

Exposition on Psalm 72

by St. Augustine

The sermon explains how Psalm 72 is a prophecy about Christ, the true Solomon, who will bring peace and justice to the world.

Scripture: Psalm 71:1, Matthew 5:3, John 10:16, Romans 5:10, Galatians 3:16

Topics: "Christ's Kingdom", "God's Justice"

Description

St. Augustine preaches about the Psalms, interpreting them to pertain to the Lord Christ rather than King Solomon, emphasizing Christ as the true Peace-maker who reconciles us to God through His sacrifice. The Psalms speak of Christ's judgment and justice, highlighting the importance of humility and obedience in God's people. The imagery of mountains and hills symbolizes sanctity and obedience in the Church, urging believers to seek reconciliation and righteousness. The Psalms also foretell the spread of Christ's kingdom to all nations, the adoration of kings, and the redemption of souls from sins and iniquity through His grace.

Transcript

1. For Salomon indeed this Psalm's title is fore-noted: but things are spoken of therein which could not apply to that Salomon king of Israel after the flesh, according to those things which holy Scripture speaks concerning him: but they can most pertinently apply to the Lord Christ. Whence it is perceived, that the very word Salomon is used in a figurative sense, so that in him Christ is to be taken. For Salomon is interpreted peace-maker: and on this account such a word to Him most truly and excellently does apply, through Whom, the Mediator, having received remission of sins, we that were enemies are reconciled to God. For when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son. Romans 5:10 The Same is Himself that Peace-maker....Since then we have found out the true Salomon, that is, the true Peace-maker: next let us observe what the Psalm does teach concerning Him.

2. O God, Your judgment to the King give Thou, and Your justice to the King's Son Psalm 71:1. The Lord Himself in the Gospel says, The Father judges not any one, but all judgment He has given to the Son: John 5:22 this is then, O God, Your judgment to the King give Thou. He that is King is also the Son of the King: because God the Father also is certainly King. Thus it has been written, that the King made a marriage for His Son. Matthew 22:2 But after the manner of Scripture the same thing is repeated. For that which he has said in, Your judgment; the same he has otherwise expressed in, Your justice: and that which he has said in, the King, the same he has otherwise expressed in, to the King's Son....But these

repetitions do much commend the divine sayings, whether the same words, or whether in other words the same sense be repeated: and they are mostly found in the Psalms, and in the kind of discourse whereby the mind's affection is to be awakened.

3. Next there follows, To judge Your people in justice, and Your poor in judgment Psalm 71:2. For what purpose the royal Father gave to the royal Son His judgment and His justice is sufficiently shown when he says, To judge Your people in justice; that is, for the purpose of judging Your people. Such an idiom is found in Salomon: The Proverbs of Salomon, son of David, to know wisdom and discipline: Proverbs 1:1 that is, the Proverbs of Salomon, for the purpose of knowing wisdom and discipline. So, Your judgment give Thou, to judge Your people: that is, Your judgment give Thou for the purpose of judging Your people. But that which he says before in, Your people, the same he says afterwards in, Your poor: and that which he says before in, in justice; the same afterward in, in judgment: according to that manner of repetition. Whereby indeed he shows, that the people of God ought to be poor, that is, not proud, but humble. For, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Matthew 5:3 In which poverty even blessed Job was poor even before he had lost those great earthly riches. Which thing for this reason I thought should be mentioned, because there are certain persons who are more ready to distribute all their goods to the poor, than themselves to become the poor of God. For they are puffed up with boasting wherein they think their living well should be ascribed to themselves, not to the grace of God: and therefore now they do not even live well, however great the good works which they seem to do....

4. But seeing that he has changed the order of the words (though he had first said, O God, Your judgment to the King give Thou, and Your justice to the King's Son, putting judgment first, then justice), and has put justice first, then judgment, saying, To judge Your people in justice, and Your poor in judgment: he does more clearly show that he has called judgment justice, proving that there is no difference made by the order in which the word is placed, because it signifies the same thing. For it is usual to say wrong judgment of that which is unjust: but justice iniquitous or unjust we are not wont to speak of. For if wrong and unjust it be; no longer must it be called justice. Again, by putting down judgment and repeating it under the name of justice, or by putting down justice and repeating it under the name of judgment, he clearly shows that he specially names that judgment which is wont to be put instead of justice, that is, that which cannot be understood of giving an evil judgment. For in the place where He says, Judge not according to persons, but right judgment judge ye; John 7:24 He shows that there may be a wrong judgment, when He says, right judgment judge ye: lastly, the one He does forbid, the other He does enjoin. But when without any addition He speaks of judgment, He would at once have just judgment to be understood: as is that which He says, You forsake the weightier matters of the Law, mercy and judgment. Matthew 23:23 That also which Jeremiah says is, making his riches not with judgment. Jeremiah 17:11 He says not, making his riches by wrong or unjust judgment, or not with judgment right or just, but not with judgment: calling not anything judgment but what is right and just.

