the world . Whether, then, we fight against the ambition of the world, or against the lusts of the flesh, or against the darts of heresy, let us arm ourselves always with the Lord’s Cross. For our Paschal feast will never end, if we abstain from the leaven of the old wickedness (in the sincerity of truth . For amid all the changes of this life which is full of various afflictions, we ought to remember the Apostle’s exhortation; whereby he instructs us, saying, ”Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God counted it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, being made in the likeness of men and found in fashion as a man.

Wherefore God also exalted Him, and gave Him a name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, of things on earth, and of things below, and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father . If, he says, you understand ”the mystery of great godliness,” and remember what the Only-begotten Son of God did for the salvation of mankind, ”have that mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus,” Whose humility is not to be scorned by any of the rich, not to be thought shame of by any of the high-born. For no human happiness whatever can reach so great a height as to reckon it a source of shame to himself that God, abiding in the form of Coy, thought it not unworthy of Himself to take the form of a slave.

V. Only He Who Holds T/re Truth on the Incarnation Can Keep Easter Properly.

Imitate what He wrought: love what He loved, and finding in you the Grace of God, love in Him your nature in return, since as He was not dispossessed of riches in poverty, lessened not glory in humility, lost not eternity in death, so do ye, too, treading in His footsteps, despise earthly things that ye may gain heavenly: for the taking up of the cross means the slaying of lusts, the killing of vices, the turning away from vanity, and the renunciation of all error. For, though the Lord's Passover can be kept by no immodest, self-indulgent, proud, or miserly person, yet none are held so far aloof from this festival as heretics, and especially those who have wrong views on the Incarnation of the Word, either disparaging what belongs to the Godhead or treating what is of the flesh as unreal. For the Son of God is true God, having from the Father all that the Father is, with no beginning in time, subject to no sort of change, undivided from the One God, not different from the Almighty, the eternal Only-begotten of the eternal Father; so that the faithful intellect believing in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost in the same essence of the one Godhead, neither divides the Unity by suggesting degrees of dignity, nor confounds the Trinity by merging the Persons in one.

But it is not enough to know the Son of God in the Father's nature only, unless we acknowledge Him in what is ours without withdrawal of what is His own. For that self-emptying, which He underwent for man's restoration, was the dispensation of compassion, not the loss of power . For, though by the eternal purpose of God there was "no other name under heaven given to men whereby they must be saved ," the Invisible made His substance visible. the Intemporal temporal, the Impassible passible: not that power might sink into weakness, but that weakness might pass into indestructible power.

VI. A Mystical Application of the Term ”Passover” Is Given.

For which reason the very feast which by us is named Pascha, among the Hebrews is called Phase, that is Pass-over , as the evangelist attests, saying, ”Before the feast of Pascha, Jesus knowing that His hour was come that He should pass out of this world unto the Father .” But what was the nature in which He thus passed out unless it was ours, since the Father was in the Son and the Son in the Father inseparably? But because the Word and the Flesh is one Person, the Assumed is not separated from the Assuming nature, and the honour of being promoted is spoken of as accruing to Him that promotes, as the Apostle says in a passage we have already quoted, ”Wherefore also God exalted Him and gave Him a name which is above every name.” Where the exaltation of His assumed Manhood is no doubt spoken of, so that He in Whose sufferings the Godheard remains indivisible is likewise coeternal in the glory of the Godhead. And to share in this unspeakable gift the Lord Himself was preparing a blessed ”passing over” for His faithful ones, when on the very threshhold of His Passion he interceded not only for His Apostles and disciples but also for the whole Church, saying, ”But not for these only I pray, but for those also who shall believe on Me through their word, that they all may be one, as Thou also, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us .”

VII. Only True Believers Can Keep the Easter Festival.

In this union they can have no share who deny that in the Son of God, Himself true God, man's nature abides, assailing the health-giving mystery and shutting themselves out from the Easter festival. For, as they dissent from the Gospel and gainsay the creed, they cannot keep it with us, because although they dare to take to themselves the Christian name, yet they are repelled by every creature who has Christ for his Head: for you rightly exult and devoutly rejoice in this sacred season as those who, admitting no falsehood into the Truth, have no doubt about Christ's Birth according to the flesh, His Passion and Death, and the Resurrection of His body: inasmuch as without any separation of the Godhead you acknowledge a Christ, Who was truly born of a Virgin's womb, truly hung on the wood of the cross, truly laid in an earthly tomb, truly raised in glory, truly set on the right hand of the Father's majesty; "whence also," as the Apostle says, "we look for a Saviour our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall refashion the body of our humility to become conformed to the body of His glory ." Who liveth and reigneth, &c.

I.the Events Recorded as Happening After the Resurrection Were Intended to Convince Its Truth.

Since the blessed and glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the Divine power in three days raised the true Temple of God, which the wickedness of the Jews had overthrown, the sacred forty days, dearly-beloved are to-day ended, which by most holy appointment were devoted to our most profitable instruction, so that, during the period that the Lord thus protracted the lingering of His bodily presence, our faith in the Resurrection might be fortified by needful proofs. For Christ's Death had much disturbed the disciples' hearts, and a kind of torpor of distrust had crept over their grief-laden minds at His torture on the cross, at His giving up the ghost, at His lifeless body's burial. For, when the holy women, as the Gospel-story has revealed,brought word of tile stone rolled away from the tomb, the sepulchre emptied of the body, and the angels bearing witness to the living Lord, their words seemed like ravings to the Apostles and other disciples. Which doubtfulness, the result of human weakness, the Spirit of Truth would most assuredly not have permitted to exist in His own preacher's breasts, had not their trembling anxiety and careful hesitation laid the foundations of our faith. It was our perplexities and our dangers that were provided for in the Apostles: it was ourselves who in these men were taught how to meet the cavillings of the ungodly and the arguments of earthly wisdom. We are instructed by their lookings, we are taught by their hearings, we are convinced by their handlings. Let us give thanks to the Divine management and the holy Fathers' necessary slowness of belief. Others doubted, that we might not doubt.

II. And Therefore They are in the Highest Degree Instructive.

Those days, therefore, dearly-beloved, which intervened between the Lord's Resurrection and Ascension did not pass by in uneventful leisure, but great mysteries were ratified in them, deep truths revealed. In them the fear of awful death was removed, and the immortality not only of the soul but also of the flesh established. In them, through the Lord's breathing upon them, the Holy Ghost is poured upon all the Apostles, and to the blessed Apostle Peter beyond the rest the care of the Lord's flock is entrusted, in addition to the keys of the kingdom. Then it was that the Lord joined the two disciples as a companion on the way, and, to the sweeping away of all the clouds of our uncertainty, upbraided them with the slowness of their timorous hearts. Their enlightened hearts catch the flame of faith, and lukewarm as they have been, are made to burn while the Lord unfolds the Scriptures. In the breaking of bread also their eyes are opened as they eat with Him: how far more blessed is the opening of their eyes, to whom the glorification of their nature is revealed than that of our first parents, on whom fell the disastrous consequences of their transgression.

III. The Prove the Resurrection of the Flesh.

And in the course of these and other miracles, when the disciples were harassed by bewildering thoughts, and the Lord had appeared in their midst and said, ”Peace be unto you ,” that what was passing through their hearts might not be their fixed opinion (for they thought they saw a spirit not flesh), He refutes their thoughts so discordant with the Truth, offers to the doubters’ eyes the marks of the cross that remained in His hands and feet, and invites them to handle Him with careful scrutiny, because the traces of the nails and spear had been retained to heal the wounds of unbelieving hearts, so that not with wavering faith, but with most stedfast knowledge they might comprehend that the Nature which had been lain in the sepulchre was to sit on God the Father’s throne.

IV. Christ's Ascension Has Given Us Greater Privileges and Joys Than the Devil Had Taken from Us.

Accordingly, dearly-beloved, throughout this time which elapsed between the Lord's Resurrection and Ascension, God's Providence had this in view, to teach and impress upon both the eyes and hearts of His own people that the Lord Jesus Christ might be acknowledged to have as truly risen, as He was truly born, suffered, and died. And hence the most blessed Apostles and all the disciples, who had been both bewildered at His death on the cross and backward in believing His Resurrection, were so strengthened by the clearness of the truth that when the Lord entered the heights of heaven, not only were they affected with no sadness, but were even filled with great joy. And truly great and unspeakable was their cause for joy, when in the sight of the holy multitude, above the dignity of all heavenly creatures, the Nature of mankind went up, to pass above the angels' ranks and to rise beyond the archangels' heights, and to have Its uplifting limited by no elevation until, received to sit with the Eternal Father, It should be associated on the throne with His glory, to Whose Nature It was united in the Son. Since then Christ's Ascension is our uplifting, and the hope of the Body is raised, whither the glory of the Head has gone before, let us exult, dearly-beloved, with worthy joy and delight in the loyal paying of thanks. For to-day not only are we confirmed as possessors of paradise, but have also in Christ penetrated the heights of heaven, and have gained still greater things through Christ's unspeakable grace than we had lost through the devil's malice. For us, whom our virulent enemy had driven out from the bliss of our first abode, the Son of God has made members of Himself and placed at the right hand of the Father, with Whom He lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Ascension Completes Our Faith in Him, Who Was God As Well as Man.

