

## Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on Luke Sermons 81 to 98

### Sermon 81.

**11:19-26. *But if I by Beelzebub cast out the devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I by the finger of God cast out the devils, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. When the strong man armed guards his house, his goods are in peace: but when He Who is stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, He takes from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divides his spoils. He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathers not with Me, scatters for Me. When the unclean spirit has gone forth from the man, it wanders about in places where there is no water, seeking rest: and not having found it, then it says, I will return to my house, whence I came out. And when it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and garnished. Then it goes, and brings seven other spirits worse than itself, and they enter in and dwell there. And the last state of that man is made worse than the first.***

THE God of all, blaming the haughtiness of the Jews, and their constant tendency to run into disobedience, thus spoke by the voice of Isaiah; "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken. I have begotten, and brought up sons; and they have rejected Me." For they rejected God the Father, by setting in manifold ways the Son at nothing, Who, though sprung from Him by nature, yet afterwards was made like unto us for our sakes: and yet He called them unto the grace that is by faith, and would have fulfilled the promise given unto their fathers. For of this the sacred Paul bears witness, where he writes, "For I say that Christ was a minister of the circumcision, to fulfil the promises of the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for mercy." The Only-begotten Word of God therefore was made man, that He might fulfil the promise of the blessing granted unto them. And that they might know that it was He Whom the law had prefigured by shadows, and Whom the company also of the holy prophets had foretold, He wrought these godlike deeds, and rebuked the unclean spirits. But they, though it was their duty to have praised Him, as doing wonders, as One Who possessed a power and authority beyond that of nature, and incomparable in degree, on the contrary disparaged His glory, saying, "This man only casts out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." And what doth Christ reply to this? "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?"

Now this subject was explained by me to you at length at our last meeting. But inasmuch as it is right that the wickedness of the Jews, in thus idly prating against Him, should still further be rebuked by many and convincing arguments, He adds on this account to what had been already said, an unanswerable consideration. And what this is, I will now mention to you as to my children.

The blessed disciples were Jews, and the children of Jews, according to the flesh; but they had obtained authority from Christ over unclean spirits, and set free those that were possessed by them, by calling over them these words, "In the Name of Jesus Christ." For Paul also once with apostolic authority commanded an unclean spirit, saying, "I command you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her." When therefore He says, your own children in My Name

trample upon Beelzebub, by rebuking his satellites, and expelling them forthwith from those in whom they are, what else is it but manifest blasphemy, joined with great ignorance, to say that I borrow this power from Beelzebub? You are convicted therefore, He says, by the faith of your own children, if, as is the case, they having received of Me authority and power, overthrow Satan, and against his will drive him from those in whom he dwells; while you affirm, that I make use of his agency in working divine miracles. But inasmuch as what you say is not true, but, on the contrary, empty and false, and liable to the charge of calumny, it is plain that I cast out devils by the finger of God. And by the finger of God He means the Holy Ghost. For the Son is called the hand and arm of God the Father; for He does all things by the Son, and the Son in like manner works by the Spirit. For just as the finger is appended to the hand, as something not foreign from it, but belonging to it by nature, so also the Holy Spirit, by reason of His being equal in substance, is joined in oneness to the Son, even though He proceed from God the Father. For, as I said, the Son does every thing by the consubstantial Spirit. Here, however, purposely He says, that by the finger of God He casts out devils, speaking as a man: because the Jews in the infirmity and folly of their mind, would not have endured it, if He had said, "by My own Spirit I cast out devils." Appeasing therefore their excessive readiness to anger, and the proneness of their mind unto insolence and phrensy, He spake as a man, although He is by nature God, and Himself the Giver of the Spirit from God the Father to those who are worthy, and employs as His own that power which is from Him. For He is consubstantial with Him, and whatsoever is said to be done by God the Father, this necessarily is by the Son in the Spirit. If therefore, He says, I, being a man, and having become like unto you, cast out devils in the Spirit of God, human nature has in Me first attained to a godlike kingdom. For it has become glorious by breaking the power of Satan, and rebuking the impure and abominable spirits: for such is the meaning of the words, that "the kingdom of God has come upon you." But the Jews did not understand the mystery of the dispensation of the Only-begotten in the flesh: and yet how ought they not rather to have reflected, that by the Only-begotten Word of God having become man, without ceasing to be that which He was, He glorified the nature of man, in that He did not disdain to take upon Him its meanness, in order that He might bestow upon it His own riches.

And inasmuch as it was necessary, as I showed, that the argument upon this subject should travel through many considerations, He makes use of a most plain and evident comparison, by means of which those who will may see, that He has conquered the ruler of this world, and having, so to speak, hamstrung him, and stripped him of the power which he possessed, has given him over for a prey unto His followers. "For when, He says, the strong man being armed guards his house, all his goods are in peace: but when One That is stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, He takes away all his armour wherein he trusted, and divides his spoil," This is, as I said, a plain demonstration, and type of the matter depicted after the manner of human affairs. For as long as a strong man retains the superiority, and guards his own property, he is in no danger of being plundered. But when one who is stronger than he, and more powerful, comes upon him, and prevails against him, then forthwith he is spoiled. And such has been the fate of our common enemy, the wicked Satan, that many headed serpent, the inventor of sin. For before the coining of the Saviour, he was in great power, driving and shutting up, so to speak, in his own stall flocks not his own, but belonging to God over all, like some rapacious and most insolent robber. But inasmuch as the Word of God Who is above all, the Giver of all might, and Lord of powers assailed Him, having become man, all his goods have been plundered, and his spoil divided. For those who of old had been ensnared by him into ungodliness and error have been called by the holy apostles to the acknowledgment of the truth, and been brought near unto God the Father by faith in His Son.

Would you like to hear and learn another convincing argument besides these? "He that is not with Me," He says, "is against Me: and he that gathers not with Me, scatters for Me." For I, He says, have come to save every man from the hands of the devil; to deliver from his guile those whom he had ensnared; to set the prisoners free; to give light to those in darkness; to raise up them that had fallen; to heal the broken-spirited: and to gather together the children of God who were scattered abroad. Such was the object of My coming. But Satan is not with Me; on the contrary he is against Me. For he ventures to scatter those whom I have gathered and saved. How then can he, who wars against Me, and sets his wickedness in array against My purposes, give Me power against himself? How is it not foolish even barely to imagine the possibility of such a thing as this?