5. Let the mountains bear peace to the people, and the hills justice Psalm 71:3. The mountains are the greater, the hills the less. These are without doubt those which another Psalm has, little with great. For those mountains did exult like rams, and those hills like lambs of the sheep, at the departure of Israel out of Egypt, that is, at the deliverance of the people of God from this world's servitude. Those then that are eminent in the Church for passing sanctity, are the mountains, who are meet to teach other men also, 2 Timothy 2:2 by so speaking as that they may be faithfully taught, by so living as that they may imitate them to their profit: but the hills are they that follow the excellence of the former by their own obedience. Why then the mountains peace: and the hills justice? Would there perchance have been no difference, even if it

had been said thus, Let the mountains bear justice to the people and the hills peace? For to both justice, and to both peace is necessary: and it may be that under another name justice herself may have been called peace. For this is true peace, not such as unjust men make among them. Or rather with a distinction not to be overlooked must that be understood which he says, the mountains peace, and the hills justice? For men excelling in the Church ought to counsel for peace with watchful care; lest for the sake of their own distinctions by acting proudly they make schisms and dissever the bond of union. But let the hills so follow them by imitation and obedience, that they prefer Christ to them: lest being led astray by the empty authority of evil mountains (for they seem to excel), they tear themselves away from the Unity of Christ....

6. Thus also most pertinently may be understood, let the mountains bear peace to the people, namely, that we understand the peace to consist in the reconciliation whereby we are reconciled to God: for the mountains receive this for His people....Let the mountains, therefore, receive peace for the people, and the hills justice: so that in this manner, both being at one, there may come to pass that which has been written, justice and peace have kissed one another. But that which other copies have, let the mountains receive peace for the people, and let the hills: I think must be understood of all sorts of preaching of Gospel peace, whether those that go before, or those that follow after. But in these copies this follows, in justice He shall judge the poor of the people. But those copies are more approved of which have that which we have expounded above, let the mountains bear peace to the people, and the hills justice. But some have, to Your people; some have not to Your, but only to the people.

7. He shall judge the poor of the people, and shall save the sons of the poor Psalm 71:4. The poor and the sons of the poor seem to me to be the very same, as the same city is Sion and the daughter of Sion. But if it is to be understood with a distinction, the poor we take to be the mountains, but the sons of the poor the hills: for instance, Prophets and Apostles, the poor, but the sons of them, that is, those that profit under their authority, the sons of the poor. But that which has been said above, shall judge; and afterwards, shall save; is as it were a sort of exposition in what manner He shall judge. For to this end He shall judge, that He may save, that is, may sever from those that are to be destroyed and condemned, those to whom He gives salvation ready to be revealed at the last time. 1 Peter 1:5 For by such men to Him is said, Destroy not with ungodly men my soul: and, Judge me, O God, and sever my cause from the nation unholy. We must observe also that he says not, He shall judge the poor people, but, the poor of the people. For above when he had said, to judge Your people in justice and Your poor in judgment, the same he called the people of God as His poor, that is, only the good and those that belong to the right hand side. But because in this world those for the right and those for the left feed together, who, like lambs and goats at the last are to be put asunder; Matthew 25:32 the whole, as it is mingled together, he has called by the name of the People. And because even here he puts judgment in a good sense, that is, for the purpose of saving: therefore he says, He shall judge the poor of the people, that is, shall sever for salvation those that are poor among the people. And He shall humble the false-accuser. No false-accuser can be more suitably recognised here than the devil. False accusation is his business. Does Job worship God gratis? Job 1:9 But the Lord Jesus does humble him, by His grace aiding His own, in order that they may worship God gratis, that is, may take delight in the Lord. He humbled him also thus; because when in Him the devil, that is, the prince of this world, had found nothing, John 14:30 he slew Him by the false accusations of the Jews, whom the false-accuser made use of as his vessels, working in the sons of unbelief. Ephesians 2:2 ...