The mystery of our salvation, dearly-beloved, which the Creator of the universe valued at the price of His blood, has now been carried out under conditions of humiliation from the day of His bodily birth to the end of His Passion. And although even in ”the form of a slave” many signs of Divinity have beamed out, yet the events of all that period served particularly to show the reality of His assumed Manhood. But after the Passion, when the chains of death were broken, which had exposed its own strength by attacking Him, Who was ignorant of sin, weakness was turned into power, mortality into eternity, contumely into glory, which the Lord Jesus Christ showed by many clear proofs in the sight of many, until He carried even into heaven the triumphant victory which He had won over the dead. As therefore at the Easter commemoration, the Lord’s Resurrection was the cause of our rejoicing; so the subject of our present gladness is His Ascension, as we commemorate and duly venerate that day on which the Nature of our humility in Christ was raised above all the host of heaven, over all the ranks of angels, beyond the height of all powers, to sit with God the Father. On which Providential order of events we are founded and built up, that God’s Grace might become more wondrous, when, notwithstanding the removal from men’s sight of what was rightly felt to command their awe, faith did not fail, hope did not waver, love did not grow cold.

For it is the strength of great minds and the light of firmly-faithful souls, unhesitatingly to believe what is not seen with the bodily sight, and there to fix one’s affections whither you cannot direct your gaze. And whence should this Godliness spring up in our hearts, or how should a man be justified by faith, if our salvation rested on those things only which lie beneath our eyes? Hence our Lord said to him who seemed to doubt of Christ’s Resurrection, until he had tested by sight and touch the traces of His Passion in His very Flesh, ”because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are, they who have not seen and yet have believed .”

II. The Ascension Renders Our Faith More Excellent and Stronger.

In order, therefore, dearly-beloved, that we may be capable of this blessedness, when all things were fulfilled which concerned the Gospel preaching and the mysteries of the New Testament, our Lord Jesus Christ, on the fortieth day after the Resurrection in the presence of the disciples, was raised into heaven, and terminated His presence with us in the body, to abide on the Father's right hand until the times Divinely fore-ordained for multiplying the sons of the Church are accomplished, and He comes to judge the living and the dead in the same flesh in which He ascended. And so that which till then was visible of our Redeemer was changed into a sacramental presence , and that faith might be more excellent and stronger, sight gave way to doctrine, the authority of which was to be accepted by believing hearts enlightened with rays from above.

III. The Marvellous Effects of This Faith on All.

This Faith, increased by the Lord's Ascension and established by the gift of the Holy Ghost, was not terrified by bonds, imprisonments, banishments, hunger, fire, attacks by wild beasts, refined torments of cruel persecutors. For this Faith throughout the world not only men, but even women, not only beardless boys, but even tender maids, fought to the shedding of their blood. This Faith cast out spirits, drove off sicknesses, raised the dead: and through it the blessed Apostles themselves also, who after being confirmed by so many miracles and instructed by so many discourses, had yet been panic-stricken by the horrors of the Lord's Passion and had not accepted the truth of His resurrection without hesitation, made such progress after the Lord's Ascension that everything which had previously filled them with fear was turned into joy. For they had lifted the whole contemplation of their mind to the Godhead of Him that sat at the Father's right hand, and were no longer hindered by the barrier of corporeal sight from directing their minds' gaze to That Which had never quitted the Father's side in descending to earth, and had not forsaken the disciples in ascending to heaven.

IV. His Ascension Refines Our Faith : the Ministering of Angels to Hint Shows the Extent of His Authority.

The Son of Man and Son of God, therefore, dearly-beloved, then attained a more excellent and holier fame, when He betook Himself back to the glory of the Father's Majesty, and in an ineffable manner began to be nearer to the Father in respect of His Godhead, after having become farther away in respect of His manhood. A better instructed faith then began to draw closer to a conception of the Son's equality with the Father without the necessity of handling the corporeal substance in Christ, whereby He is less than the Father, since, while the Nature of the glorified Body still remained the faith of believers was called upon to touch not with the hand of flesh, but with the spiritual understanding the Only-begotten, Who was equal with the Father. Hence comes that which the Lord said after His Resurrection, when Mary Magdalene, representing the Church, hastened to approach and touch Him: "Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to My Father : that is, I would not have you come to Me as to a human body, nor yet recognize Me by fleshly perceptions: I put thee off for higher things, I prepare greater things for thee: when I have ascended to My Father, then thou shall handle Me more perfectly and truly, for thou shall grasp what thou canst not touch and believe what thou canst not see.

But when the disciples' eyes followed the ascending Lord tO heaven with upward gaze of earnest wonder, two angels stood by them in raiment shining with wondrous brightness, who also said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven? This Jesus Who was taken up from you into heaven shall so come as ye saw Him going into heaven . By which words all the sons of the Church were taught to believe that Jesus Christ will come visibly in the same Flesh wherewith He ascended, and not to doubt that all things are subjected to Him on Whom the ministry of angels had waited from the first beginning of His Birth. For, as an angel announced to the blessed Virgin that Christ should be conceived by the Holy Ghost, so the voice of heavenly beings sang of His being born of the Virgin also to the

shepherds. As messengers from above were the first to attest His having risen from the dead, so the service of angels was employed to foretell His coming in very Flesh to judge the world, that we might understand what great powers will come with Him as Judge, when such great ones ministered to Him even in being judged.

V. We Must Despise Earthly Things and Rise to Things Above, Especially by Active Works of Mercy and Love.

And so, dearly-beloved, let us rejoice with spiritual joy, and let us with gladness pay God worthy thanks and raise our hearts' eyes unimpeded to those heights where Christ is. Minds that have heard the call to be uplifted must not be pressed down by earthly affections , they that are fore-ordained to things eternal must not be taken up with the things that perish; they that have entered on the way of Truth must not be entangled in treacherous snares, and the faithful must so take their course through these temporal things as to remember that they are sojourning in the vale of this world, in which, even though they meet with some attractions, they must not sinfully embrace them, but bravely pass through them. For to this devotion the blessed Apostle Peter arouses us, and entreating us with that loving eagerness which he conceived for feeding Christ's sheep by the threefold profession of love for the Lord, says, "dearly-beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul . But for whom do fleshly pleasures wage war, ifnot for the devil, whose delight it is to fetter souls that strive after things above, with the enticements of corruptible good things, and to draw them away from those abodes from which he himself has been banished? Against his plots every believer must keep careful watch that he may crush his foe on the side whence the attack is made.

And there is no more powerful weapon, dearly-beloved, against the devil's wiles than kindly mercy and bounteous charity, by which every sin is either escaped or vanquished. But this lofty power is not attained until that which is opposed to it be overthrown. And what so hostile to mercy and works of charity as avarice from the root of which spring all evils ? And unless it be destroyed by lack of nourishment, there must needs grow in the ground of that heart in which this evil weed has taken root, the thorns and briars of vices rather than any seed of true goodness. Let us then, dearly-beloved, resist this pestilential evil and "follow after charity ," without which no virtue can flourish, that by this path of love whereby

V. WE MUST DESPISE EARTHLY THINGS AND RISE TO THINGS ABOVE, ESPECIALLY BY ACTI

Christ came down to us, we too may mount up to Him, to Whom with God the Father and the Holy Spirit is honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Giving of the Law by Moses Prepared the Way for the Outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

The hearts of all catholics, beloved, realize that to-day's solemnity is to be honoured as one of the chief feasts, nor is there any doubt that great respect is due to this day, which the Holy Spirit has hallowed by the miracle of His most excellent gift. For from the day on which the Lord ascended up above all heavenly heights to sit down at God the Father's right hand, this is the tenth which has shone, and the fiftieth from His Resurrection, being the very day on which it began , and containing in itself great revelations of mysteries both new and old, by which it is most manifestly revealed that Grace was fore-announced through the Law and the Law fulfilled through Grace. For as of old, when the Hebrew nation were released from the Egyptians, on the fiftieth day after the sacrificing of the lamb the Law was given on Mount Sinai, so after the suffering of Christ, wherein the true Lamb of God was slain on the fiftieth day from His Resurrection, the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles and the multitude of believers, so that the earnest Christian may easily perceive that the beginnings of the Old Testament were preparatory to the beginnings of the Gospel, and that the second covenant was rounded by the same Spirit that had instituted the first.