The cause however which made the Jewish multitudes fall into such thoughts concerning Christ He Himself makes plain, by saying; "When the wicked spirit has gone forth from the man, it returns with seven other spirits more bitter than itself; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." For as long as they were in bondage in Egypt, and lived according to the customs and laws of the Egyptians, which were full of all impurity, they led polluted lives; an evil spirit dwelt in them: for it dwells in the hearts of the wicked. But when in the mercy of God they had been delivered by Moses, and received the law as a schoolmaster, calling them to the light of the true knowledge of God, the impure and polluted spirit was driven out. But because they did not believe in Christ, but rejected the Saviour, the impure spirit again attacked them: for he found their heart empty, and devoid of all fear of God, and, swept as it were, and took up his abode in them. For just as the Holy Spirit, when He sees any one's heart free from all impurity, and clean, dwells and abides there, and rests therein; so also the impure spirit is wont to dwell in the souls of the wicked. For they are devoid, as I said, of all virtue: and there is in them no fear of God. The last state therefore of the Israelites has become worse than the first. For as the disciple of the Saviour said; "It had been better for them not to have known the way of truth, than that when they have known it, they should turn back again from the holy commandment that was delivered unto them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb; The dog that returned to its vomit; and the washed sow to wallow in the mire." Let us flee therefore from being like the Jews; let Christ Who works miracles, be extolled by us: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

#### **Sermon 82.**

***11:29-36. And when the multitudes were gathered together, He began to say; This generation is an evil generation. It seeks a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, except the sign of Jonah.***

THE request originated in malice, and therefore was not granted them, according to the text, "The wicked shall seek Me, and shall not find Me." and which He spoke to the divine Moses; the rod was changed into a serpent. And what thing is this? some one, forsooth, may say; or what is the truth it hints at? And this certainly we must examine: for I say that of all that is contained in the sacred Scriptures, there is nothing which is not useful for edification. When Israel then had dwelt for a lengthened period in Egypt, and been brought up in the customs of its inhabitants, he wandered far from God, and became like one that had fallen from His hand, and been made a serpent, by which is meant one naturally of a thoroughly wicked disposition. But inasmuch as God again took hold of him, he was restored to his former state,

and became a rod, that is to say, a plant of Paradise. For he was called to the true knowledge of God, and enriched with the law as the means of a virtuous life.

Moreover God wrought also something further of an equally miraculous character. For He said unto Moses, "Put your hand into your bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom; and he drew forth his hand from his bosom, and his hand had become leprous, like snow. And he said again, Put your hand into your bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom; and he drew it forth from his bosom, and it had gained again the colour of his flesh." For as long as Israel adhered to the customs of his fathers, and represented in his own manners the type of virtuous living which he had in Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, he was, as it were, in the bosom of God, that is, under His guardianship and protection: but by abandoning the virtue of his ancestors, he became, so to speak, leprous; and fell into impurity: for the leper by the law of Moses was impure. But when He was again accepted by God, and placed under His protection, he was delivered from his leprosy; and put away the impurity of the Egyptian mode of life. And when these signs were wrought in their presence, they believed Moses, saying, "The Lord God of your fathers has sent me unto you."

Observe therefore that they did not make the display of miracles a reason for fault finding. They did not revile the divine Moses; they did not give free license to an unbridled tongue, and say that he wrought the miracles which he displayed before them by means of Beelzebub: they did not ask a sign from heaven, in contempt of his mighty deeds. But you assigned to Beelzebub works thus honourable and miraculous, and was not ashamed in bringing to perdition others as well as your own self, by means of those very things which ought to have made you possess a steadfast faith in Christ. But He will not grant you another sign, that He may not give holy things unto dogs, nor cast pearls before swine. For how can they who are hot calumniators of the miracles already wrought, deserve yet more? On the contrary we see that very skilful husbandmen, when they observe land sluggish in bearing fruit, withhold their hand, and refuse to plough it any more, that they may not suffer the loss at once both of their labour and of the seed.

He said, however, the sign only of Jonah shall be given them, by which is meant the passion upon the cross, and the resurrection from the dead. "For as Jonah," He says, "was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights, so shall also the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights." But had it been possible for Jesus not to have willed to suffer death in the flesh upon the cross, neither would this sign have been given to the Jews: but inasmuch as the passion, wrought for the salvation of the world, was indispensable, it was given these unbelievers for their condemnation. For also in speaking to the Jews, He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." But that the abolishing of death, and restoration of corruption by the resurrection from the dead, is a very great sign of the power and godlike authority of the Incarnate Word, will be sufficiently proved, as I imagine, in the judgment of serious men, by the soldiers of Pilate, who were appointed to guard the tomb, having been bribed with a large sum of money to say, that "the disciples came by night, and stole Him." It was therefore no unavailing sign, but rather one sufficient to convince all the inhabitants of the whole earth, that Christ is God, that of His own choice He suffered death in the flesh, but rose again, having commanded the bonds of death to depart, and overthrown corruption. But the Jews did not believe even this: for which reason it was very justly said of them, that "the queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment against this generation."

[From Mai] This woman, though a barbarian, earnestly sought to hear Solomon, and for this purpose travelled so vast a distance, to listen to his wisdom upon the nature of things visible, and animals, and plants. But you, though already present, and listening to Wisdom Itself, Who came to you, discoursing upon things invisible and heavenly, and confirming what He said by deeds and miracles, turn away from the word, and pass by with indifference the wonderful nature of His oracles. How then is there not more than Solomon here, that is in Me? And again observe, I pray, the skilfulness of His language; for why does He say "here," and not rather "in Me?" It is to persuade us to be humble, even though we be largely endowed with spiritual gifts. And besides, it is not at all unlikely, that had the Jews heard Him say, "that there is more than Solomon in Me," they would have ventured to speak of Him in their usual way: 'See! He says, that He is superior even to the kings who have gloriously reigned over us.' The Saviour, therefore, for the economy's sake, uses moderate language, saying, "here," instead of "in Me."

