

Exposition on Psalm 55

by St. Augustine

The sermon explores the themes of Christ as the end and perfection, the call to praise and exercise patience and love in the face of adversity, and the longing for solitude and the desert of the conscience.

Scripture: Psalm 55:13-16, Jeremiah 17:11, Matthew 15:14, Romans 1:24, 1 Corinthians 11:19, 2 Timothy 3:9, 2 Timothy 3:13

Topics: "Spiritual Unity", "Faith And Redemption"

Description

St. Augustine preaches about the division caused by those who separate themselves from unity, leading to spiritual deaths and deceitfulness. He emphasizes the importance of casting our cares upon the Lord, who will nourish and redeem us in peace. The hardness of God's discourses is softened above oil, becoming darts aimed at the hearts of men. Those who rely on human leaders and pollute God's Testament will be humbled by Him. The men of bloods and deceitfulness, who do not make progress for long, shall not halve their days, while those who hope in the Lord will reach eternal day.

Transcript

1. Of this Psalm the title is: At the end, in hymns, understanding to David himself. What the end is, we will briefly call to your recollection, because you have known it. For the end of the Law is Christ, for righteousness unto every man believing. Romans 10:4 Be the attention therefore directed unto the End, directed unto Christ. Wherefore is He called the end? Because whatever we do, to Him we refer it, and when to Him we shall have come home, more to ask we shall not have. For there is an end spoken of which does consume, there is an end spoken of which does make perfect. In one sense, for instance, we understand it, when we hear, there is ended the food which was in eating; and in another sense we understand it when we hear, there is ended the vesture which was in weaving: in each case we hear, there is ended; but the food so that it no longer is, the vesture so that it is perfected. Our end therefore ought to be our perfection, our perfection Christ. For in Him we are made perfect, because of Himself the Head, the Members are we. And he has been spoken of as the End of the Law, because without Him no one does make perfect the Law. When therefore ye hear in the Psalms, At the end,-- for many Psalms are thus superscribed,-- be not your thought upon consuming, but upon consummation.

2. In hymns: in praises. For whether we are troubled and are straitened, or whether we rejoice and exult, He is to be praised, who both in tribulations does instruct, and in gladness does comfort. For the praise of God from the heart and mouth of a Christian man ought not to depart; not that he may be praising in

prosperity, and speaking evil in adversity; but after the manner that this Psalm does prescribe, I will speak good of the Lord in every time, always the praise of Him is in my mouth. Thou dost rejoice; acknowledge a Father indulging; you are troubled; acknowledge a Father chastening. Whether He indulge, or whether He chasten, He is instructing one for whom He is preparing an inheritance.

3. What then is, Understanding to David himself? David indeed was, as we know, a holy prophet, king of Israel, son of Jesse: 2 Samuel 23:1 but because out of his seed there came for our salvation after the flesh the Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 1:3 often under that name He is figured, and David instead of Christ is in a figure set down, because of the origin of the Flesh of the Same. For after some sort He is Son of David, after some sort He is the Lord of David; Son of David after the flesh, Lord of David after the divinity.

For if by Him have been made all things, John 1:3 by Him also David himself has been made, out of whose seed He came to men. Moreover, when the Lord had questioned the Jews, whose Son they affirmed Christ to be, they made answer, David's: where the Lord chides the Jews, when they said that He was the Son of David. He saw that they had stayed at the flesh, and had lost sight of the divinity; and He reproves them by propounding a question: How then does David himself in spirit call Him Lord, 'The Lord has said unto my Lord.'...If then He in spirit calls Him Lord, how is He is Son?

Matthew 22:43-45 A question He propounded; His being Son He denied not. You have heard Lord; say ye how He is his Son: you have heard Son; say how He is Lord. This question the Catholic Faith solves. How Lord? Because In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1 How Son? Because The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. John 1:14 Because then David in a figure is Christ, but Christ, as we have often reminded your Love, is both Head and Body; neither ought we to speak of ourselves as alien from Christ, of whom we are members, nor to count ourselves as if we were any other thing: because The two shall be in one flesh.

Genesis 2:24 This is a great Sacrament, says the Apostle, but I speak in regard of Christ and the Church. Ephesians 5:32 Because then whole Christ is Head and Body; when we hear, Understanding to David himself, understand we ourselves also in David. Let the members of Christ understand, and Christ in His members understand, and the members of Christ in Christ understand: because Head and Members are one Christ. The Head was in heaven, and was saying, Why do you persecute Me?

Acts 9:4 We with Him are in heaven through hope, Himself is with us on earth through love. Therefore understanding to David himself. Be we admonished when we hear, and let the Church understand: for there belongs to us great diligence to understand in what evil we now are, and from what evil we desire to be delivered, remembering the Prayer of the Lord, where at the end we say, Deliver us from evil. Matthew 6:13 Therefore amid many tribulations of this world, this Psalm complains somewhat of understanding.