II. How Marvellous Was the Gift of ”Divers Tongues.”

For as the Apostles’ story testifies: ”while the days of Pentecost were fulfilled and all the disciples were together in the same place, there occurred suddenly from heaven a sound as of a violent wind coming, and filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance .” Oh! how swift are the words of wisdom. and where God is the Master, how quickly is what is taught, learnt. No interpretation is required for understanding, no practice for using, no time for studying, but the Spirit of Truth blowing where He wills , the languages peculiar to each nation become common property in the mouth of the Church. And therefore from that day the trumpet of the Gospel-preaching has sounded loud: from that day the showers of gracious gifts, the rivers of blessings, have watered every desert and all the dry land, since to renew the face of the earth the Spirit of God ”moved over the waters ,” and to drive away the old darkness flashes of new light shone forth, when by the blaze of those busy tongues was kindled the Lord’s bright Word and fervent eloquence, in which to arouse the understanding, and to consume sin there lay both a capacity of enlightenment and a power of burning.

III. The Three Persons in the Trinity are Perfectly Equal in All Things.

But although, dearly-beloved, the actual form of the thing done was exceeding wonderful, and undoubtedly in that exultant chorus of all human languages the Majesty of the Holy Spirit was present, yet no one must think that His Divine substance appeared in what was seen with bodily eyes. For His Nature, which is invisible and shared in common with the Father and the Son, showed the character of His gift and work by the outward sign that pleased Him, but kept His essential property within His own Godhead: because human sight can no more perceive the Holy Ghost than it can the Father or the Son. For in the Divine Trinity nothing is unlike or unequal, and all that can be thought concerning Its substance admits of no diversity either in power or glory or eternity. And while in the property of each Person the Father is one, the Son is another, and the Holy Ghost is another, yet the Godhead is not distinct and different; for whilst the Son is the Only begotten of the Father, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, not in the way that every creature is the creature of the Father and the Son, but as living and having power with Both, and eternally subsisting of That Which is the Father and the Son .

And hence when the Lord before the day of His Passion promised the coming of the Holy Spirit to His disciples, He said, "I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of Truth shall have come, He shall guide you into all the Truth. For He shall not speak from Himself, but whatsoever He shall have heard, He shall speak and shall announce things to come unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I that He shall take of Mine, and shall announce it to you . Accordingly, there are not some things that are the Father's, and other the Son's, and other the Holy Spirit's: but all things whatsoever the Father has, the Son also has, and the Holy Spirit also has: nor was there ever a time when this communion did not exist, because with Them to have all things is to always exist. In them let no times, no grades, no differences be imagined , and, if no one can explain that which is true concerning God, let no one dare to assert what is not true. For it is more excusable not to make a full statement concerning His ineffable Nature

than to frame an actually wrong definition. And so whatever loyal hearts can conceive of the Father's eternal and unchangeable Glory, let them at the same time understand it of the Son and of the Holy Ghost without any separation or difference.

For we confess this blessed Trinity to be One God for this reason, because in these three Persons there is no diversity either of substance, or of power, or of will, or of operation.

IV. The Macedonian Heresy is as Blasphemous as the Arian.

As therefore we abhor the Arians, who maintain a difference between the Father and the Son, so also we abhor the Macedonians , who, although they ascribe equality to the Father and the Son, yet think the Holy Ghost to be of a lower nature, not considering that they thus fall into that blasphemy, which is not to be forgiven either in the present age or in the judgment to come, as the Lord says: ”whosoever shall have spoken a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, but he that shall have spoken against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him either in this age or in the age to come .” And so to persist in this impiety is unpardonable, because it cuts him off from Him, by Whom he could confess: nor will he ever attain to healing pardon, who has no Advocate to plead for him. For from Him comes the invocation of the Father, from Him come the tears of penitents, from Him come the groans of suppliants, and ”no one can call Jesus the Lord save in the Holy Ghost ,” Whose Omnipotence as equal and Whose Godhead as one, with the Father and the Son, the Apostle most clearly proclaims, saying, ”there are divisions of graces but the same Spirit; and the divisions of ministrations but the same Lord; and there are divisions of operations but the same God, Who worketh all things in all .”

V. The Spirit's Work is Still Continued in Thechurch.

By these and other numberless proofs, dearly-beloved, with which the authority of the Divine utterances is ablaze, let us with one mind be incited to pay reverence to Whitsuntide, exulting in honour of the Holy Ghost, through Whom the whole catholic Church is sanctified, and every rational soul quickened; Who is the Inspirer of the Faith, the Teacher of Knowledge, the Fount of Love, the Seal of Chastity, and the Cause of all Power. Let the minds of the faithful rejoice, that throughout the world One God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is praised by the confession of all tongues, and that that sign of His Presence, which appeared in the likeness of fire, is still perpetuated in His work and gift. For the Spirit of Truth Himself makes the house of His glory shine with the brightness of His light, and will have nothing dark nor lukewarm in His temple. And it is through His aid and teaching also that the purification of fasts and alms has been established among us. For this venerable day is followed by a most wholesome practice, which all the saints have ever found most profitable to them, and to the diligent observance of which we exhort you with a shepherd's care, to the end that if any blemish has been contracted in the days just passed through heedless negligence, it may be atoned for by the discipline of fasting and corrected by pious devotion. On Wednesday and Friday, therefore, let us fast, and on Saturday for this very purpose keep vigil with accustomed devotion, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

I. The Holy Ghost's Work Did Not Begin at Pentecost, But Was Continued Because the Holy Trinity is One in Action and in Will.

To-day's festival, dearly-beloved, which is held in reverence by the whole world, has been hallowed by that advent of the Holy Ghost, which on the fiftieth day after the Lord's Resurrection, descended on the Apostles and the multitude of believers , even as it was hoped. And there was this hope, because the Lord Jesus had promised that He should come, not then first to be the Indweller of the saints, but to kindle to a greater heat, and to fill with larger abundance the hearts that were dedicated to Him, increasing, not commencing His gifts, not fresh in operation because richer in bounty. For the Majesty of the Holy Ghost is never separate from the Omnipotence of the Father and the Son, and whatever the Divine government accomplishes in the ordering of all things, proceeds from the Providence of the whole Trinity. Therein exists unity of mercy and loving-kindness, unity of judgment and justice: nor is there any division in action where there is no divergence of will. What, therefore, the Father enlightens, the Son enlightens, and the Holy Ghost enlightens: and while there is one Person of the Sent, another of the Sender, and another of the Promiser both the Unity and the Trinity are at the same time revealed to us, so that the Essence which possesses equality and does not admit of solitariness is understood to belong to the same Substance but not the same Person.

II. Each Person in the Trinity Look Part in Our Redemption.

The fact, therefore, that, with the co-operation of the inseparable Godhead still perfect, certain things are performed by the Father, certain by the Son, and certain by the Holy Spirit, in particular belongs to the ordering of our Redemption and the method of our salvation. For if man, made after the image and likeness of God, had retained the dignity of his own nature, and had not been deceived bythe devil's wiles into transgressing through lust the law laid down for him, the Creator of the world would not have become a Creature, the Eternal would not have entered the sphere of time, nor God the Son, Who is equal with God the Father, have assumed the form of a slave and the likeness of sinful flesh. But because "by the devil's malice death entered into the world ," and captive humanity could not otherwise be set free without His undertaking our cause, Who without loss of His majesty should both become true Man, and alone have no taint of sin, the mercy of the Trinity divided for Itself the work of our restoration in such a way that the Father should be propitiated, the Son should propitiate , and the Holy Ghost enkindle. For it was necessary that those who are to be saved should also do something on their part, and by the turning of their hearts to the Redeemer should quit the dominion of the enemy, even as the Apostle says, "God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father ," "And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty ," and "no one can call Jesus Lord except in the Holy Spirit ."

III. But This Apportionment of Functions Does Not Mar the Unity of the Trinity.

If, therefore, under guiding grace, dearly-beloved, we faithfully and wisely understand what is the particular work of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and what is common to the Three in our restoration, we shall without doubt so accept what has been wrought for us by humiliation and in the body as to think nothing unworthy about the One and Selfsame Glory of the Trinity. For although no mind is competent to think, no tongue to speak about God, yet whatever that is which the human intellect apprehends about the essence of the Father's Godhead, unless one and the selfsame truth is held concerning His Only-begotten or the Holy Spirit, our meditations are disloyal, and beclouded by the intrusions of the flesh, and even that is lost, which seemed a right conclusion concerning the Father, because the whole Trinity is forsaken, if the Unity therein is not maintained; and That Which is different by any inequality can in no true sense be One.