He says, moreover, that the Ninevites will appear for the condemnation of the Jews at the season of judgment: for they were rude and barbarous people, ignorant of Him Who by nature and in truth is God, who had never even heard of the predictions of Moses, and were without knowledge of the glorious tidings of prophecy: but even though this was their mental state, they repented, He says, at the preaching of Jonah. Far better therefore were they than the Israelites, and will condemn them. But listen to the very words: "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold! a greater than Jonah is here." "No man, having lighted a lamp, puts it into a cellar, nor under the bushel, but upon the lampstand, that they who enter in may see the light." And what was the object of such words as these? He combats the Jews by an objection drawn from their own folly and ignorance: for they said that He wrought miracles, not that He might be more fully believed in, but that He might have numbers of followers, and catch the applause of those who saw his wondrous acts. And this calumny He refutes by taking as an example the use of a lamp. For a lamp, He says, is always elevated, and put upon a stand, to be of use to those who see. And let us consider the inference which follows from this. Before then the coining of our Saviour, the father of darkness, even Satan, had made the world dark, and blackened all things with an intellectual gloom; but in this state the Father gave us the Son, to be as it were a lamp to the world, to irradiate us with divine light, and rescue us from Satanic darkness. But, O Jew, if you blame the lamp, because it is not hidden, but on the contrary, being set on high on a stand, gives its light to those who see, then blame Christ for not wishing to be concealed, but on the contrary to be seen of all, illuminating those in darkness, and shedding on them the light of the true knowledge of God. He did not therefore fulfil His miracles so much in order to be wondered at, nor seek by them to become famous, as that we might rather believe, that whereas He is God by nature, yet He became man for our sakes, but without ceasing to be what He was. And upon the holy church as a lamp-stand, shining by the doctrine He proclaims, He gives light to the minds of all by filling them with divine knowledge.

### **Sermon 83.**

**11:37-41. And as He was speaking, a certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with him: and He went in and lay down to meat. But the Pharisee, when he saw it, wondered that He had not first washed before dinner. But the Lord said unto him, Now do you Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the dish,, but that which is within you is full of rapine and wickedness. O you little-minded,**

***did not He Who made that which is without, make that which is within also?  
But whatever there is give as alms, and behold! every thing is clean unto you.***

THE very wise Paul truly tells us, that "Christ came into the world to save sinners." For this was His aim, and for this purpose He humbled Himself to the emptying of His glory, and appeared upon earth in the flesh, and conversed with men. For it was right, that as being the Creator and Lord of all, He should give a saving hand to those who had fallen into sin, and show unto them that were wandering in error, a pathway that would lead them straight unto every good work, and the excellence of virtuous deeds. And it is said somewhere also by one of the holy prophets, concerning those who have been called by faith to the knowledge of His glory "And they shall be all taught of God." How, therefore, does He lead us into every thing that is useful? By humbling Himself to be with sinners, and condescending sometimes even to those things that He would not, that so He might save many. That this was the case we may see by the lessons from the gospel now set before us; for one of the Pharisees, it says, besought Him to dine at His house: "and He went in, and lay down to meat." And yet how is it not plain to every one, that the gang of the Pharisees were always wicked and impure, hateful to God, and envious, ready for anger, of innate pride, and ever bold of speech against Christ the Saviour of us all? For they found fault with His divine miracles, and gathering wicked troops of counsellors, plotted His death. How then did He become their guest? Was He not aware of their maliciousness? But how can this be safely affirmed? For as God He knoweth all things. What therefore is the explanation? It is this, that He was especially anxious to admonish them, therein resembling the most excellent physicians. For they apply the remedies of their art to those who are most dangerously ill, struggling against the disease under which they suffer, and assuaging its cruel attacks. As they therefore without restraint gave way to an infatuated mind, it was necessary for Christ to speak unto them what was requisite and useful for their salvation. For as He Himself somewhere says, "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." And again He also said, that "they who are whole need not a physician, but they who are sick."

The Pharisee therefore for some purpose of his own invites Him to an entertainment: and the Saviour of all submits, as I said, to this, for the economy's sake. But He made the matter an opportunity of giving instruction, not consuming the time of their meeting in the enjoyment of food and delicacies, but in the task of making those more virtuous who were assembled there. And the dull Pharisee himself supplied an occasion for His discourse, for "he wondered," it says, "that He had not washed before dinner." Did he then wonder at Him, as having done something of which he approved, as being especially worthy of the saints? This was not his view: how could it be? On the contrary he was offended, because having the reputation among them of a righteous man and a prophet, He did not conform Himself to their unreasonable customs. For they washed before meat, as though they so freed themselves from all pollution. But this was very absurd. For the washing with water is highly useful for those who are unclean in body; but how can it free men from the defilement of the mind and heart?

Our argument however is this: O foolish Pharisee, you boast much of your knowledge of the sacred Scriptures: you are ever quoting the law of Moses. Tell us therefore where Moses gave you this precept? What commandment can you mention, ordained by God, requiring men to wash before meat? The waters of sprinkling were indeed given by the command of Moses for the cleansing of corporeal uncleanness, as being a type of the baptism which really is holy and cleansing, even that in Christ. Those also who were called to the priesthood were bathed in

water: for so did the divine Moses bathe Aaron, and the Levites with him, the law thereby declaring by means of the baptism enacted in type and shadow, that even its priesthood had not that which suffices for sanctification, but, on the contrary, needs divine and holy baptism for the true cleansing: and further, beautifully showing us that the Saviour of all is sufficient to sanctify and cleanse from all defilement, by means of holy and precious baptism, ourselves, who are the generation consecrated to and elect of God. Plainly however, he nowhere commands it as a duty to wash before eating. Why therefore do you wonder, or for what reason are you offended, O Pharisee? He Who Himself spoke it in old time has not violated the precept of Moses: and, as I said, the law, which you make a profession of honouring, has nowhere given you any such commandment.