8. And He shall endure to the sun, or, shall endure with the sun Psalm 71:5. For thus some of our writers have thought would be more exactly translated that which in the Greek is συμπαραμεινε . But if in Latin it

could have been expressed in one word, it must have been expressed by *compermanebit*: however, because in Latin the word cannot be expressed, in order that the sense at least might be translated, it has been expressed by, He shall endure with the sun. For He shall co-endure to the sun is nothing else but, He shall endure with the sun.

But what great matter is it for Him to endure with the sun, through whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made, John 1:3 save that this prophecy has been sent before for the sake of those who think that the religion of the Christian name up to a particular time in this world will live, and afterwards will be no more? He shall endure therefore with the sun, so long as the sun rises and sets, that is, so long as these times revolve, there shall not be wanting the Church of God, that is, Christ's body on earth.

But that which he adds, and before the moon, generations of generations: he might have expressed by, and before the sun, that is, both with the sun and before the sun: which would have been understood by both with times and before times. That then which goes before time is eternal: and that is truly to be held eternal which by no time is changed, as, in the beginning was the Word. John 1:1 But by the moon he has chosen rather to intimate the waxings and wanings of things mortal.

Lastly, when he had said, before the moon, wishing in a manner to explain for what purpose he inserted the moon, generations, he says, of generations. As though he were saying, before the moon, that is, before the generations of generations which pass away in the departure and succession of things mortal, like the lunar wanings and waxings. And thus what is better to be understood by His enduring before the moon, than that He takes precedence of all mortal things by immortality?

Which also as follows may not impertinently be taken, that whereas now, having humbled the false-accuser, He sits at the right hand of the Father, this is to endure with the sun. For the brightness of the eternal glory is understood to be the Son: Hebrews 1:3 as though the Sun were the Father, and the Brightness of Him His Son. But as these things may be spoken of the invisible Substance of the Creator, not as of that visible creation wherein are bodies celestial, of which bright bodies the sun has the pre-eminence, from which this similitude has been drawn: just as they are drawn even from things earthly, to wit, stone, lion, lamb, man having two sons, and the like: therefore having humbled the false-accuser, He endures with the sun: because having vanquished the devil by the Resurrection, He sits at the right hand of the Father, Mark 16:19 where He dies no more, and death no longer over Him shall have dominion.

Romans 6:9 This too is before the moon, as though the First-born from the dead were going before the Church, which is passing on in the departure and succession of mortals. These are the generations of generations. Or perchance it is because generations are those whereby we are begotten mortally; but generations of generations those whereby we are begotten again immortally. And such is the Church which He went before, in order that He might endure before the moon, being the First-born of the dead.

To be sure, that which is in the Greek γενεας γενεων, some have interpreted, not generations, but, of a generation of generations: because γενεας is of ambiguous case in Greek, and whether it be the genitive singular της γενεας accusative plural τας γενεας, that is, the generations, does not clearly appear, except that deservedly that sense has been preferred wherein, as though explaining what he had called the moon, he added in continuation, generations of generations.