He laments not with it, who has not understanding. But furthermore, dearly beloved, we ought to remember, that after the image of God we have been made, and that not in any other part than in the understanding itself. For in many things by beasts we are surpassed: but when a man knows himself to have been made after the image of God, Genesis 1:26 therein something in himself he acknowledges to be more than has been given to dumb animals. But on consideration of all those things which a man has, he finds himself in this thing peculiarly distinguished from a dumb animal, in that he has himself an understanding.

Whence certain men despising in themselves that peculiar and special thing which from their Maker they had received, the Maker Himself reproves, saying, Do not become like horse and mule, in which there is

no understanding.. ..

4. Hear Thou, O God, my entreaty, and despise not my prayer: give heed unto me, and hearken unto me Psalm 54:1. Of one earnest, anxious, of one set in tribulation, are these words. He is praying, suffering many things, from evil yearning to be delivered: it remains that we hear in what evil he is, and when he begins to speak, let us acknowledge there ourselves to be; in order that the tribulation being shared, we may conjoin prayer. I have been made sad in my exercise, and have been troubled Psalm 54:2. Where made sad, where troubled? In my exercise, he says. Of evil men, whom he suffers, he has made mention, and the same suffering of evil men he has called his exercise. Think ye not that without profit there are evil men in this world, and that no good God makes of them. Every evil man either on this account lives that he may be corrected, or on this account lives that through him a good man may be exercised. O that therefore they that do now exercise us would be converted, and together with us be exercised! Nevertheless, so long as they are such as to exercise, let us not hate them: because in that wherein any one of them is evil, whether unto the end he is to persevere, we know not; and oftentimes when to yourself you seem to have been hating an enemy, you have been hating a brother, and know not. The devil and his angels in the holy Scriptures have been manifested to us, that for fire everlasting they have been destined. Of them only must amendment be despaired of....Therefore since this rule of Love for you is fixed, that imitating the Father you should love an enemy: for, He says, love your enemies: Luke 6:27 in this precept how would you be exercised, if you had no enemy to suffer? You see then that he profits you somewhat: and let God sparing evil men profit you, so that thou show mercy: because perchance thou too, if you are a good man, out of an evil man hast been made a good man: and if God spared not evil men, not even you would be found to return thanks. May He therefore spare others, that has spared you also. For it were not right, when you had passed through, to close up the way of godliness.

5. Whence then does this man pray, set among evil men, with whose enmities he was being exercised? Why says he, I have been made sad in my exercise, and have been troubled? While he is extending his love so as to love enemies, he has been affected with disgust, being bayed at all around by the enmities of many men, by the frenzy of many and under a sort of human infirmity he has sunk. He has seen himself now begin to be pierced through with an evil suggestion of the devil, to bring on hatred against his enemies: wrestling against hatred in order to perfect love herself, in the very fight, and in the wrestling, he has been troubled. For there is his voice in another Psalm, My eye has been troubled, because of anger. And what follows there? I have waxen old among all mine enemies. As if in storm and waves he were beginning to sink, like Peter. Matthew 14:30 For he does trample the waves of this world, that loves enemies. Christ on the sea was walking fearless, from whose heart there could not by any means be taken away the love of an enemy, who hanging on the Cross did say, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Luke 23:34 Peter too would walk. He as Head, Peter as Body: because, Upon this rock, He says, I will build My Church. Matthew 16:18 He was bidden to walk, and he was walking by the Grace of Him bidding, not by his own strength. But when he saw the wind mighty, he feared; and then he began to sink, being troubled in his exercise. By what mighty wind? By the voice of the enemy, and by the tribulation of the sinner Psalm 54:3. Therefore, in the same manner as he cried out on the waves, Lord, I perish, save me, Matthew 14:30 a similar voice from this man has preceded, Hearken unto me. Wherefore? For what do you suffer? Of what do you groan? I have been made sad in my exercise. To be exercised indeed among evil men You have set me, but too much they have risen up, beyond my powers: calm Thou one troubled, stretch forth a hand to one sinking. For they have brought down upon me iniquity, and in anger they were shadowing me. You have heard of waves and winds: one as it were humbled they were insulting, and he was praying: on every side against him with the roar of insult they were raging, but

he within was calling upon Him whom they did not see....

6. But this man being troubled and made sad was praying, his eye being disturbed as it were on account of anger. But the anger of a brother if it shall have been inveterate is then hatred. Anger does trouble the eye, hatred does quench it: anger is a straw, hatred is a beam. Sometimes you hate and chide an angry man: in you is hatred, in him whom you chide anger: with reason to you is said, Cast out first the beam from your own eye, and so you shall see to cast out the straw from your brother's eye. Matthew 7:5 For that you may know how much difference there is between anger and hatred: day by day men are angry with their sons, show me them that hate their sons! This man being troubled was praying even when made sad, wrestling against all revilings of all revilers; not in order that he might conquer any one of them by giving back reviling, but that he might not hate any one of them. Hence he prays, hence asks: From the voice of the enemy and from the tribulation of the sinner. My heart has been troubled in me Psalm 54:4. This is the same as elsewhere has been said, My eye because of anger has been troubled. And if eye has been troubled, what follows? And fear of death has fallen upon me. Our life is love: if life is love, death is hatred. When a man has begun to fear lest he should hate him that he was loving, it is death he is fearing; and a sharper death, and a more inward death, whereby soul is killed, not body. You minded a man raging against you; what was he to do, against whom your own Lord had given you security, saying, Fear not them that kill the body? Matthew 10:28 He by raging kills body, thou by keeping hatred hast killed soul; and he the body of another, thou your own soul. Fear, therefore, of death has fallen upon me.

7. Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, and darkness has covered me Psalm 54:5. And I have said, He that hates his brother, is in darkness until now. 1 John 2:9, 11 If love is light, hatred is darkness. And what says to himself one set in that weakness and troubled in that exercise? Who shall give me wings as to a dove, and I shall fly and shall rest? Psalm 54:6. Either for death he was wishing, or for solitude he was longing. So long, he says, as this is the work with me, as this command is given me, that I should love enemies, the revilings of these men, increasing and shadowing me, do derange my eye, perturb my sight, penetrate my heart, slay my soul.

I could wish to depart, but weak I am, lest by abiding I should add sins to sins: or at least may I be separated for a little space from mankind, lest my wound suffer from frequent blows, in order that when it has been made whole it may be brought back to the exercise. This is what takes place, brethren, and there arises oftentimes in the mind of the servant of God a longing for solitude, for no other reason than because of the multitude of tribulations and scandals, and he says, Who shall give me wings?

Does he find himself without wings, or rather with bound wings? If they are wanting, be they given; if bound, be they loosed; because even he that looses a bird's wings, either gives, or gives back to it its wings. For it had not as though its own them, wherewith it could not fly. Bound wings make a burden. Who, he says, shall give me wings as to a dove, and I shall fly and shall rest? Shall rest, where? I have said there are two senses here: either, as says the Apostle, To be dissolved and to be with Christ, for it is by far the best thing.

Philippians 1:23 ...Even he that amended cannot be, is yours, either by the fellowship of the human race, or oftentimes by Church Communion; he is within, what will you do? Whither wilt go? Whither separate yourself, in order that these things you may not suffer? But go to him, speak, exhort, coax, threaten, reprove. I have done all things, whatever powers I had I have expended and have drained, nothing I see have I prevailed; all my labour has been spent out, sorrow has remained.

How then shall my heart rest from such men, except I say, Who shall give me wings? As to a dove, however, not as to a raven. A dove seeks a flying away from troubles, but she loses not love. For a dove as a type of love is set forth, and in her the plaint is loved. Nothing is so fond of plaints as a dove: day and night she complains, as though she were set here where she ought to complain. What then says this lover? Revilings of men to bear I am unable, they roar, with frenzy are carried away, are inflamed with indignation, in anger they shadow me; to do good to them I am unable; O that I might rest somewhere, being separated from them in body, not in love; lest in me there should be troubled love itself: with my words and my speech no good can I do them, by praying for them perchance I shall do good.

These words men say, but oftentimes they are so bound, that to fly they are not able. For perchance they are not bound with any birdlime, but are bound by duty. But if they are bound with care and duty, and to leave it are unable, let them say, I was wishing to be dissolved and to be with Christ, for it is by far the best thing: to abide in the flesh is necessary because of you. Philippians 1:23-24 A dove bound back by affection, not by cupidity, was not able to fly away because of duty to be fulfilled, not because of little merit.

Nevertheless a longing in heart must needs be; nor does any man suffer this longing, but he that has begun to walk in that narrow way: Matthew 7:14 in order that he may know that there are not wanting to the Church persecutions, even in this time, when a calm is seen in the Church, at least with respect to those persecutions which our Martyrs have suffered. But there are not wanting persecutions, because a true saying is this, All that will godly to live in Christ, shall suffer persecution. 2 Timothy 3:12 ...

8. Behold I have gone afar fleeing, and have abode in the desert Psalm 54:7. In what desert? Wherever you shall be, there will gather them together other men, the desert with you they will seek, will attach themselves to your life, you can not thrust back the society of brethren: there are mingled with you also evil men; still exercise is your due portion, Behold I have gone afar, and have abode in the desert. In what desert? It is perchance in the conscience, whither no man enters, where no one is with you, where you are and God. For if in the desert, in any place, what will you do with men gathering themselves together? For you will not be able to be separated from mankind, so long as among men you live?