But what said the Saviour? He most opportunely rebuked them, saying, "Now you Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup, and the dish; but that which is within you is full of rapine and wickedness." For it would have been easy for the Lord to have used other words with the view of instructing the foolish Pharisee, but He found an opportunity, and, so to speak, connects His teaching with what was before their eyes. For as it was the time of eating, and of sitting at table, He takes as a plain comparison the cup and the dish, and shows that those who sincerely serve God must be pure and clean, not only from bodily impurity, but also from that hidden within in the mind; just, for instance, as those utensils also that serve the table must be cleansed both from those impurities that are on the outside, and also as well from those that are within. "For He who made," He says, "that which is without, made also that which is within:" by which is meant, that He Who created the body made also the soul. As therefore they are both the works of one virtue-loving God, their purification must be uniform.

But this was not the practice of the Scribes and Pharisees; for so far as the mere reputation went of being clean, they were anxious to do every thing. They went about with sad looks, as though pale from fasting; and as the Saviour says, "made broad the hems of their robes, and widened their phylacteries, and stood in the streets and prayed, that they might be seen of many," wishing rather to have praise of men than God, and to carry off the applause of the spectators. And, to speak briefly, while they exhibited themselves to the lookers on as the very pattern of the life of virtue that is by the law, they in every possible way withdrew from being lovers of God. "Whitened sepulchres were they," as the Saviour said, "which on the outside are beautiful, but inside are full of bones of the dead, and of all uncleanness." But Christ wills not that we be such as these, but rather spiritual worshippers, holy and without blame both in soul and body. For one also of our communion said, "Cleanse your hands you sinners, and sanctify your hearts, you double-minded." And the prophet David somewhere sings, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." And again the prophet Isaiah speaks as in the person of God, "Wash you, make you clean; put away iniquities from your souls from before My eyes. Cease from your iniquities." Observe the exactness of the expression: for His words are, "From before My eyes put away iniquities from your souls." For the wicked do sometimes escape the eyes of men, but never can they escape those of God. It is our duty therefore, inasmuch as God sees what is secret, to put away wickedness from before His eyes.

But the Pharisees had no knowledge of any such method of virtuous living: what medicine therefore did the Saviour offer them after His rebukes? How did He Who struck them make them whole? "Whatever you have," He says, "give as alms: and lo! every thing is pure unto you." And yet we affirm that there are many ways of virtuous conduct, such for instance as

meekness, humility, and other kindred virtues: why therefore did He omit these, and command them to be compassionate? What answer do we make to this? The Pharisees then were exceedingly avaricious, and the slaves of base gains, and accumulated with greedy hand stores of wealth. For the God of all even somewhere said concerning them, "How has the faithful city Zion, that was full of judgment, become a harlot! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers! Your silver is adulterate; your merchants mingle the wine with water; your princes are disobedient, the partners of thieves, loving bribes, running after recompense; they judge not the fatherless, and regard not the suit of the widow." He purposely therefore had regard to that malady which had possession of them, and tears their avarice up by the root, that being delivered from its wickedness, and attaining to purity in mind and heart, they might become true worshippers.

The Saviour therefore in all these things acted in accordance with the plan of salvation; and being invited to a banquet, bestowed spiritual food, not only upon His entertainer, but upon all those who were feasting with Him. And let us too pray Him for this spiritual food; for "He is that living Bread, which came down from heaven, and gives life unto the world:" by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

#### **Sermon 84.**

***11:42-44. But woe unto you, Pharisees! who tithe mint and rue and all herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God. But these things ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for you love the uppermost seat in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. Woe unto you! for you are as those graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them know it not.***

THOSE who are exact observers of the sacred commandments do not venture in any way whatsoever to offend the God of all. For they feel the truth of what is written, "That whosoever shall keep the whole law, but shall offend in one particular, becomes guilty of all. For He Who said, You shall not commit adultery, said also, You shall not kill. If then you do not commit adultery, but yet kill, you are become a transgressor of the law." The transgression therefore of one commandment transgresses the law, that is, proves the man to be without the law. But when any one disregards those commandments, which especially are important above the rest, what words will he find able to save him from deserved punishment? That the Pharisees then merited these severe censures, the Lord proved against them, saying, "Woe unto you, Pharisees! who tithe mint and rue and all herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God. These things ought you to have done, and not to pass by the other, that is, to leave them undone." For while they omitted, as of no importance, those duties which they were especially bound to practice, as, for instance, judgment and the love of God, they carefully and scrupulously observed, or rather commanded the people subject to their authority to observe, those commandments only which were a way and means of great revenues for themselves.

Put more fully to explain these things to you, my beloved, I must speak as follows. The law of Moses commanded tithes to be offered to the priests by the Israelites. For it spoke thus; "The sons of Levi shall have no inheritance among the children of Israel. The offerings of the Lord are their inheritance." For whatsoever was offered by any one for the glory of God, on the score I mean of tithe, this God set apart for those whose office it was to minister; and this was

their inheritance. But inasmuch as the Pharisees above all others were covetous, and fond of disgraceful gains, they commanded that this law of tithing should be observed carefully and scrupulously, so as not even to omit the most paltry and insignificant herbs; while they carelessly disregarded what they ought to have observed, namely, the more essential commandments given by Moses; such, for instance, as judgment, by which is meant justice in passing judgment, and the love of God. For it would have been a just judgment, and an upright sentence, to have considered every thing that was commanded deserving of equal care and attention, and not to neglect things of primary importance, while they paid a scrupulous regard to those only which were to their profit. And the effect of love to God would have been to avoid making Him angry in any respect, and to dread the violation of any part whatsoever of the law.

Or to put it in another light, one may say, that judgment would have been to decree just sentences, and to make upon no matter whatsoever an unfair decision. And this too was disregarded by the Pharisees; for the Spirit rebuked them by the voice of David, thus saying, "God arose in the congregation of the Gods, and in the midst of the Gods He judges. How long will you judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?" He accused them also by the voice of Isaiah, saying, "How has the faithful city Zion, that was full of judgment, become a harlot? Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. Your silver is adulterate: your merchants mingle the wine with water: your princes are disobedient, the partners of thieves, loving bribes, running after recompense: they judge not the fatherless, and regard not the suit of the widow." For to judge unjustly is not the part of those who practice love to the brethren, but the crime rather of an iniquitous mind, and a plain proof of a falling away into sin. While therefore you tithe the mint, He says, and rue, and every herb, and ordain that the commandment upon these points is to be strictly kept, you deign to give no attention to the weightier matters of the law, to those commandments, I mean, which are more especially necessary and beneficial to the soul, and by means of which you might prove yourselves honourable and holy, and full of such praises as become those whose desire it is to love God, and please Him.