9. And He shall come down like rain into a fleece, and like drops distilling upon the earth Psalm 71:6. He has called to our minds and admonished us, that what was done by Gedeon the Judge, in Christ has its end. For he asked a sign of the Lord, that a fleece laid on the floor should alone be rained upon, and the floor should be dry; and again, the fleece alone should be dry, and the floor should be rained upon; and so it came to pass. Judges 6:36-38 Which thing signified, that, being as it were on a floor in the midst of the whole round world, the dry fleece was the former people Israel. The same Christ therefore Himself came down like rain upon a fleece, when yet the floor was dry: whence also He said, I am not sent but to the sheep which were lost of the house of Israel. Matthew 15:24 There He chose out a Mother by whom to receive the form of a servant, wherein He was to appear to men: there the disciples, to whom He gave this same injunction, saying, Into the way of the nations go ye not away, and into the cities of the Samaritans enter ye not: go ye first to the sheep which are lost of the house of Israel. Matthew 10:5-6 When He says, go ye first to them, He shows also that hereafter, when at length the floor was to be rained upon, they would go to other sheep also, which were not of the old people Israel, concerning whom He says, I have other sheep which are not of this fold, it behooves Me to bring in them also, that there may be one flock and one Shepherd. John 10:16 Hence also the Apostle: for I say, he says, that Christ was a minister of the Circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers. Romans 15:8 Thus rain came down upon the fleece, the floor being yet dry. But inasmuch as he continues, but that the nations should glorify God for His mercy: Romans 15:9 that when the time came on, that should be fulfilled which by the Prophet He says, a people whom I have not known has served Me, in the hearkening of the ear it has obeyed Me: we now see, that of the grace of Christ the nation of the Jews has remained dry, and the whole round world through all nations is being rained upon by clouds full of Christian grace. For by another word he has indicated the same rain, saying, drops distilling: no longer upon the fleece, but upon the earth. For what else is rain but drops distilling? But that the above nation under the name of a fleece is signified, I think is either because they were to be stripped of the authority of teaching, just as a sheep is stripped of its skin; or because in a secret place He was hiding that same rain, which He willed not should be preached to uncircumcision, that is, be revealed to uncircumcised nations.

10. There shall arise in His days justice and abundance of peace, until the moon be taken away Psalm 71:7. The expression tollatur some have interpreted by be taken away, but others by be exalted, translating one Greek word, which is there used, good. But they who have said, be removed, and they who have said, be taken away, do not so very much differ. For by the expression, be removed, custom does teach us that there should be rather implied, that a thing is taken away and is no more, than that it is raised to a higher place: but be taken away can be understood in no other way at all, than that a thing is destroyed: that is, it is no more: but by be exalted, only that it is raised to a higher place. Which indeed when it is put in a bad sense is wont to signify pride: as is the passage, In your wisdom be not exalted. But in a good sense it belongs to a more exceeding honour, as, for instance, when anything is being raised; as is, In the nights exalt ye your hands unto holy places, and bless ye the Lord. Here then if we have understood the expression, be removed, what will be, until the moon be removed, but that it be so dealt with that it be no more? For perchance he willed this also to be perceived, that mortality is to be no longer, when the last enemy shall be destroyed, death: 1 Corinthians 15:26 so that abundance of peace may be brought down so far as that nothing may withstand the felicity of the blessed from the infirmity of mortality: which will come to pass in that age, of which we have the faithful promise of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, concerning which it is said, There shall arise in His days justice and abundance of peace: until, death being utterly overcome and destroyed, all mortality be consumed. But if under the term moon, not the mortality of the flesh through which the Church is now passing, but the Church Herself in general has been signified, which is to endure for everlasting, being delivered from this mortality, thus must be taken

the expression, There shall arise in His days justice and abundance of peace, until the moon be exalted; as though it were said, There shall arise in His days justice, to conquer the contradiction and rebellion of the flesh, and whereby there may be made a peace so increasing and abundant, until the moon be exalted, that is, until the Church be lifted up, through the glory of the Resurrection to reign with Him, who went before Her in this glory, the first-born of the dead, that He might sit at the right hand of the Father; Mark 16:19 thus with the sun enduring before the moon, in the place whereunto hereafter was to be exalted the moon also.

11. And He shall be Lord from sea even unto sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the round world Psalm 71:8: He to wit concerning whom he had said, There shall arise in His days justice and abundance of peace, until the moon be exalted. If the Church here is properly signified under the term moon, in continuation he showed how widely that same Church He was going to spread abroad, when He added, and He shall be Lord from sea even unto sea. For the land is encircled by a great sea which is called the Ocean: from which there flows in some small part in the midst of the lands, and makes those seas known to us, which are frequented by ships. Again, in from sea even unto sea He has said, that from any one end of the earth even unto any other end, He would be Lord, whose name and power in the whole world were to be preached and to prevail exceedingly. To which, that there might not be understood in any other manner, from sea even unto sea: He immediately added, and from the river even unto the ends of the round world. Therefore that which He says in even unto the ends of the round world, the same He had said before in from sea even unto sea. But in that which now He says, from the river, He has evidently expressed that He willed Christ to publish at length His power from that place from whence also He began to choose His disciples, to wit from the river Jordan, where upon the Lord, on His baptism, when the Holy Ghost descended, there sounded a voice from Heaven, This is My beloved Son. Matthew 3:17 From this place then His doctrine and the authority of the heavenly ministry setting out, is enlarged even unto the ends of the round world, when there is preached the Gospel of the kingdom in the whole world, for a testimony unto all nations: and then shall come the end. Matthew 24:14