IV. In Thinking Upon God, We Must Put Aside All Material Notions.

When, therefore, we fix our minds on confessing the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, let us keep far from our thoughts the forms of things visible, the ages of beings born in time, and all material bodies and places. Let that which is extended in space, that which is enclosed by limit, and whatever is not always everywhere and entire be banished from the heart. The conception of the Triune Godhead must put aside the idea of interval or of grade , and if a man has attained any worthy thought of God, let him not dare to withhold it from any Person therein, as if to ascribe with more honour to the Father that which he does not ascribe to the Son and Spirit. It is not true Godliness to put the Father before the Only-begotten: insult to the Son is insult to the Father: what is detracted from the One is detracted from Both. For since Their Eternity and Godhead are alike common, the Father is not accounted either Almighty and Unchangeable, if He begot One less than Himself or gained by having One Whom before He had not .

V. Christ as Man is Less Than the Father, as God Co-Equal.

The Lord Jesus does, indeed, say to His disciples, as was read in the Gospel lection, ”if ye loved Me, ye would assuredly rejoice, because I go to the Father, because the Father is greater than I ; but those ears, which have often heard the words, ”I and the Father are One ,” and ”He that sees Me, sees the Father also ,” accept the saying without supposing a difference of Godhead or understanding it of that Essence which they know to be co-eternal and of the same nature with the Father. Man’s uplifting, therefore, in the Incarnation of the Word, is commended to the holy Apostles also, and they, who were distressed at the announcement of the Lord’s departure from them, are incited to eternal joy over the increase in their dignity; ”If ye loved Me,” He says, ”ye would assuredly rejoice, because I go to the Father: that is, if, with complete knowledge ye saw what glory is bestowed on you by the fact that, being begotten of God the Father, I have been born of a human mother also, that being invisible I have made Myself visible, that being eternal ”in the form of God” I accepted the ”form of a slave,” ”ye would rejoice because I go to the Father. For to you is offered this ascension, and your humility is in Me raised to a place above all heavens at the Father’s right hand.

But I, Who am with the Father that which the Father is, abide undivided with My Father, and in coming from Him to you I do not leave Him, even as in returning to Him from you I do not forsake you. Rejoice, therefore, ”because I go to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. For I have united you with Myself, and am become Son of Man that you might have power to be sons of God. And hence, though I am One in both forms, yet in that whereby I am conformed to you I am less than the Father, whereas in that whereby I am not divided from the Father I am greater even than Myself. And so let the Nature, which is less than the Father, go to the Father, that the Flesh may be where the Word always is, and that the one Faith of the catholic Church may believe that He Whom as Man it does not deny to be less, is equal as God with the Father.

VI. And This Equality Which the Son Has with the Father, the Holy Ghost Also Has.

Accordingly, dearly-beloved, let us despise the vain and blind cunning of ungodly heretics, which flatters itself over its crooked interpretation of this sentence, and when the Lord says, "All things that the Father hath are Mine ," does not understand that it takes away from the Father whatever it dares to deny to the Son, and is so foolish in matters even which are human as to think, that what is His Father's has ceased to belong to His Only-begotten, because He has taken on Him what is ours. Mercy in the case of God does not lessen power, nor is the reconciliation of the creature whom He loves a falling off of Eternal glory. What the Father has the Son also has, and what the Father and the Son have, the Holy Ghost also has, because the whole Trinity together is One God. But this Faith is not the discovery of earthly wisdom nor the conviction of man's opinion: the Only-begotten Son has taught it Himself, and the Holy Ghost has established it Himself, concerning Whom no other conception must be formed than is formed concerning the Father and the Son. Because albeit He is not the Father nor the Son, yet He is not separable from the Father and the Son: and as He has His own personality in the Trinity, so has He One substance in Godhead with the Father and the Son, filling all things, containing all things, and with the Father and the Son controlling all things, to Whom is the honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I. Since the Apostles' Day Till Now Self-Restraint is the Best Defence Against the Devil's Assaults.

To-day's festival, dearly-beloved, hallowed by the descent of the Holy Ghost, is followed, as you know by a solemn fast, which being a salutary institution for the healing of soul and body, we must keep with devout observance. For when the Apostles had been filled with the promised power, and the Spirit of Truth had entered their hearts, we doubt not that among the other mysteries of heavenly doctrine this discipline of spiritual self-restraint was first thought of at the prompting of the Paraclete in order that minds sanctified by fasting might be fitter for the chrism to be bestowed on them . The disciples of Christ had the protection of the Almighty aid, and the chiefs of the infant Church were guarded by the whole Godhead of the Father and the Son through the presence of the Holy Ghost. But against the threatened attacks of persecutors, against the terrifying shouts of the ungodly, they could not fight with bodily strength or pampered flesh, since that which delights the outer does most harm to the inner man, and the more one's fleshly substance is kept in subjection, the more purified is the reasoning soul.

II. The Templer is Foiled in Attacks Upon Those Who Have Learnt These Tactics.

And so those teachers, who have instructed all the Church's sons by their examples and their traditions, began the rudiments of the Christian warfare with holy fasts, that, having to fight against spiritual wickednesses, they might take the armour of abstinence, wherewith to slay the incentives to vice. For invisible foes and incorporeal enemies will have no strength against us, if we be not entangled in any lusts of the flesh. The desire to hurt us is indeed ever active in the tempter, but he will be disarmed and powerless, if he find no vantage around within us from which to attack us. But who, encompassed with this frail flesh, and placed in this body of death, even one who has made much decided progress, can be so sure of his safety now, as to believe himself free from the peril of all allurements? Although Divine Grace gives daily victory to His saints , yet He does not remove the occasion for fighting, because this very fact is part of our Protector's Mercy, Who has always designed that something should remain for our ever-changing nature to win, lest it should boast itself on the ending of the battle.

III. And So This Fast Comes Very Opportunely After the Feast of Whitsuntide.

Therefore, after the days of holy gladness, which we have devoted to the honour of the Lord rising from the dead and then ascending into heaven, and after receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, a fast is ordained as a wholesome and needful practice, so that, if perchance through neglect or disorder even amid the joys of the festival any undue licence has broken out, it may be corrected by the remedy of strict abstinence, which must be the more scrupulously carried out in order that what was on this day Divinely bestowed on the Church may abide in us. For being made the Temple of the Holy Ghost, and watered with a greater supply than ever of the Divine Stream, we ought not to be conquered by any lusts nor held in possession by any vices in order that the habitation of Divine power may be stained with no pollution.

IV. And by Proper Use of It We Shall Win God's Favour.

And this assuredly it is possible for all to obtain, God helping and guiding us, if by the purification of fasting and by merciful liberality, we take pains to be set free from the filth of sins, and to be rich in the fruits of love. For whatever is spent in feeling the poor, in healing the sick, in ransoming prisoners, or in any other deeds of piety, is not lessened but increased, nor will that ever be lost in the sight of God which the loving-kindness of the faithful has expended, seeing that whatever a man gives in relief, he lays up for his own reward. For "blessed are the merciful, since God shall have mercy on them ;" nor wilt shortcomings be remembered, where the presence of true religion has been attested. On Wednesday and Friday, therefore, let us fast, and on Saturday let us keep vigil in the presence of the most blessed Apostle, Peter, by whose prayers we surely trust to be set free both from spiritual foes and bodily enemies; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost, lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

I. Rome Owes Its High Position to These Apostles.

The whole world, dearly-beloved, does indeed take part in all holy anniversaries, and loyalty to the one Faith demands that whatever is recorded as done for all men's salvation should be everywhere celebrated with common rejoicings. But, besides that reverence which to-day's festival has gained from all the world, it is to be honoured with special and peculiar exultation in our city, that there may be a predominance of gladness on the day of their martyrdom in the place where the chief of the Apostles met their glorious end . For these are the men, through whom the light of Christ's gospel shone on thee, O Rome, and through whom thou, who wast the teacher of error, wast made the disciple of Truth. These are thy holy Fathers and true shepherds, who gave thee claims to be numbered among the heavenly kingdoms, and built thee under much better and happier auspices than they, by whose zeal the first foundations of thy walls were laid: and of whom the one that gave thee thy name defiled thee with his brother's blood . These are they who promoted thee to such glory, that being made a holy nation, a chosen people, a priestly and royal state , and the head of the world through the blessed Peter's holy See thou didst attain a wider sway. by the worship of God than by earthly government. For although thou weft increased by many victories, and didst extend thy rule on land and sea, yet what thy toils in war subdued is less than what the peace of Christ has conquered.

II. The Extension of the Roman Empire Was Part of the Divine Scheme.

For the good, just, and Almighty God, Who has never withheld His mercy from mankind, and has ever instructed all men alike in the knowledge of Himself by the most abundant benefits, has by a more secret counsel and a deeper love shown pity upon the wanderers' voluntary blindness and proclivities to evil, by sending His co-equal and co-eternal Word. Which becoming flesh so united the Divine Nature with the human that He by lowering His Nature to the uttermost has raised our nature to the highest. But that the result of this unspeakable Grace might be spread abroad throughout the world, God's Providence made ready the Roman empire, whose growth has reached such limits that the whole multitude of nations are brought into close connexion. For the Divinely-planned work particularly required that many kingdoms should be leagued together under one empire, so that the preaching of the world might quickly reach to all people, when they were held beneath the rule of one state. And yet that state, in ignorance of the Author of its aggrandisement though it rule almost all nations, was enthralled by the errors of them all, and seemed to itself to have fostered religion greatly, because it rejected no falsehood. And hence its emancipation through Christ was the more wondrous that it had been so fast bound by Satan.