And He adds yet another woe to those already spoken, saying, "Woe unto you, Pharisees, who love the uppermost seat in the synagogues, and greetings in the market places," Is then this reproof useful to the Pharisees only? Not so: for the benefit of it extends even unto us: for by the rebukes He addressed to them, He effects also our improvement. For true it is, that those who are perfect in mind, and lovers of upright conduct, find in the rebukes of others the means of their own safety. For they of course avoid imitating them, and do not expose themselves to being caught in similar faults. The accusation therefore which Christ brings against the Pharisees, that they seek for greetings in the market places, and the uppermost seats in the synagogues, or meetings, shows that they were fond of praise, and wont to indulge themselves in empty ostentation, and an absurd superciliousness. And what can be worse than this? or how must not such conduct be hateful to every man, as being boastful and annoying, and destitute of the praises of virtue, and intent solely upon stealing the reputation of being honourable. And how must not he be incomparably superior to men thus disposed, who is poor in spirit, and gentle, and affable; not loving boasting, but courteous; not deceiving men by outside and fictitious disguises, but being rather a true worshipper, and adorned with that rational beauty which the divine Word imprints in us by means of all virtue and holiness and righteousness.

For if we must prove ourselves better than others,----and there is nothing to prevent this,----let the sentence of superiority be given us of God, by our excelling them in point of conduct

and morals, and in a wise and blameless knowledge of the sacred scriptures. For to be saluted by others, and seated higher than one's friends, does not at all prove us to be persons of merit: for this is possessed by many, who, so far from being virtuous, are rather lovers of pleasure, and lovers of sin. For they wrest honours from every one, because of their possessing either vast wealth or worldly power.

But that our being admired by others without investigation and inconsiderately, and without their knowing our real state, does not at all make us elect in the presence of God, Who knows all things, the Saviour at once demonstrates by Saying; "Woe unto you, for you are as those graves which appear not, and the men who walk over them know it not," Observe, I pray, very clearly the force of the example. Those who desire to be saluted by every one in the marketplace, and anxiously consider it a great matter to have the foremost seats in the synagogues, differ in no respect from graves that appear not, which on the outside are beautifully adorned, but are full of all impurity. See here, I pray, that hypocrisy is utterly blamed: for it is a hateful malady, both towards God and men. For whatsoever the hypocrite seems, and is thought to be, that he is not: but he borrows, so to speak, the reputation of goodness, and thereby accuses his real baseness: for the very thing which he praises and admires, he will not practise. But it is a thing impossible for you long to hide your hypocrisy: for just as the figures painted in pictures fall off, as time dries up the colours, so also hypocrisies, after escaping observation for a very little time, are soon convicted of being really nothing.

We then must be true worshippers, and not as wishing to please men, lest we fall from being servants of Christ. For so the blessed Paul somewhere speaks; "For now do I persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men? If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." For suppositions in matters of moral excellence are simply ridiculous, and worthy neither of account nor admiration. For just as in gold coins, that which is counterfeit and faulty is rejected, so the hypocrite is regarded with scorn both by God and men. But he who is true meets with admiration; just, for instance, as Nathaniel, of whom Christ said, "Behold one truly an Israelite, in whom is no guile." He who is such is esteemed before God; he is counted worthy of crowns and honours; has a glorious hope given him; and is "a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God."

Let us therefore flee from the malady of hypocrisy: and may there rather dwell within us a pure and uncorrupt mind, resplendent with glorious virtues. For this will unite us unto Christ; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

### **Sermon 85.**

**11:45-48. Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto Him, Teacher, in saying these things you reproach us also. And He said, Also unto you, lawyers, woe! for you burden men with burdens heavy and grievous to be borne; and you yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe unto you! for you build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Therefore you bear witness, and approve of the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and you build their sepulchres.**

REPROOF is ever, so to speak, a thing difficult for any man to bear: but it is not without profit to the soberminded: for it leads them to the duty of performing those things which make them worthy of honour, and lovers of virtuous pursuits. But those who run into wickedness with all eagerness, and whose heart is set against admonition, are hurried into greater sins by the very things that should have made them more soberminded, and are only hardened by the words of those who try to benefit them. And, as an example of this state of mind, behold those who among the Jews were called lawyers. For the Saviour of all was rebuking the Pharisees, as men that were wandering far from the right way, and fallen into unbecoming practices. For He blamed them as being boasters, as hypocrites, as loving greetings in the markets, and as wishing to sit in front of everybody else in the synagogues: and He further called them "whited sepulchres, which on the outside are beautiful, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all impurity." At these things the band of wicked lawyers was indignant, and one of them stood up to controvert the Saviour's declarations, and said; "Teacher, in saying these things, You reproach us also." Oh what great ignorance! what blindness in mind and understanding unto every thing necessary! These men subject themselves to blame: or rather the force of truth showed them to be liable to the same accusations as the Pharisees, and of one mind with them, and partners of their evil deeds, if they thus consider that what Christ said unto the others was spoken also against them. For tell me, for what reason are you angry? When any reproof is addressed to the Pharisees, you say that you are reproached. You confess therefore your deeds. You are conscious, of course, to thyself of being a similar character. But if you consider it a reproach for ought of this sort to be said of you, and nevertheless do not alter your behaviour, it is your own conduct you are found blaming. If you hate reproof as being a reproach, show thyself superior to the faults with which you are charged: or rather do not regard as a reproach the word of correction. Do you not see that those who heal the bodies of men converse with the sick upon the causes which have brought on their maladies, and use pungent drugs to counteract what has happened: but no one is angry with them on this account, or regards what they say as a reproach. But you are weak-minded in bearing admonitions, nor consent to learn what those passions are which are bringing injury to your heart. Far better would it be to love reproof, and ask for deliverance from your maladies, and healing for the ulcers of your soul. Far better were it rather to say, "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed: save me, and I shall be saved: for You are my praise."