12. In His presence shall fall down the Ethiopians, and His enemies shall lick the earth Psalm 71:9. By the Ethiopians, as by a part the whole, He has signified all nations, selecting that nation to mention especially by name, which is at the ends of the earth. By in His presence shall fall down has been signified, shall adore Him. And because there were to be schisms in various quarters of the world, which would be jealous of the Church Catholic spread abroad in the whole round world, and again those same schisms dividing themselves into the names of men, and by loving the men under whose authority they had been rent, opposing themselves to the glory of Christ which is throughout all lands; so when He had said, in His presence shall fall down the Ethiopians, He added, and His enemies shall lick the earth: that is, shall love men, so that they shall be jealous of the glory of Christ, to whom has been said, Be exalted above the Heavens, O God, and above all the earth Your glory. For man earned to hear, Earth you are, and unto earth you shall go. Genesis 3:19 By licking this earth, that is, being delighted with the vainly talking authority of such men, by loving them, and by counting them for the most pleasing of men, they gainsay the divine sayings, whereby the Catholic Church has been foretold, not as to be in any particular quarter of the world, as certain schisms are, but in the whole universe by bearing fruit and growing so as to attain even unto the very Ethiopians, to wit, the remotest and foulest of mankind.

13. The kings of Tharsis and the isles shall offer gifts, the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall lead presents Psalm 71:10. This no longer requires an expounder but a thinker; yea it does thrust itself upon the sight not only of rejoicing believers, but also of groaning unbelievers-- except perchance we must

inquire why there has been said, shall lead presents. For there are wont to be led those things which can walk. For could it by any means have been spoken with reference to the sacrifice of victims? Far be it that such righteousness should arise in His days. But those gifts which have been foretold as to be led, seem to me to signify men, whom into the fellowship of the Church of Christ the authority of kings does lead: although even persecuting kings have led gifts, knowing not what they did, in sacrificing the holy Martyrs. And there shall adore Him all kings of the earth, all nations shall serve Him Psalm 71:11.

14. But while he is explaining the reasons why so great honour is paid Him by kings, and He is served of all nations: because He has delivered, he says, the needy man from the mighty, and the poor man, to whom was no helper Psalm 71:12. This needy and poor man is the people of men believing in Him. In this people are also kings adoring Him. For they do not disdain to be needy and poor, that is, humbly confessing sins, and needing the glory of God Romans 3:23 and the grace of God, in order that this King, Son of the King, may deliver them from the mighty one. For this same mighty one is he who above was called the Slanderer: whom mighty to subdue men to himself, and to hold them bound in captivity, not his virtue did make, but men's sins. The same is himself also called strong; therefore here mighty also. But He that has humbled the slanderer and has entered into the house of the strong man to bind him and to spoil his vessels, Matthew 12:29 He has delivered the needy and the poor man. For this neither the virtue of any one could accomplish, nor any just man, nor any Angel. When then there was no helper, by His coming He saved them Himself.

15. But it might occur to one; if because of sins man was held by the devil, have sins pleased Christ, who saved the needy man from the mighty? Far be it. But He it is that shall spare the helpless and poor man Psalm 71:13: that is, shall remit sins to the man, humble and not trusting in his own merits, or hoping for salvation because of his own virtue, but needing the grace of his Saviour. But when he has added, and the souls of the poor He shall save: he has recommended to our notice both the aids of grace; both that which is for the remission of sins, when he says, He shall spare the poor and needy man; and that which does consist in the imparting of righteousness, when he has added, and the souls of the poor He shall save. For no one is meet of himself for salvation (which salvation is perfect righteousness), unless God's grace aid: because the fullness of the law is nought but love, which does not exist in us of ourselves, but is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given unto us. Romans 5:5