III. On the Dispersing of the Twelve, St. Peter Was Sent to Rome.

For when the twelve Apostles, after receiving through the Holy Ghost the power of speaking with all tongues, had distributed the world into parts among themselves, and undertaken to instruct it in the Gospel, the most blessed Peter, chief of the Apostolic band, was appointed to the citadel of the Roman empire, that the light of Truth which was being displayed for the salvation of all the nations, might spread itself more effectively throughout the body of the world from the head itself. What nation had not representatives then living in this city; or what peoples did not know what Rome had learnt? Here it was that the tenets of philosophy must be crushed, here that the follies of earthly wisdom must be dispelled, here that the cult of demons must be refuted, here that theblasphemy of all idolatries must be rooted out, here where the most persistent superstition had gathered together all the various errors which had anywhere been devised.

IV. St. Peter's Love Conquered His Fears in Coming to Rome.

To this city then, most blessed Apostle Peter, thou dost not fear to come, and when the Apostle Paul; the partner of thy glory, was still busied with regulating other churches, didst enter this forest of roaring beasts, this deep, stormy ocean with greater boldness than when thou didst walk upon the sea. And thou who hadst been frightened by the high priest's maid in the house of Caiaphas, hadst no fear of Rome the mistress of the world. Was there any less power in Claudius, any less cruelty in Nero than in the judgment of Pilate or the Jews' savage rage? So then it was the force of love that conquered the reasons for fear: and thou didst not think those to be feared whom thou hadst undertaken to love. But this feeling of fearless affection thou hadst even then surely conceived when the profession of thy love for the Lord was confirmed by the mystery of the thrice-repeated question. And nothing else was demanded of this thy earnest purpose than that thou shouldst bestow the food wherewith thou hadst thyself been enriched, on feeding His sheep whom thou didst love.

V. S. Peter Was Providentially Prepared for His Great Mission.

Thy confidence also was increased by many miraculous signs, by many gifts of grace, by many proofs of power. Thou hadst already taught the people, who from the number of the circumcised had believed: thou hadst already founded the Church at Antioch, where first the dignity of the Christian name arose: thou hadst already instructed Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, in the laws of the Gospel-message: and, without doubt as to the success of the work, with full knowledge of the short span of thy life didst carry the trophy of Christ's cross into the citadel of Rome, whither by the Divine fore-ordaining there accompanied thee the honour of great power and the glory of much suffering.

VI. Many Noble Martyrs Have Sprung from the Blood of Ss. Peter and Paul.

Thither came also thy blessed brother-Apostle Paul, ”the vessel of election ,” and the special teacher of the Gentiles, and was associated with thee at a time when all innocence, all modesty, all freedom was into jeopardy under Nero’s rule. Whose fury, inflamed by excess of all vices, hurled him headlong into such a fiery furnace of madness that he was the first to assail the Christian name with a general persecution, as if God’s Grace could be quenched by the death of saints, whose greatest gain it was to win eternal happiness by contempt of this fleeting life. ”Precious,” therefore, ”in the eyes of the Lord is the death of His saints :” nor can any degree of cruelty destroy the religion which is founded on the mystery of Christ’s cross. Persecution does not diminish but increase the church, and the Lord’s field is clothed with an ever richer crop, while the grains, which fall singly, spring up and are multiplied a hundred-fold . Hence how large a progeny have sprung from these two Heaven-sown seeds is shown by the thousands of blessed martyrs, who, rivalling the Apostles’ triumphs, have traversed the city far and wide in purple-clad and ruddy-gleaming throngs, and crowned it, as it were with a single diadem of countless gems.

VII. No Distinction Must Be Drawn Between the Merits of the Two.

And over this band, dearly-beloved, whom God has set forth for our example in patience and for our confirmation in the Faith, there must be rejoicing everywhere in the commemoration of all the saints, but of these two Fathers' excellence we must rightly make our boast in louder joy, for God's Grace has raised them to so high a place among the members of the Church, that He has set them like the twin light of the eyes in the body, whose Head is Christ. About their merits and virtues, which pass all power of speech, we must not make distinctions, because they were equal in their election , alike in their toils, undivided in their death. But as we have proved for Ourselves, and our forefathers maintained, we believe, and are sure that, amid all the toils of this life, we must always be assisted in obtaining God's Mercy by the prayers of special interceders, that we may be raised by the Apostles' merits in proportion as we are weighed down by our own sins. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

Sermon 84 Concerning the Neglect of the Commemoration

I. The Churchmen of Rome are in Danger of Forgetting Past Judgments and Mercies, and Becoming Ungrateful to God.

The fewness of those who were present has of itself shown, dearly-beloved, that the religious devotion wherewith, in commemoration of the day of our chastisement and release, the whole body of the faithful used to flock together in order to give God thanks, has on this last occasion been almost entirely neglected: and this has caused me much sadness of heart and great fear. For there is much danger of men becoming ungrateful to God, and through forgetfulness of His benefits not feeling sorrow for the chastisement, nor joy for the liberation. Accordingly I fear, dearly-beloved, lest that utterance of the Prophet be addressed in rebuke to such men, which says, "thou hast scourged them and they have not grieved: thou hast chastised them, and they have refused to receive correction " For what amendment is shown by them in whom such aversion to God's service is found? One is ashamed to say it, but one must not keep silence: more is spent upon demons than upon the Apostles, and mad spectacles draw greater crowds than blessed martyrdoms . Who was it that restored this city to safety? that rescued it from captivity? the games of the circus-goers or the care of the saints? surely it was by the saints' prayers that the sentence of Divine displeasure was diverted, so that we who deserved wrath, were reserved for pardon.

II. Let Them Avail Themselves Betimes of God's Long-Suffering and Return to Him.

I entreat you, beloved, let those words of the Saviour touch your hearts, Who, when by the power of His mercy He had cleansed ten lepers, said that only one of them all had returned to give thanks : meaning without doubt that, though the ungrateful ones had gained soundness of body, yet their failure in this godly duty arose from ungodliness of heart. And therefore, dearly-beloved, that this brand of ingratitude may not be applied to you, return to the Lord, remembering the marvels which He has deigned to perform among us; and ascribing. our release not, as the ungodly suppose, to the influences of the stars, but to the unspeakable mercy of Almighty God, Who has deigned to soften the hearts of raging barbarians, betake yourselves to the commemoration of so great a benefit with all the vigour of faith. Grave neglect must be atoned for by yet greater tokens of repentance.

Let us use the Mercy of Him, Who has spared us, to our own amendment, that the blessed Peter and all the saints, who have always been near us in many afflictions, may deign to aid our entreaties for you to the merciful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The Example of the Martyrs is Most Valuable

Whilst the height of all virtues, dearly-beloved, and the fulness of all righteousness is born of that love, wherewith God and one's neighbour is loved, surely in none is this love found more conspicuous and brighter than in the blessed martyrs; who are as near to our Lord Jesus, Who died for all men, in the imitation of His love, as in the likeness of their suffering. For, although that Love, wherewith the Lord has redeemed us, cannot be equalled by any man's kindness, because it is one thing that a man who is doomed to die one day should die for a righteous man, and another that One Who is free from the debt of sin should lay down His life for the wicked : yet the martyrs also have done great service to all men, in that the Lord Who gave them boldness, has used it to show that the penalty of death and the pain of the cross need not be terrible to any of His followers, but might be imitated by many of them. If therefore no good man is good for himself alone, and no wise man's wisdom befriends himself only, and the nature of true virtue is such that it leads many away from the dark error on which its light is shed, no model is more useful in teaching God's people than that of the martyrs. Eloquence may make intercession easy, reasoning may effectually persuade; but yet examples are stronger than words, and there is more teaching in practice than in precept.

II. The Saint's Martyrdom Described.

And how gloriously strong in this most excellent manner of doctrine the blessed martyr Laurentius is, by whose sufferings to-day is marked, even his persecutors were able to feel, when they found that his wondrous courage, born principally of love for Christ, not only did not yield itself, but also strengthened others by the example of his endurance. For when the fury of the gentile potentates was raging against Christ's most chosen members, and attacked those especially who were of priestly rank, the wicked persecutor's wrath was vented on Laurentius the deacon, who was pre-eminent not only in the performance of the sacred rites, but also in the management of the church's property , promising himself double spoil from one man's capture: for if he forced him to surrender the sacred treasures, he would also drive him out of the pale of true religion. And so this man, so greedy of money and such a foe to the truth, arms himself with double weapon: with avarice to plunder the gold; with impiety to carry off Christ. He demands of the guileless guardian of the sanctuary that the church wealth on which his greedy mind was set should be brought to him. But the holy deacon showed him where he had them stored, by pointing to the many troops of poor saints, in the feeding and clothing of whom he had a store of riches which he could hot lose, and which were the more entirely safe that the money had been spent on so holy a cause.