Nothing however of this sort enters the mind of the lawyers, but they venture even to say; "In speaking these things, You reproach us also:" ignorantly giving the name of reproach to a reproof which was for their benefit and advantage. What then does Christ reply? He makes His reproof yet more severe, and humbles their empty pride, thus saying; "Also to you, lawyers, woe! for you burden men with burdens heavy and grievous to be borne: and you yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers." He frames His argument against them out of a plain example. For the law was confessedly grievous to the Israelites, as the divine disciples also acknowledged. For they even rebuked those who were endeavouring to make such as had already believed desire to return to the legal ritual: for they said; "And now why tempt you God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear? And the Saviour Himself taught us this, crying out and saying; "Come unto Me, all you weary, and heavy laden; and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest for yourselves." Weary then and heavy laden are those, He says, who are under the law: while He calls Himself meek, as though the law had nothing in it of this character. For, as Paul says; "Whosoever has despised Moses' law is put to death without mercy at the mouth of two or three witnesses." Woe to you, therefore, He says, O lawyers: for while you bind burdens

grievous to be borne, and intolerable to carry, and lay them on those who are under the law, you yourselves will not touch them. For while commanding that the ordinance of Moses should be kept inviolate, and passing sentence of death upon any who despise it, they themselves paid not the slightest heed to the duty of performing its precepts. As accustomed thus to act, the wise Paul also rebukes them, saying; "Behold you are called a Jew, and rest in the law, and make your boast of God; and know His will, and discern the things that are more excellent, being instructed by the law; and are confident of thyself, that you are a guide of the blind; an instructor of those without understanding; a teacher of babes; and that you have the form of knowledge and of truth in the law. You therefore that teach others, teach you not thyself? you that say that men should not steal, do you steal? you that say that men should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? And you that despise idols, do you plunder the sanctuary? And you that boast in the law, by the transgression of the law despise you God?" For the teacher is rejected with infamy when his conduct does not agree with his words. Upon him our Saviour also passes the sentence of severe punishment: "for whosoever," He says, "has taught and done, shall be called great: but whosoever shall teach and not do, he shall " be called small in the kingdom of heaven." And for the same reason the disciple of the Saviour also writes to us; "Let there not be many teachers among you, my brethren; knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we all of us commit wrong."

And having thus shown the worthlessness of this abominable crew of lawyers, He goes on to utter a common reproof to all the chiefs of the Jews: "Woe unto you! for you build the sepulchres of the prophets: and your fathers killed them. Therefore you bear witness, and approve of the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their sepulchres." Let us then carefully examine what the Saviour means; for what wicked act can we say that they were guilty of in building the tombs of the saints? Were they not rather doing them distinguished honour? What doubt can there be of this? It is necessary therefore to see what it is which Christ teaches us. The ancestors then of the Jews had from time to time put the holy prophets to death, when bringing them the word of God, and leading them unto the right way: but their descendants, acknowledging that the prophets were holy and venerable men, built over them sepulchres or tombs, as bestowing upon them an honour suitable to the saints. Their fathers therefore slew them; but they, as believing that they were prophets and holy men. became the judges of those that slew them. For by determining to pay honour to those who had been put to death, they thereby accused the others of having done wrongfully. But they, who condemned their fathers for such cruel murders, were about to incur the guilt of equal crimes, and to commit the same, or rather more abominable offences. For they slew the Prince of Life, the Saviour and Deliverer of all: and added also to their wickedness towards Him other abominable murders. For Stephen was put to death, not as being accused of any thing base, but rather for admonishing them, and speaking unto them what is contained in the inspired Scriptures. And other crimes besides were committed by them against every saint who preached unto them the Gospel message of salvation.

The lawyers therefore and Pharisees were reprov'd in every way, as being haters of God, and boastful, and lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God: and as everywhere hating to be saved. For this reason Christ added always that word "woe," as something peculiarly theirs: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

**Sermon 86.**

**11:52 ... 12:1-3. Woe unto you, lawyers: for you have taken away the key of knowledge: you entered not in, and those that are entering in you hindered. And as He came out from thence, the scribes and Pharisees began to urge Him vehemently, and to put Him to silences about many things, lying in wait to catch something out of his mouth. Meanwhile many myriads of the people having assembled, so that they trod one upon another, He began to say unto His disciples first of all, Beware in yourselves of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed: neither hid, that shall not be known. All things whatsoever you have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light: and that which you have spoken in the ear in chambers, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.**

THOSE who search the sacred Scriptures, and know the Lord's will, if they are virtuous men, and anxious for the people's good, and skilled in leading them aright unto every thing that is admirable, shall be rewarded with every blessing, if they discharge their duties with earnestness. And of this the Saviour assures us where He says, "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord has set over his household, to give them meat in its season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord shall come and find so doing: verily, I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he has." But if he be indolent, and neglectful, and a cause of offence to those entrusted to his charge, so as for them to fall from the right way, most miserable is he, and in danger of hopeless punishment. For again Christ Himself has said; "Whosoever therefore shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in Me, it were better for him that the millstone of an ass were hung about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea."

Of faults thus grievous, Christ proved them guilty who professed to be skilled in the law; the scribes, I mean, and lawyers: and for this reason he said unto them; "Also to you lawyers woe! who have taken away the key of knowledge." By the key of knowledge we consider that the law itself is meant, and justification in Christ, by faith I mean in Him. For though the law was in shadow and type, yet those types shape out to us the truth, and those shadows depict to us in manifold ways the mystery of Christ. A lamb was sacrificed according to the law of Moses; they ate its flesh, they anointed the lintels with its blood, and overcame the destroyer. But the blood of a mere sheep could not turn away death. It was Christ then Who was typified under the form of a lamb, Who endures to be the victim for the life of the world, and saves by His blood those who are partakers of Him. And one might mention many other instances as well, by means of which we can discern the mystery of Christ, sketched out in the shadows of the law. And He Himself once when speaking to the Jews said, "There is one that accuses you, even Moses, in whom you trusted. For if you had believed Moses, you would have also believed Me; for he wrote of Me." And again; Search the Scriptures: for in them you think that you have eternal life; and it is they that testify of Me. And you are not willing to come unto Me, that you may have life." For every word of divinely inspired Scripture looks unto Him, and refers to Him. And whether it be Moses who speaks, he, as has been shown, was typifying Christ: or be it the holy prophets that you name, they also proclaimed to us in manifold ways the mystery of Christ, preaching beforehand the salvation that is by Him.