16. From usuries and iniquity He shall redeem the souls of them Psalm 71:14. What are these usuries but sins, which are also called debts? Matthew 6:12 But I think they have been called usuries, because more of ill is found in the punishments than has been committed in the sins. For, for example's sake, while a man-slayer kills only the body of a man, but can no wise hurt the soul; of himself both soul and body is destroyed in hell. Because of such despisers of present commandment and deriders of future punishment has been said, I coming would have exacted with usuries, Matthew 25:27 from these usuries are redeemed the souls of the poor by that blood which has been shed for the remission of sins. He shall redeem, I say, from usuries, by remitting sins which owed larger punishments: but He shall redeem from iniquity, by helping them by grace even to do righteousness. Therefore the same two things have been repeated which were said above. For in that which is above, He shall spare the helpless and poor man, there is understood from usuries: but in that which there he says, and the souls of the poor He shall save; there seems to have been implied, from iniquity: so that the words He shall redeem, are understood with both. So when He shall spare the poor and helpless man, and shall save the souls of the poor: thus from usuries and iniquity He shall redeem the souls of them. And honourable shall be the name of Him in the presence of them. For they give honour to His name for so great benefits, and they respond that meet and

right it is to render thanks to the Lord their God. Or, as some copies have it, and honourable is the name of them in the presence of Him: for even if Christians seem despicable to this world, the name of them in the presence of Him is honourable, who to them has given it, no longer remembering those names in His lips, whereby before they used to be called, when they were bound fast by the superstitions of the Gentiles, or signed with names derived from their own evil deserts, before they were Christians, which name is honourable in the presence of Him, even if it seems despicable to enemies.

17. And He shall live, and there shall be given to Him of the gold of Arabia Psalm 71:15. There would not have been said, and He shall live (for of whom could not this be said, though living for ever so brief a space of time on this earth?) unless that life were being recommended to our notice, wherein He dies no more, and death over Him shall have no more dominion. Romans 6:9 And thus, and He shall live, that was despised in death: for, as another Prophet says, there shall be taken away from the earth the life of Him. Isaiah 53:8 But what is, and there shall be given to Him of the gold of Arabia? For the fact that from thence even the former Salomon received gold, in this Psalm has been in a figure transferred unto another true Salomon, that is, the true Peace-maker. For the former did not have dominion from the river even unto the ends of the round world. Thus then has been prophesied, that even the wise men of this world in Christ would believe. But by Arabia we understand the Gentiles; by gold wisdom which does as much excel among all doctrines as gold among metals. Whence has been written, Receive ye prudence as silver, and wisdom as proved gold. Proverbs 8:10 And they shall pray concerning Himself always. That which the Greek has, περ α το, some have interpreted by concerning Himself, some for Himself, or for Him. But what is, concerning Himself, except perchance that for which we pray, saying, Your kingdom come? Matthew 6:10 For Christ's coming shall make present to believers the kingdom of God. But how to understand for Him is difficult; except that when prayer is made for the Church, for Himself prayer is made, because she is His Body. For concerning Christ and the Church has been sent before a great Sacrament, Ephesians 5:32 there shall be two in one flesh. But now that which follows, all the day long, that is, in all time, they shall bless Him, is sufficiently evident.

18. And there shall be a firmament on the earth, on the tops of the mountains Psalm 71:16. For, all the promises of God in Him are Yea, 2 Corinthians 1:20 that is, in Him are confirmed: because in Him has been fulfilled whatever has been prophesied for our salvation. For the tops of the mountains it is meet to understand as the authors of the divine Scriptures, that is, those persons through whom they were supplied: wherein He is indeed Himself the Firmament: for unto Him all things that have been divinely written are ascribed.

But this He willed should be on earth; because for the sake of those that are upon earth, they were written. Whence He came also Himself upon earth, in order that He might confirm all these things, that is, in Himself might show them to have been fulfilled. For it was necessary, He says, for all things to be fulfilled which were written in the Law, and the Prophets, and Psalms, concerning Me: Luke 24:44 that is, in the tops of the mountain. Isaiah 2:2 For so there comes in the last time the evident Mount of the Lord, prepared on the summit of the mountains: of which here he speaks, in the tops of the mountains.

Highly superexalted above Libanus shall be His fruit. Libanus we are wont to take as this world's dignity: for Libanus is a mountain bearing tall trees, and the name itself is interpreted whiteness. For what marvel, if above every brilliant state of this world there is superexalted the fruit of Christ, of which fruit the lovers have contemned all secular dignities? But if in a good sense we take Libanus, because of the cedars of Libanus which He has planted: what other fruit must be understood, that is being exalted above this Libanus, except that whereof the Apostle speaks when he is going to speak concerning that love of his,

yet a pre-eminent way to you I show? 1 Corinthians 12:31 For this is put forward even in the first rank of divine gifts, in the place where he says, but the fruit of the Spirit is love: Galatians 5:22 and with this are conjoined the remaining words as consequent.