9. I was looking for him that should save me from weakness of mind and tempest Psalm 54:8. Sea there is, tempest there is: nothing for you remains but to cry out, Lord, I perish. Matthew 14:30 Let Him stretch forth hand, who does the waves tread fearlessly, let Him relieve your dread, let Him confirm in Himself your security, let Him speak to you within, and say to you, Give heed to Me, what I have borne: an evil brother perchance you are suffering, or an enemy without art suffering; which of these have I not suffered? There roared without Jews, within a disciple was betraying. There rages therefore tempest, but He does save men from weakness of mind, and tempest. Perchance your ship is being troubled, because He in you is sleeping. The sea was raging, the bark wherein the disciples were sailing was being tossed; but Christ was sleeping: at length it was seen by them that among them was sleeping the Ruler and Creator of winds; they drew near and awoke Christ; Matthew 8:24-25 He commanded the winds, and there was a great calm. With reason then perchance your heart is troubled, because you have forgotten Him on whom you have believed: beyond endurance you are suffering, because it has not come into your mind what for you Christ has borne. If unto your mind comes not Christ, He sleeps: awake Christ, recall faith. For then in you Christ is sleeping, if you have forgotten the sufferings of Christ: then in you Christ is watching, if you have remembered the sufferings of Christ. But when with full heart you shall have considered what He has suffered, will not you too with equanimity endure? And perchance rejoicing, because you have been found in some likeness of the sufferings of your King. When therefore on these things thinking you have begun to be comforted and to rejoice, He has arisen, He has commanded the winds; therefore there is a great

calm. I was looking for Him that should save me from weakness of mind and tempest.

10. Sink, O Lord, and divide the tongues of them Psalm 54:9. He is referring to men troubling him and shadowing him, and he has wished this thing not of anger, brethren. They that have wickedly lifted up themselves, for them it is expedient that they be sunk. They that have wickedly conspired, it is expedient for them that their tongues should be divided: to good let them consent, and let their tongues agree together. But if to one purpose there were a whispering against me, he says, all mine enemies, let them lose their one purpose in evil, divided be the tongues of them, let them not with themselves agree together. Sink, O Lord, and divide the tongues of them. Wherefore sink? Because themselves they have lifted up. Wherefore divide? Because for an evil thing they have united. Recollect that tower of proud men made after the deluge: what said the proud men? Lest we perish in a deluge, let us make a lofty tower. Genesis 11:4 In pride they were thinking themselves to be fortified, they built up a lofty tower, and the Lord divided the tongues of them. Then they began not to understand one another; hence arose the beginning of many tongues. For before, one tongue there was: but one tongue for men agreeing was good, one tongue for humble men was good: but when that gathering together did into a union of pride fall headlong, God spared them; even though He divided the tongues, lest by understanding one another they should make a destructive unity. Through proud men, divided were the tongues; through humble Apostles, united were the tongues. Spirit of pride dispersed tongues, Spirit Holy united tongues. For when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, with the tongues of all men they spoke, Acts 2:4 by all men they were understood: tongues dispersed, into one were united. Therefore if still they rage and are Gentiles, it is expedient for them divided to have their tongues. They would have one tongue; let them come to the Church; because even among the diversity of tongues of flesh, one is the tongue in faith of heart.

11. For I have seen iniquity and contradiction in the city. With reason this man was seeking the desert, for he saw iniquity and contradiction in the city. There is a certain city turbulent: the same it was that was building a tower, the same was confounded and called Babylon, the same through innumerable nations dispersed: Genesis 11:9 thence is gathered the Church into the desert of a good conscience. For he saw contradiction in the city. Christ comes.-- What Christ? you contradict-- Son of God.-- And has God a Son? you contradict-- He was born of a virgin, suffered, rose again.-- And whence is it possible for this to be done? you contradict.-- Give heed at least to the glory of the Cross itself. Now on the brow of kings that Cross has been fixed, over which enemies insulted. The effect has proved the virtue. It has subdued the world, not with steel, but with wood. The wood of the Cross deserving of insults has seemed to enemies, and before the wood itself standing they were wagging the head, and saying, If Son of God He is, let Him come down from the Cross. Matthew 27:40 He was stretching forth His hands to a people unbelieving and contradicting. For if just he is that of faith lives, Romans 1:17 unjust he is that has not faith. By that which here he says iniquity, I understand unbelief. The Lord therefore was seeing in the city iniquity and contradiction, and was stretching forth His hands to a people unbelieving and contradicting: and nevertheless waiting for these same, He was saying, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Luke 23:34 Even now indeed there rage the remnant of that city, even now they contradict. From the brows of all men now He is stretching forth hands to the remnant unbelieving and contradicting.