It was the duty therefore of those who were called lawyers, because they studied the law of Moses, and were well acquainted with the words of the holy prophets, to open, so to speak, to the Jewish multitudes the doors of knowledge. For the law directs men unto Christ, and the pious announcements of the holy prophets lead, as I said, to the acknowledgment of Him. But

this the so-called lawyers did not do, but on the contrary they took away the key of knowledge, by which you are to understand the guidance of the law, or really faith in Christ. For by faith is the knowledge of the truth, as the prophet Isaiah somewhere says; "If you will not believe, neither shall you understand." This same way of salvation by faith in Christ He before declared unto us by the holy prophets, saying; "Yet a little, a little while, and he that comes shall come, and shall not tarry. And whosoever shall draw back, in him My soul shall have no pleasure." And what is meant by a person's drawing back is his giving way to slothfulness. When therefore He says, that no one of those who have been called must draw back, it means, that if he grow slothful in his progress towards the grace which is by faith, My soul shall have no pleasure in him.

But that the fathers were proved by faith, the examination of their deeds demonstrates. Take, for instance, the patriarch Abraham, who was called the friend of God: what is written of him? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God." And it is written again; "By faith Noah, when it was revealed to him of things not seen as yet, prepared the ark for the saving of his house, in which few, that is, eight persons, were saved by water." And the blessed Paul has laid down for us a definition, so to speak, or rather a general law, thus saying; "Without faith it is impossible for any one whatsoever to please God." "For by it, he said, the elders, that is, those in old time, obtained a good report."

But these so-called lawyers had taken away the key of knowledge; for they would not let men believe in Christ the Saviour of all. He wrought miracles in manifold ways; raising the dead from their graves; restoring beyond all hope their sight to the blind; making the lame whole in their feet; cleansing lepers; and rebuking unclean spirits. But they, though it was their duty to regard Him with admiration because of these things, despised His divine signs: and making the people entrusted to their charge to stumble, they said; "This man casts not out devils but in Beelzebub the prince of the devils." Here then you see them taking away the key of knowledge. He taught in their synagogues; He revealed to His hearers that good and acceptable and perfect will of God the Father; but they cannot leave even these His instructions without blame: for they called out to the multitudes, "He has a devil, and is utterly mad. Why hear you Him?" In truth therefore they took away the key of knowledge: they went not in themselves, and the others they hindered.

And thus being indignant at this reproof, "they began," it says, "to urge Him vehemently;" by which is meant, to attack Him with cunning, and oppose Him, and show their hatred of Him. And they ventured also, it says, even "to put Him to silence about many things." And what again is the meaning of their putting Him to silence? It is that they required Him at once, and so to speak, without consideration to make answer to their wicked questions; expecting forsooth that he would fall, and say something or other open to objection. But they knew not that He was God; or rather, they were despisers, and proud and contemptuous. And therefore it was that Christ told His friends, that is, His disciples, to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and scribes," meaning by leaven their false pretence. For hypocrisy is a thing hateful to God, and abominated by man, bringing no reward, and utterly useless for the salvation of the soul, or rather the cause of its perdition. For though sometimes it may escape detection for a little, yet before long it is sure to be laid bare, and bring upon them disgrace; like ill-featured women, when they are stripped of that external embellishment which they had produced by artificial means.

Hypocrisy therefore is a thing foreign to the character of the saints: for that it is impossible for those things that are done and said by us to escape the eye of the Deity, He showed by saying; "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed: neither hid that shall not be known." For all our words and deeds shall be revealed at the day of judgment. Hypocrisy therefore is superfluous trouble; and our duty is to prove ourselves true worshippers, serving God with free and open countenance, not submitting our judgment to those who take away the key of knowledge, but seeing even in the law the mystery of Christ, and seizing upon the words of the holy prophets to confirm our knowledge of Him. For this His disciple also taught us thus saying; "We have for confirmation the word of prophecy, into which you do well to look, as upon a torch shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the star of light arise in your hearts." On us then who are in Christ the day has shone, and the star of the rational dawn has arisen, possessing as we do a correct and blameless knowledge of Him: for He has Himself put into our mind and heart divine knowledge, being the Saviour and Lord of all; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

### **Sermon 87.**

**THIS HOMILY IS FIT TO BE READ IN A TIME OF STRUGGLE AND PERSECUTION FOR FAITH IN GOD.**

***12:4-7. And I say unto you, My friends, Fear not them that kill the body, and afterwards have nothing more to do. But I will show you Whom you shall fear: fear Him Who after He has killed has power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, fear Him. Are not five sparrows sold for two halfpence; and not one of them is forgotten before God. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not: you are of more value than many sparrows.***

PATIENCE, and an enduring and courageous mind, form the impenetrable armour of the saints: for they render them approved and resplendent with the praises of piety. For one also of the holy apostles thus spake, at one time; "In patience possess you your souls:" at another; "You have need of patience, that by doing the will of God, you may receive the promise." By such manly virtues we become famous, and praiseworthy, and renowned among men everywhere, and worthy of honours and the blessings that are prepared for the saints: even those which "eye has not seen, nor ear heard," as wise Paul says. And how must not those things be worth the gaining and admirable, which surpass our understanding and reason? And therefore, as I said, He prepares those who love Him for spiritual fortitude, thus speaking; "I say unto you, My friends."

His present discourse therefore does not, as it seems, belong to every one absolutely: but, on the contrary, to those only who evidently love Him with all their heart, and can fitly say; "Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" For those who have as yet no sure and certain and well-founded love of Him, as long as they live in tranquil times, may indeed possibly preserve their faith in Him: but if distress or persecution harass them a little, they turn away and forsake Him, losing, together with their faith, that which stirred them up to love Him. For just as young plants, which have lately sprung up, cannot endure the violence of too tempestuous a wind, because they have not as yet struck their roots deep; while those which are firmly fixed, and well rooted, remain secure in the ground, even though a gale of fierce winds shake

them: so those whose mind is not yet firmly and securely fixed upon Him are very easily drawn aside, and readily desert; while those who have stored up and possess in mind and heart a secure and unwavering love of Him, are unalterable in mind, and unwavering in heart, being superior to all indolence, and looking with contempt upon the most intolerable dangers, and making a mock at terrors, so as even to ridicule the violence of death. The commandment therefore so to act belongs to those who love Him.