III.the Description of His Sufferings Continued.

The baffled plunderer, therefore, frets, and blazing out into hatred of a religion, which had put riches to such a use, determines to pillage a still greater treasure by carrying off that sacred deposit , wherewith he was enriched, as he could find no solid hoard of money in his possession. He orders Laurentius to renounce Christ, and prepares to ply the deacon's stout courage with frightful tortures: and, when the first elicit nothing, fiercer follow. His limbs, torn and mangled by many cutting blows, are commanded to be broiled upon the fire in an iron framework , which was of itself already hot enough to burn him, and on which his limbs were turned from time to time, to make the torment fiercer, and the death more lingering.

IV. Laurentius Has Conquered His Persecutor.

Thou gainest nothing, thou prevailest nothing, O savage cruelty. His mortal frame is released from thy devices, and, when Laurentius departs to heaven, thou art vanquished. The flame of Christ's love could not be overcome by thy flames, and the fire which burnt outside was less keen than that which blazed within. Thou didst but serve the martyr in thy rage, O persecutor: thou didst but swell the reward in adding to the pain. For what did thy cunning devise, which did not redound to the conqueror's glory, when even the instruments of torture were counted as part of the triumph? Let us rejoice, then, dearly-beloved, with spiritual joy, and make our boast over the happy end of this illustrious man in the Lord, Who is "wonderful in His saints ," in whom He has given us a support and an example, and has so spread abroad his glory throughout the world, that, from the rising of the sun to its going down, the brightness of his deacon's light doth shine, and Rome is become as famous in Laurentius as Jerusalem was ennobled by Stephen. By his prayer and intercession we trust at all times to be assisted; that, because all, as the Apostle says, "who wish to live holily in Christ, suffer persecution ," we may be strengthened with the spirit of love, and be fortified to overcome all temptations by the perseverance of steadfast faith. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

I. The Fasts, Which the Ancient Prophets Proclaimed, are Still Necessary.

Of what avail, dearly-beloved, are religious fasts in winning the mercy of God, and in renewing the fortunes of human frailty, we know from the statements of the holy Prophets, who proclaim that justice of God, Whose vengeance the people of Israel had again and again incurred through their iniquities, cannot be appeased save by fasting. Thus it is that the Prophet Joel warns them, saying, ”thus saith the Lord your God, turn ye to Me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning, and rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn ye to the Lord your God, for He is merciful and patient, and of great kindness, and very merciful ,” and again, ”sanctify a fast, proclaim a healing, assemble the people, sanctify the church .” And this exhortation must in our days also be obeyed, because these healing remedies must of necessity be proclaimed by us too, in order that in the observance of the ancient sanctification Christian devotion may gain what Jewish transgression lost.

II. Public Services are of a Higher Character Than Private.

But the respect that is paid to the Divine decrees always brings a special blessing, whatever may be the extent of our voluntary services, so that publicly proclaimed celebrations are of a higher character than those which rest on private institution . For the exercise of self-restraint, which each individual imposes on himself at his own discretion, concerns thebenefit of a certain portion only of the Church, but the fast which the whole Church undergoes leaves out no one from the general purification, and God's people' then become strongest, when the hearts of all the faithful meet together in one common act of holy obedience, when in the camp of the Christian army there is on all sides the same making ready for the fight and for defence. Though the cruel enemy rage in restless fury, and spread all round his hidden snares, yet he will be able to catch no one and wound no one, if he find no one off his guard, no one given up to sloth, nO one inactive in works of piety.

III. The September Fast Calls Us in This Public Way to Self-Amendment.

To this unconquerable strength of unity, therefore, dearly-beloved, we are even now invited by the solemn Fast of the Seventh Month, that we may lift our souls to the Lord free from worldly cares and earthly concerns. And because, always needful as this endeavour is, we cannot all adhere to it perpetually, and often through human frailty we fall back from higher things to the things of earth, let us at least on these days, which are most healthfully ordained for our correction, withdraw ourselves from worldly occupations, and steal a little time for promoting our eternal welfare. ”For in many things,” as it is written, ”we all stumble .” And though by the daily gift of God we be cleansed from divers pollutions, yet there cling to unwary souls for the most part darker stains, which need a greater care to wash them out, a stronger effort to destroy them. And the fullest abolition of sins is obtained when the whole Church offers up one prayer and one confession. For if the Lord has promised fulfilment of all they shall ask, to the holy and devout agreement of two or three, what shall be denied to many thousands of the people who unite in one act of worship, and with one breath make their common supplications ?

IV. Community of Goods and of Actions is Most Precious in God's Sight.

It is a great and very precious thing, beloved, in the Lord's sight, when Christ's whole people engage together in the same duties, and all ranks and degrees of either sex co-operate with the same intent: when one purpose animates all alike of declining from evil and doing good; when God is glorified in the works of His slaves, and the Author of all godliness is blessed in unstinted giving of thanks. The hungry are nourished, the naked are clothed, thesick are visited, and men seek not their own but "that which is another's ," so long as in relieving the misery of others each one makes the most of his own means; and it is easy to find "a cheerful giver ," where a man's performances are only limited by the extent of his power. By this grace of God, "which worketh all in all ," the benefit: and the deserts of the faithful are both enjoyed in common. For they, whose income is not like, can yet think alike, and when one rejoices over another's bounty his feelings put him on the same level with him whose powers of spending are on a different level. In such a community there is no disorder nor diversity, for all the members of the whole body agree in one strong purpose of godliness, and he who glories in the wealth of others is not put to shame at his own poverty. For the excellence of each portion is the glory of the whole body, and when we are all led by God's Spirit, not only are the things we do ourselves our own but those of others also over the doing of which we rejoice.

V. Let Us Then Make the Best Use Possible of the Opportunity.

Let us then, dearly-beloved, lay hold upon this most sacred unity in all its blessed integrity and engage in the solemn fast with the concordant purpose of a good will. Nothing hard, nothing harsh is asked of anyone, nor is anything imposed beyond our strength, whether in the discipline of abstinence or in the amount of alms. Each knows what he can and what he cannot do: let every one pay his quota, assessing himself at a just and reasonable rate, that the sacrifice of mercy be not offered sadly nor reckoned among losses. Let so much be expended on pious work, as will justify the heart, wash the conscience, and in a word profit both giver and receiver. Happy indeed is that soul and truly to be admired which in its love of doing good fears not the failing of the means, and has no distrust that He will give him money still to spend, from Whom he had what he spent in the past. But because few possess this greatness of heart, and yet it is truly a pious thing for each one not to forsake the care of his own, we, without prejudice to the more perfect sort, lay down for you this general rule and exhort you to perform God's bidding according to the measure of your ability. For cheerfulness becomes the benevolent man, who should so manage his liberality that while the poor rejoice over the help supplied, home needs may not suffer.

"And He that ministers seed to the sower, shall both provide bread to be eaten and multiply your seed and increase the fruits of your righteousness . On Wednesday and Friday therefore let us fast; and on Saturday keep vigil all together in the presence of the most blessed Apostle Peter, by whose merits and prayers we are sure God's mercy will be vouchsafed to us in all things through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

I.we Must Always Be Seeking Pardon, Because We are Always Liable to Sin.

We proclaim the holy Fast of the Seventh Month, dearly-beloved, for the exercise of common devotions, confidently inciting you with fatherly exhortations to make Christian by your observance that which was formerly Jewish . For it is at all times suitable and in agreement with both the New and Old Testament, that the Divine Mercy should be sought with chastisement both of mind and body, because nothing is more effectual in prevailing with God than that a man should judge himself and never cease from asking pardon, knowing that he is never without fault For human nature has this flaw in itself, not planted there by the Creator but contracted by the transgressor , and transmitted to his posterity by the law of generation , so that from the corruptible body springs that which may corrupt the soul also. Hence although the inner man be now reborn in Christ and rescued from the bonds of captivity, it has unceasing conflicts with the flesh, and has to endure resistance in seeking to restrain vain desires. And in this strife such perfect victory is not easily obtained that even those habits which must be broken off do not still encumber us, and those vices which must be slain do not wound. However wisely and prudently the mind presides as judge over the outer senses, yet even amid the pains it takes to rule and the limits it imposes on the appetites of the flesh, the temptation is always too close at hand.

For who so abstracts himself from pleasure or pain of body that his mind is not affected by that which delights or racks it from without? Joy and sorrow are inseparable from a man: no part of him is free from the kindlings of wrath, the over-powerings of delight, the castings down of affliction. And what turning away from sin can there be, where ruler and ruled alike are liable to the same passions? Rightly does the Lord exclaim that ”the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak .”