12. Day and night there will compass it upon the walls thereof iniquity, and labour. Upon the walls thereof; upon the fortifications thereof, holding as it were the heads thereof, the noble men thereof. If that noble man were a Christian, not one would remain a pagan! Oft-times men say, no one would remain a pagan, if he were a Christian. Ofttimes men say, If he too were made a Christian, who would remain a pagan? Because therefore not yet they are made Christians, as if walls they are of that city unbelieving and

contradicting. How long shall these walls stand? Not always shall they stand. The Ark is going around the walls of Jericho: there shall come a time at the seventh going round of the Ark, when all the walls of the city unbelieving and contradicting shall fall. Joshua 6:5 Until it come to pass, this man is being troubled in his exercise; and enduring the remains of men contradicting, he would choose wings for flying away, would choose the rest of the desert. Yea let him continue amid men contradicting, let him endure menaces, drink revilings, and look for Him that will save him from weakness of mind and tempest: let him look upon the Head, the pattern for his life, let him be made calm in hope, even if he is troubled in fact. Day and night there will compass it upon the walls thereof iniquity; and labour in the midst thereof and injustice. And for this reason labour is there, because iniquity is there: because injustice is there, therefore also labour is there. But let them hear him stretching forth hands. Come unto Me, all you that labour. Matthew 11:28 You cry, you contradict, you revile: He on the contrary, Come unto Me, all you that labour, in your pride, and you shall rest in My humility. Learn of Me, He says, for meek I am and humble in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls. Matthew 11:29 For whence do they labour, but because they are not meek and humble in heart? God humble was made, let man blush to be proud.

13. There has not failed from the streets thereof usury and deceit Psalm 54:11. Usury and deceit are not hidden at least, because they are evil things, but in public they rage. For he that in his house does any evil thing, however for his evil thing does blush: In the streets thereof usury and deceit. Money-lending even has a profession, Money-lending also is called a science; a corporation is spoken of, a corporation as if necessary to the state, and of its profession it pays revenue; so entirely indeed in the streets is that which should have been hidden. There is also another usury worse, when you forgive not that which to you is owed; and the eye is disturbed in that verse of the prayer, Forgive us our debts-- as we too forgive our debtors. For what there will you do, when you are going to pray, and coming to that same verse? An insulting word you have heard: you would exact the punishment of condemnation. Do but consent to exact just so much as you have given, thou usurer of injuries! With the fist you have been smitten, slaying you seek, Evil usury! How will you go to prayer? If you shall have left praying, which way will you come round unto the Lord? Behold you will say: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Your Name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, as in heaven so on earth. You will say, Our daily bread give us today. You will come to, Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. Matthew 6:9-12 Even in that evil city let there abound these usuries; let them not enter the walls where the breast is smitten! What will you do? Because there thou and that verse are in the midst? Petitions for you has a heavenly Lawyer composed. He that knew what used there to be done, said to you, Otherwise you shall not obtain. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that if you shall have forgiven men sins, they shall be forgiven you; but if you shall not have forgiven sins unto men, neither will your Father forgive you. Matthew 6:14 Who says this? He that knows what there is being done, in the place whereat you are standing to make request. See how Himself has willed to be your Advocate; Himself your Counsellor, Himself the Assessor of the Father, Himself your Judge has said, Otherwise you shall not receive. What will you do? You will not receive, unless you shall speak; will not receive if falsely you shall speak. Therefore either you must do and speak, or else what you ask you will not earn; because they that this do not do, are in the midst of those evil usuries. Be they engaged therein, that yet do idols either adore or desire: do not thou, O people of God, do not thou, O people of Christ, do not thou the Body of Him the Head! Give heed to the bond of your peace, give heed to the promise of your life. For what does it profit you, that you exact for injuries which you have endured? Does vengeance refresh you? Therefore, over the evil of another shall you rejoice? You have suffered evil; pardon thou; be not ye two.. ..

14. For if an enemy had upbraided me Psalm 54:12. And indeed above he was troubled in his exercise by the voice of the enemy and by the tribulation of the sinner, perhaps being placed in that city, that proud city that was building a tower, which was sunk, that divided might be the tongues: give heed to his inward groaning because of perils from false brethren. For if an enemy had upbraided me, I would have undergone it assuredly, and if he that did hate me had over me spoken great words, that is, through pride had on me trampled, did magnify himself above me, did threaten me all in his power: I would hide myself assuredly from him. From him that is abroad, you would hide yourself where? Amid those that are within. But now see whether anything else remains, but that thou seek solitude. But you, he says, man of one mind, my guide and my friend Psalm 54:13. Perchance sometimes good counsel you have given, perchance sometimes you have gone before me, and some wholesome advice you have given me: in the Church of God together we have been. But you,...that together with me took sweet morsels Psalm 54:14. What are the sweet morsels? Not all they that are present know: but let them not be soured that do know, in order that they may be able to say to them that as yet know not: Taste ye and see, how sweet is the Lord. In the House of God we have walked with consent. Whence then dissension? Thou that wast within, hast become one without. He has walked with me in the House of God with consent: another house has he set up against the House of God. Wherefore has that been forsaken, wherein we have walked with consent? wherefore has that been deserted, wherein together we did take sweet morsels?