And they shall flourish from the city like hay of the earth. Because city is used ambiguously, and there is not annexed of Him, or of God, for there has not been said, from the city of Him, or from the city of God, but only from the city: in a good sense it is understood, in order that from the city of God, that is, from the Church, they may flourish like grass; but grass bearing fruit, as is that of wheat: for even this is called grass in Holy Scripture; as in Genesis there is a command for the earth to bring forth every tree and every grass, and there is not added every wheat: which without doubt would not have been passed over unless under the name of grass this also were understood; and in many other passages of the Scriptures this is found.

But if we must take, and they shall flourish like the grass of the earth, in the same manner as is said, all flesh is grass, and the glory of a man like the flower of grass: Isaiah 40:6 certainly then that city must be understood which does intimate this world's society: for it was not to no purpose that Cain was the first to build a city. Genesis 4:17 Thus the fruit of Christ being exalted above Libanus, that is, above enduring trees and undecaying timbers, because He is the everlasting fruit, all the glory of a man according to the temporal exaltation of the world is compared to grass; for by believers and by men already hoping for life eternal temporal felicity is despised, in order that there may be fulfilled that which has been written, all flesh is grass, and all the glory of flesh as the flower of grass: the grass has dried, the flower has fallen off, but the word of the Lord does endure for ever.

There is the fruit of Him exalted above Libanus. For always flesh has been grass, and the glory of flesh as the flower of grass: but because it was not clearly proved what felicity ought to have been chosen and preferred, the flower of grass was esteemed for a great matter: not only it was by no means despised, but it was even chiefly sought after. As if therefore at that time He shall have begun to be thus, when there is reproved and despised whatever used to flourish in the world, thus has been said, superexalted above Libanus shall be the fruit of Him, and they shall flourish from the city like grass of the earth: that is, glorified above all things shall be that which is promised for everlasting, and compared to the grass of the earth shall be whatever is counted a great matter in the world.

19. Be, therefore, the name of Him blessed for ever: before the sun endures the name of Him Psalm 71:17. By the sun times are signified. Therefore for everlasting endures the name of Him. For eternity does precede times, and is not bounded by time. And there shall be blessed in Him all the tribes of the earth. For in Him is fulfilled that which has been promised to Abraham. For He says not, In seeds, as though in many; but as though in one, And to your Seed, which is Christ. Galatians 3:16 But to Abraham is said, In your Seed shall be blessed all the tribes of the earth. Genesis 22:18 And not the sons of the flesh but the sons of promise are counted in the Seed. Romans 9:8 All nations shall magnify Him. As if in explanation there is repeated that which above has been said. For because they shall be blessed in Him, they shall magnify Him; not of themselves making Him to be great, that of Himself is great, but by praising and confessing Him to be great. For thus we magnify God: thus also we say, Hallowed be Your name, Matthew 6:9 which is indeed always holy.

20. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has done wonderful things alone Psalm 71:18. Contemplating all things above spoken of, a hymn bursts forth; and the Lord God of Israel is blessed. For that is being fulfilled which has been spoken to that barren woman, and He that has delivered You, the God of Israel,

shall Himself be called of the whole earth. Isaiah 54:5 He does Himself marvellous things alone: for whosoever do them, He does Himself work in them, who does wonderful things alone. And blessed be the name of His glory for everlasting, and for age of age Psalm 71:19. For what else should the Latin interpreters have said, who could not have said for everlasting, and for everlasting of everlasting? For it sounds as if one thing were meant in the expression for everlasting, and another thing in the expression for age: but the Greek has εἰς τὴν αἰῶνα, καὶ εἰς τὴν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, which perchance more meetly might have been rendered by, for age, and for age of age: so that by for age, might have been understood as long as this age endures; but for age of age, that which after the end of this is promised to be. And there shall be fulfilled with the glory of Him every land: so be it, so be it. You have commanded, O Lord, so it is coming to pass: so it is coming to pass, until that which began with the river, may attain fully even unto the ends of the round world.

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