II. Christ is Himself the Way, Which He Bids Us Tread.

And lest we should be led by despair into sheer inaction, He promises that the Divine power shall make those things possible which are to man impossible from his own lack of power: ”for narrow and strait is the way which leadeth unto life ,” and no one couldset foot on it, no one could advance one step, unless Christ by making Himself the Way unbarred the difficulties of approach: and thus the Ordainer of the journey becomes the Means whereby we are able to accomplish it, because not only does He impose the labour, but also brings us to the haven of rest. In Him therefore we find our Model of patience, in Whom we have our Hope of life eternal; for ”if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him ,” since, as the Apostle says, ”he that saith he abideth in Christ ought himself also to walk as He walked .” Otherwise we make a vain presence and show, if we follow not His steps, Whose name we glory in, and assuredly they would not be irksome to us, but would free us from all dangers, if we loved nothing but what He commanded us to love.

III. The Love of God Contrasted with the Love of the World.

For there are two loves from which proceed all wishes, as different in quality as they are different in their sources. For the reasonable soul, which cannot exist without love, is the lover either of God or the world. In the love of God there is no excess, but in the love of the world all is hurtful. And therefore we must cling inseparably to eternal treasures, but things temporal we must use like passers-by, that as we are sojourners hastening to return to our own land, all the good things of this world which meet us may be as aids on the way, not snares to detain us. Therefore the blessed Apostle makes this proclamation, ”the time is short: it remains that those who have wives be as though they had none; and those who weep, as though they wept not; and those who rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and those who buy, as though they possessed not; and those that use this world, as though they used it not. For the fashion of this world passes away . But as the world attracts us with its appearance, and abundance and variety, it is not easy to turn away from it unless in the beauty of things visible the Creator rather than the creature is loved; for, when He says, ”thou shale love the Lord Shy God from all thy heart, and from all thy mind, and from all shy strength ,” He wishes us in noticing to loosen ourselves from the bonds of His love.

And when He links the love of our neighbour also to this command, He enjoins on us the imitation of His own goodness, that we should love what He loves and do what He does. For although we be ”God’s husbandry and God’s building,” and ”neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase ,” yet in all things He requires our ministry and service, and wishes us to be the stewards of His gifts, that he who bears God’s image may do God’s will. For this reason, in the Lord’s prayer we say most devoutly, ”Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done as in heaven, so also on earth. For what else do we ask for in these words but that God may subdue those whom He has not yet subdued, and as in heaven He makes the angels ministers of His will, so also on earth He may make men? And in seeking this we love God, we love also our neighbour: and the love within us has but one Object, since we desire the bond-servant to serve and the Lord to have rule.

IV. The Love of God Is Fostered by Good Works.

This state of mind, therefore, beloved, from which earthly love is excluded, is strengthened by the habit of well-doing, because the conscience must needs be delighted at good deeds, and do willingly what it rejoices to have done. Thus it is that fasts are kept, alms freely given, justice maintained, frequent prayer resorted to, and the desires of individuals become the common wish of all. Labour fosters patience, gentleness extinguishes anger, loving-kindness treads down hatred, unclean desires are slain by holy, aspirations, avarice is east out by liberality, and burdensome wealth becomes the means of virtuous acts . But because the snares of the devil are not at rest even in such a state of things, most rightly at certain seasons of the year the renewal of our vigour is provided for: and now in particular, when one who is greedy of present good might boast himself over the clemency of the weather and the fertility of the land, and having stored his crops in great barns, might say to his soul, "thou hast much goods, eat and drink," let him take heed to the rebuke of the Divine voice, and hear it saying, "Thou fool, this night they require thy soul of thee, and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be ?" This should be the wise man's most anxious consideration, in order that, as the days of this life are short and its span uncertain, death may never come upon him unawares, and that knowing himself mortal he may meet his end fully prepared. And so, that this may avail both for the sanctification of out bodies and the renewal of our souls, on Wednesday and Friday let us fast, and on Saturday let us keep vigil with the most blessed Apostle Peter, whose prayers will help us to obtain fulfilment of our holy desires through Christ our Lord, Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

I. Abstinence Must Include Discipline of the Soul as Well Asof the Body.

There is nothing, dearly-beloved, in which the Divine Providence does not assist the devotions of the faithful. For the very elements of the world also minister to the exercise of mind and body in holiness, seeing that the distinctly varied revolution of days and months opens for us the different pages of the commands, and thus the seasons also in some sense speak to us of that which the sacred institutions enjoin. And hence, since the year's course has brought back the seventh month to us, I feel certain that your minds are spiritually aroused to keep the solemn fast; since you have learnt by experience how well this preparation purifies both the outer and the inner parts of men, so that by abstaining from the lawful, resistance becomes easier to the unlawful. But do not limit your plan of abstinence, dearly-beloved, to the mortifying of the body, or to the lessening of food alone. For the greater advantages of this virtue belong to that chastity of the soul, which not only crushes the lusts of the flesh, but also despises the vanities of worldly wisdom, as the Apostle says, "take heed that no one deceive you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men ."

II. And in Particular We Must Abstain from Heresy, and that of Eutyches as Well as that of Nestorius.

We must restrain ourselves, therefore, from food, but much more must we fast from errors that the mind, given up to no carnal pleasure, may be taken captive by no falsehood: because as in past days, so also in our own, there are not wanting enemies of the Truth, who dare to stir up civil wars within the catholic Church , in order that by leading the ignorant into agreement with their ungodly doctrines they may boast of increase in numbers through those whom they have been able to sever from the Body of Christ. For what is so opposed to the Prophets, so repugnant to the Gospels, so at variance with the Apostles' teaching as to preach one single Nature in the Lord Jesus Christ born of Mary, and without respect to time co-eternal with the Eternal Father? If it is only man's nature which is to be acknowledged, where is the Godhead Which saves? if only God's, where is the humanity which is saved? But the catholic Faith, which withstands all errors, refutes these blasphemies also at the same time, condemning Nestorius, who divides the Divine from the human, and denouncing Eutyches, who nullifies the human in the Divine; seeing that the Son of True God, Himself True God, possessing unity and equality with the Father and with the Holy Ghost, has vouchsafed likewise to be true Man, and after the Virgin Mother's conception was not separated from her flesh and child-bearing, so uniting humanity to Himself as to remain immutably God;

so imparting Godhead to man as not to destroy but enhance him by glorification. For He, Who became "the form of a slave," ceased not to be "the form of God," and He is not one joined with the other, but One in Both, so that ever since "the Word became Flesh" our faith is disturbed by no vicissitudes of circumstance, but whether in the miracles of power, or in the degradation of suffering, we believe Him to be both God, Who is Man, and Man, Who is God .

III. The Truth of the Incarnation is Proved Both by the Eucharistic Feast and by the Divine Institution of Almsgiving.

Dearly-beloved, utter this confession with all your heart and reject the wicked lies of heretics, that your fasting and almsgiving may not be polluted by any contagion with error: for then is our offering of the sacrifice clean and oar gifts of mercy holy, when those who perform them understand that which they do. For when the Lord says, ”unless ye have eaten the flesh of the Son of Man, and drunk His blood, ye will not have life in you ,” you ought so to be partakers at the Holy Table, as to have no doubt whatever concerning the reality of Christ’s Body and Blood. For that is taken in the mouth which is believed in Faith, and it is vain for them to respond Amen who dispute that which is taken. But when the Prophet says, ”Blessed is he, who considereth the poor and needy ,” he is the praiseworthy distributor of clothes and food among the poor, who knows he is clothing and feeding Christ in the poor: for He Himself says, ”as long as ye have done it to one of My brethren, ye have done it to Me .” And so Christ is One, True God and True Man, rich in what is His own, poor in what is ours, receiving gifts and distributing gifts, Partner with mortals, and the Quickener of the dead, so that in the ”name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, of things on earth, and of things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father ,” living and reigning with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

I. Introduction of the Subject.

When our Lord Jesus Christ, beloved, was preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, and was healing divers sicknesses through the whole of Galilee, the fame of His mighty works had spread into all Syria: large crowds too from all parts of Judaea were flocking to the heavenly Physician . For as human ignorance is slow in believing what it does not see, and in hoping for what it does not know, those who were to be instructed in the divine lore , needed to be aroused by bodily benefits and visible miracles: so that they might have no doubt as to the wholesomeness of His teaching when they actually experienced His benignant power. And therefore that the Lord might use outward healings as an introduction to inward remedies, and after healing bodies might work cures in the soul, He separated Himself from the surrounding crowd, ascended into the retirement of a neighbouring mountain, and called His apostles to Him there, that from the height of that mystic seat He might instruct them in the lottier doctrines, signifying from the very nature of the place and act that He it was who had once honoured Moses by speaking to him: then indeed with a more terrifying justice, but now with a holier mercifulness, that what had been promised might be fulfilled when the Prophet Jeremiah says: ”behold the days come when I will complete a new covenant for the house of Israel and for the house of Judah.