15. Let there come death upon them, and let them go down unto Hell living Psalm 54:15. How has he cited and has made us call to mind that first beginning of schism, when in that first people of the Jews certain proud men separated themselves, and would without have sacrificed? A new death upon them came: the earth opened herself, and swallowed them up alive. Numbers 16:31 Let there come, he says, death upon them, and let them go down into Hell living. What is living? knowing that they are perishing, and yet perishing. Hear of living men perishing and being swallowed up in a gulf of the earth, that is, being swallowed up in the voraciousness of earthly desires. You say to a man, What ails you, brother? Brethren we are, one God we invoke, in one Christ we believe, one Gospel we hear, one Psalm we sing, one Amen we respond, one Hallelujah we sound, one Easter we celebrate: why are you without and I am within? Ofttimes one straitened, and perceiving how true are the charges which are made, says, May God requite our ancestors! Therefore alive he perishes. In the next place you continue and thus givest warning. At least let the evil of separation stand alone, why do you adjoin thereto that of rebaptism? Acknowledge in me what you have; and if you hate me, spare thou Christ in me. And this evil thing does frequently and very greatly displease them....Because they themselves have the Scriptures in their hands, and know well by daily reading how the Church Catholic through the whole world is so spread, that in a word all contradiction is void; and that there cannot be found any support for their schism they know well: therefore unto the lower places living they go down, because the evil which they do, they know evil to be. But the former a fire of divine indignation consumed. For being inflamed with desire of strife, from their evil leaders they would not depart. There came upon fire a fire, upon the heat of dissension the heat of consuming. For naughtiness is in their lodgings, in the midst of them. In their lodgings, wherein they tarry and pass away. For here they are not always to be: and nevertheless in defence of a temporal animosity they are fighting so fiercely. In their lodgings is iniquity; in the midst of them is iniquity: no part of them is so near the middle of them as their heart.

16. Therefore to the Lord I have cried out Psalm 54:16. The Body of Christ and the oneness of Christ in anguish, in weariness, in uneasiness, in the tribulation of its exercise, that One Man, Oneness in One Body set, when He was wearying His soul in crying out from the ends of the earth; says, From the ends of the earth to You I have cried out, when My heart was being vexed. Himself one, but a oneness that One!

And Himself one, not in one place one, but from the ends of the earth is crying as one. How from the ends of the earth should there cry one, except there were one? I to the Lord have cried out. Rightly do thou cry out to the Lord, cry not to Donatus: lest for you he be instead of the Lord a lord, that under the Lord would not be a fellow-servant.

17. In evening, in morning, at noon-day I will recount and will tell forth, and He shall hearken to my voice Psalm 54:18. Do thou proclaim glad tidings, keep not secret that which you have received, in evening of things gone by, in morning of things to be, at noonday of things ever to be. Therefore, to that which he says in evening belongs that which he recounts: to that which he says, in morning, belongs that which he tells forth: to that which he says at noon-day, belongs that wherein his voice is hearkened to. For the end is at noon-day; that is to say, whence there is no going down unto setting. For at noon-day there is light full high, the splendour of wisdom, the fervour of love. In evening and in morning and at noon-day. In evening, the Lord on the Cross; in morning, in Resurrection; at noon-day, in Ascension. I will recount in evening the patience of Him dying, I will tell forth in morning the life of Him rising, I will pray that He hearken at noon-day sitting at the right hand of the Father. He shall hearken to my voice, That intercedes for us. Romans 8:34 How great is the security of this man. How great the consolation, how great the refuge from weakness of mind and tempest, against evil men, against ungodly men both without and within, and in the case of those that are without though they had been within.

18. Therefore, my Brethren, those that in the very congregation of these walls ye see to be rebellious men, proud, seeking their own, lifted up; not having a zeal for God that is chaste, sound, quiet, but ascribing to themselves much; ready for dissension, but not finding opportunity; are the very chaff of the Lord's floor. Matthew 3:12 From hence these few men the wind of pride has dislodged: the whole floor will not fly, save when He at the last shall winnow. But what shall we do, save with this man sing, with this man pray, with this man mourn and say securely, He shall redeem in peace my soul Psalm 54:18.

Against them that love not peace: in peace He shall redeem my soul. Because with those that hated peace I was peace-making. He shall redeem in peace my soul, from those that draw near to me. For from those that are afar from me, it is an easy case: not so soon does he deceive me that says, Come, pray to an idol: he is very far from me. Are you a Christian? A Christian, he says. Out of a neighbouring place he is my adversary, he is at hand. He shall redeem in peace my soul, from those that draw near to me: for in many things they were with me.

Wherefore have I said, draw near to me? Because in many things they were with me. In this verse two propositions occur. In many things they were with me. Baptism we had both of us, in that they were with me: the Gospel we both read, they were in that with me: the festivals of martyrs we celebrated, they were there with me: Easter's solemnity we attended, they were there with me. But not entirely with me: in schism not with me, in heresy not with me. In many things with me, in few things not with me.

But in these few things wherein not with me, there is no profit to them of the many things wherein they were with me. For see, brethren, how many things has recounted the Apostle Paul: one thing, he has said, if it shall have been wanting, in vain are those things. If with the tongues of men and of angels I shall speak, he says, if I have all prophecy, and all faith, and all knowledge; if mountains I shall remove, if I shall bestow all my goods upon the poor, if I shall deliver my body even so that it be burned. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 How many things he has enumerated!

To all these many things let there be wanting one thing, charity; the former in number are more, the latter in weight is greater. Therefore in all Sacraments they are with me, in one charity not with me: In many things they were with me. Again, by a different expression: For in many things they were with me. They that themselves have separated from me, with me they were, not in few things, but in many things. For throughout the whole world few are the grains, many are the chaffs.

Therefore he says what? In chaff with me they were, in wheat with me they were not. And the chaff is nearly related to the wheat, from one seed it goes forth, in one field is rooted, with one rain is nourished, the same reaper it suffers, the same threshing sustains, the same winnowing awaits, but not into one barn enters.

19. God will hear me, and He shall humble them That is before ages Psalm 54:19. For they rely on some leader or other of theirs that has begun but yesterday. He shall humble them That is before ages. For even if with reference to time Christ is of Mary the Virgin, nevertheless before ages: In the beginning He is the Word and the Word with God, and the Word God. John 1:1 He shall humble them That is before ages. For to them is no changing: of them I speak to whom is no changing. He knew of some to persevere, and in the perseverance of their own wickedness to die. For we see them, and to them is no changing: they that die in that same perverseness, in that same schism, to them is no changing. God shall humble them, shall humble them in damnation, because they are exalted in dissension. To them is no changing, because they are not changed for the better, but for the worse: neither while they are here, nor in the resurrection. For all we shall rise again, but not all shall be changed. Wherefore? Because 'To them is no changing: and they have not feared God....

20. He stretches forth His hand in requiting Psalm 54:20. They have polluted His Testament. Read the testament which they have polluted: In your seed shall be blessed all nations. Thou against these words of the Testator sayest what? The Africa of holy Donatus has alone deserved this grace, in him has remained the Church of Christ. Say at least the Church of Donatus. Wherefore do you add, of Christ? Of whom it is said, In your seed shall be blessed all nations. After Donatus will you go? Set aside Christ, and then secede. See therefore what follows: They have polluted His Testament. What Testament? To Abraham have been spoken the promises, and to his seed. The Apostle says, Nevertheless, a man's testament confirmed no one makes void, or super-adds to: to Abraham have been spoken the promises, and to his seed. He says not, And to seeds, as if in many; but as if in one, And to your Seed, which is Christ. Galatians 3:15-16 In this Christ, therefore, what Testament has been promised? In your seed shall be blessed all nations. Thou that hast given up the unity of all nations, and in a part hast remained, hast polluted His Testament....

21. And His heart has drawn near Psalm 54:22. Of whom do we understand it, except of Him, by the anger of whom they have been divided? How has his heart drawn near? In such sort, that we may understand His will. For by heretics has been vindicated the Catholic Church, and by those that think evil have been proved those that think well. For many things lay hid in the Scriptures: and when heretics had been cut off, with questions they troubled the Church of God: then those things were opened which lay hid, and the will of God was understood. Thence is said in another Psalm, In order that they might be excluded that have been proved with silver. For let them be excluded, He has said, let them come forth, let them appear. Whence even in silver-working men are called excluders, that is, pressers out of form from the sort of confusion of the lump. Therefore many men that could understand and expound the Scriptures very excellently, were hidden among the people of God: but they did not declare the solution of difficult questions, when no reviler again urged them. For was the Trinity perfectly treated of before the Arians

sarled thereat? Was repentance perfectly treated of before the Novatians opposed? So not perfectly of Baptism was it treated, before rebaptizers removed outside contradicted; nor of the very oneness of Christ were the doctrines clearly stated which have been stated, save after that this separation began to press upon the weak: in order that they that knew how to treat of and solve these questions (lest the weak should perish vexed with the questions of the ungodly), by their discourses and disputations should bring out unto open day the dark things of the Law... This obscure sense see in what manner the Apostle brings out into light; It is needful, he says, that also heresies there be, in order that men proved may be made manifest among you. 1 Corinthians 11:19 What is men proved? Proved with silver, proved with the word. What is may be made manifest? May be brought out. Wherefore this? Because of heretics. So therefore these also have been divided because of the anger of His countenance, and His heart has drawn near.

22. His discourses have been softened above oil, and themselves are darts Psalm 54:21. For certain things in the Scriptures were seeming hard, while they were obscure; when explained, they have been softened. For even the first heresy in the disciples of Christ, as it were from the hardness of His discourse arose. For when He said, Except a man shall have eaten My flesh and shall have drunk My blood, he shall not have life in himself: they, not understanding, said to one another, Hard is this discourse, who can hear it? Saying that, Hard is this discourse, they separated from Him: He remained with the others, the twelve. When they had intimated to Him, that by His discourse they had been scandalized, Will ye also, He says, choose to go? Then Peter: You have the Word of life eternal: to whom shall we go? Attend, we beseech you, and you little ones learn godliness. Did Peter by any means at that time understand the secret of that discourse of the Lord? Not yet he understood: but that good were the words which he understood not, godly he believed. Therefore if hard is a discourse, and not yet is understood, be it hard to an ungodly man, but to you be it by godliness softened: for whenever it is solved, it both will become for you oil, and even unto the bones it will penetrate.