After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws in their minds , and in their heart will I write them . He therefore who had spoken to Moses, spoke also to the apostles, and the swift hand of the Word wrote and deposited the secrets of the new covenant in the disciples' hearts: there were no thick clouds surrounding Him as of old, nor were the people frightened off from approaching the mountain by frightful sounds and lightning , but quietly and freely His discourse reached the ears of those who stood by: that the harshness of the law might give way before the gentleness of grace, and ”the spirit of adoption” might dispel the terrors of bondage .

II. The Blessedness of Humility Discussed

The nature then of Christ's teaching is attested by His own holy statements: that they who wish to arrive at eternal blessedness may understand the steps of ascent to that high happiness. "Blessed," He saith, "are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven ." It would perhaps be doubtful what poor He was speaking of, if in saying "blessed are the poor" He had added nothing which would explain the sort of poor: and then that poverty by itself would appear sufficient to winthe kingdom of heaven which many suffer from hard and heavy necessity. But when He says "blessed are the poor in spirit," He shows that the kingdom of heaven must be assigned to those who are recommended by the humility of their spirits rather than by the smallness of their means. Yet it cannot be doubted that this possession of humility is more easily acquired by the poor than the rich: for submissiveness is the companion of those that want, while loftiness of mind dwells with riches . Notwithstanding, even in many of the rich is found that spirit which uses its abundance not for the increasing of its pride but on works of kindness, and counts that for the greatest gain which it expends in the relief of others' hardships. It is given to every kind and rank of men to share in this virtue, because men may be equal in will, though unequal in fortune: and it does not matter how different they are in earthly means, who are found equal in spiritual possessions. Blessed. therefore, is poverty which is not possessed with a love of temporal things, and does not seek to be increased with the riches of the world, but is eager to amass heavenly possessions.

III. Scriptural Examples of Humility.

Of this high-souled humility the Apostles first , after the Lord, have given us example, who, leaving all that they had without difference at the voice of the heavenly Master, were turned by a ready change from the catching of fish to be fishers of men, and made many like themselves through the imitation of their faith, when with those first-begotten sons of the Church, ”the heart of all was one, and the spirit one, of those that believed :”for they, putting away the whole of their things and possessions, enriched themselves with eternal goods, through the most devoted poverty, and in accordance with the Apostles’ preaching rejoiced to have nothing of the world and possess all things with Christ. Hence the blessed Apostle Peter, when he was going up into the temple, and was asked for alms by the lame man, said, ”Silver and gold is not mine, but what I have that I give thee: in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk .” What more sublime than this humility? what richer than this poverty? He hath not stores of money , but he hath gifts of nature. He whom his mother had brought forth lame from the womb, is made whole by Peter with a word; and he who gave not Caesar’s image in a coin, restored Christ’s image on the man. And by the riches of this treasure not he only was aided whose lower of walking was restored, but 5,000 men also, who then believed at the Apostle’s exhortation on account of the wonder of this cure. And that poor man who had not what to give to the asker, bestowed so great a bounty of Divine Grace, that, as he had set one man straight on his feet, so he healed these many thousands of believers in their hearts, and made them ”leap as an hart” in Christ whom he had found limping in Jewish unbelief.

IV. The Blessedness of Mourning Discussed.

After the assertion of this most happy humility, the Lord hath added, saying, ”Blessed are they which mourn, for they shall be comforted .” This mourning, beloved, to which eternal comforting is promised, is not the same as the affliction of this world: nor do those laments which are poured out in the sorrowings of the whole human race make any one blessed. The reason for holy groanings, the cause of blessed tears, is very different. Religious grief mourns sin either that of others’ or one’s own: nor does it mourn for that which is wrought by God’s justice, but it laments over that which is committed by man’s iniquity, where he that does wrong is more to be deplored than he who suffers it, because the unjust man’s wrongdoing plunges him into punishment, but the just man’s endurance leads him on to glory.

V. The Blessedness of the Meek.

Next the Lord says: ”blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth by inheritance .” To the meek and gentle, to the humble and modest, and to those who are prepared to endure all injuries, the earth is promised for their possession. And this is not to be reckoned a small or cheap inheritance, as if it were distinct from our heavenly dwelling, since it is no other than these who are understood to enter the kingdom of heaven. The earth, then, which is promised to the meek, and is to be given to the gentle in possession, is the flesh of the saints, which in reward for their humility will be changed in a happy resurrection, and clothed with the glory of immortality, in nothing now to act contrary to the spirit, and to be in complete unity and agreement with the will of the soul . For then the outer man will be the peaceful and unblemished possession of the inner man: then the mind, engrossed in beholding God, will be hampered by no obstacles of human weakness nor will it any more have to be said ”The body which is corrupted, weigheth upon the soul, and its earthly house presseth down the sense which thinketh many things :” for the earth will not struggle against its tenant, and will not venture on any insubordination against the rule of its governor. For the meek shall possess it in perpetual peace, and nothing shall be taken from their rights, ”when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality :” that their danger may turn into reward, and what was a burden become an honour .

VI. The Blessedness of Desiring Righteousness.

After this the Lord goes on to say: ”blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied .” It is nothing bodily, nothing earthly, that this hunger, thisthirst seeks for: but it desires to be satiated with the good food of righteousness, and wants to be admitted to all the deepest mysteries, and be filled with the Lord Himself. Happy the mind that craves this food and is eager for such drink: which it certainly would not seek for if it had never tasted of its sweetness. But hearing the Prophet’s spirit saying to him: ”taste and see that the Lord is sweet ;” it has received some portion of sweetness from on high, and blazed out into love of the purest pleasure, so that spurning all things temporal, it is seized with the utmost eagerness for eating and drinking righteousness, and grasps the truth of that first commandment which says: ”Thou shalt love the Lord thy God out of all thy heart, and out of all thy mind, and out of all thy strength :” since to love God is nothing else but to love righteousness . In fine, as in that passage the care for one’s neighbour is joined to the love of God, so, too, here the virtue of mercy is linked to the desire for righteousness, and it is said:

VII. The Blessedness of the Merciful:

”Blessed are the merciful, for God shall have mercy on them .” Recognize, Christian, the worth of thy wisdom, and understand to what rewards thou art called, and by what methods of discipline thou must attain thereto. Mercy wishes thee to be merciful, righteousness to be righteous, that the Creator may be seen in His creature, and the image of God may be reflected in the mirror of the human heart expressed by the lines of imitation. The faith of those who do good is free from anxiety: thou shalt have all thy desires, and shalt obtain without end what thou lovest. And since through thine alms-giving all things are pure to thee, to that blessedness also thou shalt attain which is promised in consequence where the Lord says:

VIII. The Blessedness of a Pure Heart.

”Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God .” Great is the happiness, beloved, of him for whom so great a reward is prepared. What, then, is it to have the heart pure, but to strive after those virtues which are mentioned above? And how great the blessedness of seeing God, what mind can conceive, what tongue declare? And yet this shall ensue when man’s nature is transformed, so that no longer ”in a mirror,” nor ”in a riddle,” but ”face to face ” it sees the very Godhead ”as He is ,” which no man could see ; and through the unspeakable joy of eternal contemplation obtains that ”which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man .” Rightly is this blessedness promised to purity of heart. For the brightness of the true light will not be able to be seen by the unclean sight: and that which will be happiness to minds that are bright and clean, will be a punishment to those that are stained. Therefore, let the mists of earth’s vanities be shunned. and your inward eyes purged from all the filth of wickedness, that the sight may be free to feed on this great manifestation of God. For to the attainment of this we understand what follows to lead.

IX. The Blessedness of Peace-Making.

”Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the sons of God .” This blessedness, beloved, belongs not to any and every kind of agreement and harmony, but to that of which the Apostle speaks: ”have peace towards God ;” and of which the Prophet David speaks: ”Much peace have they that love Thy law, and they have no cause of offences .” This peace even the closest ties of friendship and the exactest likeness of mind do not really gain, if they do not agree with God’s will. Similarity of bad desires, leagues in crimes, associations of vice, cannot merit this peace. The love of the world does not consort with the love of God, nor doth he enter the alliance of the sons of God who will not separate himself from the children of this generation Whereas they who are in mind always with God, ”giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ,” never dissent from the eternal law, uttering that prayer of faith, ”Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth .” These are ”the peacemakers,” these are thoroughly of one mind, and fully harmonious, and are to be called sons ”of God and joint-heirs with Christ ,” because this shall be the record of the love of God and the love of our neighbour, that we shall suffer no calamities, be in fear of no offence, but all the strife of trial ended, rest in God’s most perfect peace, through our Lord, Who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

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.