23. Furthermore, just as Peter, after their having been scandalized by the hardness, as they thought, of the discourse of the Lord, even then said, to whom shall we go? so he has added, Cast upon the Lord your care, and He shall Himself nourish you up Psalm 54:22. A little one you are, not yet you understand the secret things of words: perchance from you the bread is hidden, and as yet with milk you must be fed: 1 Corinthians 3:1 be not angry with the breasts: they will make you fit for the table, for which now little fitted you are. Behold by the division of heretics many hard things have been softened: His discourses that were hard have been softened above oil, and they are themselves darts. They have armed men preaching the Gospel: and the very discourses are aimed at the breast of every one that hears, by men instant in season and out of season: by those discourses, by those words, as though by arrows, hearts of men unto the love of peace are smitten. Hard they were, and soft they have been made. Being softened they have not lost their virtue, but into darts have been converted.... Upon the Lord cast yourself. Behold you will cast yourself upon the Lord, let no one put himself in the place of the Lord. Cast upon the Lord your care....

24. But to the others what? But You, O God, shall bring them down unto the pit of corruption Psalm 54:23. The pit of corruption is the darkness of sinking under. When blind leads blind, they both fall into a ditch. Matthew 15:14 God brings them down into the pit of corruption, not because He is the author of their own guilt, but because He is Himself the judge of their iniquities. For God has delivered them unto the desires of their heart. Romans 1:24 For they have loved darkness, and not light; they have loved blindness, and not seeing. For behold the Lord Jesus has shone out to the whole world, let them sing in unity with the whole world: For there is not one that can hide himself from the heat of Him. But they passing over from the whole to a part, from the body to a wound, from life to a limb cut off, shall meet with what, but going

into the pit of corruption?

25. Men of bloods and of deceitfulness. Men of bloods, because of slayings he calls them: and O that they were corporal and not spiritual slayings. For blood from the flesh going forth, is seen and shuddered at: who sees the blood of the heart in a man rebaptized? Those deaths require other eyes. Although even about these visible deaths Circumcelliones armed everywhere remain not quiet. And if we think of these visible deaths, there are men of bloods. Give heed to the armed man, whether he is a man of peace and not of blood. If at least a club only he were to carry, well; but he carries a sling, carries an axe, carries stones, carries lances; and carrying these weapons, wherever they may they scour, for the blood of innocent men they thirst. Therefore even with regard to these visible deaths there are men of bloods. But even of them let us say, O that such deaths alone they perpetrated, and souls they slew not. These that are men of bloods and of deceit, let them not suppose that we thus wrongly understand men of bloods, of them that kill souls: they themselves of their Maximianists have so understood it. For when they condemned them, in the very sentence of their Council they have set down these words: Swift are the feet of them to shed the blood (of the proclaimers), tribulation and calamity are in the ways of them, and the way of peace they have not known. This of the Maximianists they have said. But I ask of them, when have the Maximianists shed the body's blood; not because they too would not shed, if there were so great a multitude as could shed, but because of the fear in their minority rather they have suffered somewhat from others, than have themselves at any time done any such thing. Therefore I question the Donatist and say: In your Council you have set down of the Maximianists, Swift are the feet of them to shed blood. Show me one of whom the Maximianists have hurt so much as a finger! What other thing to me is he to answer, than that which I say? They that have separated themselves from unity, and who slay souls by leading astray, spiritually, not carnally, do shed blood. Very well you have expounded, but in your exposition acknowledge their own deeds. Men of bloods and of deceitfulness. In guile is deceitfulness, in dissimulation, in seduction. What therefore of those very men that have been divided because of the anger of His countenance? They are themselves men of bloods and of deceit.

26. But of them he says what? They shall not halve their days. What is, They shall not halve their days? They shall not make progress as much as they think: within the time which they expect, they shall perish. For he is that partridge, whereof has been said, In the half of his days they shall leave him, and in his last days he shall be an unwise one. Jeremiah 17:11 They make progress, but for a time. For what says the Apostle? But evil men and seducers shall make progress for the worse, themselves erring, and other men into error driving. 2 Timothy 3:13 But a blind man leading a blind man, together into a ditch they fall. Matthew 15:14 Deservedly they fall into the pit of corruption. What therefore says he? They shall make progress for the worse: not however for long. For a little before he has said, But further they shall not make progress: 2 Timothy 3:9 that is, shall not halve their days. Let the Apostle proceed and tell wherefore: For the madness of them shall be manifest to all men, as also was that of the others. But I in You will hope, O Lord. But deservedly they shall not halve their days, because in man they have hoped. But I from days temporal have reached unto day eternal. Wherefore? Because in You I have hoped, O Lord.

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