But who are those who love Him? They are, so to speak, such as are like-minded with Him, and anxious to follow in His footsteps. And to this His disciple encourages us by saying; "Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, do you for His sake arm yourselves with the same mind." He laid down His life for us, and was "among the dead as one free." For death did not attack Him, as it attacks us, because of sin: for He was and is far removed from all sin, and incapable of iniquity: but of His own will He endured it for our sakes, because of His boundless love toward us. For listen to Him as He plainly says; "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And how then is it not a most base thing not to return to Christ, as a most necessary debt, that which we have received of Him? And, to put it in another light; as being His friends, we ought not to fear death, but rather imitate the faith of the holy fathers. The patriarch Abraham, when tempted, offered his only-begotten son Isaac, "accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead." What terror of death, therefore, can assail us, now that "Life has abolished death?" for Christ is "the Resurrection and the Life."

And this too we must bear in mind, that the crowns are to be won by labour. It is strong exertion united with skill that perfects those mighty athletes in the games. It is courage and a brave mind that are most serviceable to those who are skilled in battles: while the man who throws away his shield is ridiculed even by the foe: and if the runaway live, he leads a life of disgrace. But he who was steadfast in the battle, and stood stoutly and courageously with all his might against the enemy, is honoured if he win the victory; and if he fall, is looked upon with admiration. And so ought we to reckon for ourselves; for to endure patiently, and maintain the conflict with courage, brings with it great reward, and is highly desirable, and wins for us the blessings bestowed by God: while to refuse to suffer death in the flesh for the love of Christ, brings upon us lasting, or rather never-ending punishment. For the wrath of man reaches at most to the body, and the death of the flesh is the utmost that they can contrive against us: but when God punishes, the loss reaches not to the flesh alone;---how could it?---but the wretched soul also is cast alone; with it into torments. Let our lot therefore rather be the honoured death; for it makes us mount up to the commencement of an eternal life, to which of necessity are attached those blessings also which come from the divine bounty: and let us flee from and despise a life of shame; a life accursed, and of short duration, and which leads down to bitter and everlasting torment.

And to bestow yet another means of succour upon our minds, He forcibly added; "that five sparrows are scarcely perhaps worth two halfpence, and yet not one of them is forgotten before God." And further, He said; "that also the separate hairs of your head are all numbered." Consider, therefore, how great care He takes of those that love Him. For if the Preserver of the universe extends His aid to things thus worthless, and descends, so to speak, to the smallest animals, how can He forget those who love Him, especially when He takes so great care of them, and deigns so to visit them, as to know exactly each particular of their state, and even how many are the hairs of their head?

Where, then, is the vain and senseless babbling of heathen boasting? "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For some of them entirely deny the providence of God: while others make it reach down as far only as the moon, and set bounds to it, as though they had had this authority committed to them. Unto such we would say: Is the providence of God too weak to reach down to that which is below, and even as far as unto us, or is the Creator of all too weary to see what we do? If then they say that it is too weak, this is mere stupidity, and nothing else. But if they represent the divine nature as subject to indolence, they make it thereby liable also to envy. And this again is blasphemy, and a crime than which none is greater. But they answer, it is giving trouble to the divine and supreme will to impose upon it the care of all these earthly matters. They know not how great is that nature which the mind cannot understand nor speech describe, and which rules over all. For to it all things are small: and so the blessed prophet Isaiah teaches us where he says; "If it is true that all the nations are as a drop from a cask, and are reckoned as the turn of a balance, and shall be counted as spittle, to what have you likened the Lord?" For what is one drop from a cask? and what is the turn of a balance? and what too is spittle?---that is, a single expectoration? If therefore this be the position of all things towards God, how can it be a great matter to Him, or one that occasions Him trouble, to have the care of all things? The noxious sentiments therefore of the heathen are bereft of reason.

Let us therefore not doubt but that with rich hand He will bestow His grace upon those who love Him. For either He will not permit us to fall into temptation: or if, by His wise purpose, He permit us to be taken in the snare, in order that we may gain glory by suffering. He will most assuredly grant us the power to bear it. And of this the blessed Paul is our witness, who says; "God is powerful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of egress, that you may be able to bear it." For He Who is the Saviour and Lord of us all, is the Lord of powers: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

### **Sermon 88.**

**THIS HOMILY ALSO IS FIT TO BE READ IN A TIME OF STRUGGLE AND PERSECUTION FOR FAITH IN GOD.**

***12:8-10. And I say unto you, that whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God. But he that shall deny Me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God. And whosoever shall speak a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him.***

HERE too, you who love to hear, replenish yourselves with the words of holiness: receive within you the knowledge of the sacred doctrines, that advancing prosperously in the faith, you may obtain the crown of love and steadfastness in Christ. For He bestows it, not upon those whose heart is faint and easily shaken, but rather on those who can with fitness say; "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." For those who live holily, live unto Christ; and those, who for piety towards Him, endure dangers, gain the life incorruptible, being crowned by His decree before the judgment seat of God. And this He teaches us, saying; "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God,"

It is then a thing above all others worthy of our attention to see who it is that confesses Christ, and in what way one may rightly and blamelessly confess Him. Most wise Paul, therefore writes to us, "Say not in your heart, Who shall ascend unto heaven? that is to bring Christ down: or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring Christ up from the dead. But what says the Scripture? The Word is nigh you, in your mouth and in your heart; that is, the Word of faith which we preach: because if you shall say with your mouth that Jesus is the Lord, and shall believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall live. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." In which words the mystery of Christ is most excellently explained. For first of all it is our duty to confess that the Son, Who sprang from God the Father, and Who is the Only-begotten of His substance, even God the Word, is Lord of all: not as one on whom lordship has been bestowed from without, and by imputation, but as being by nature and in truth Lord, as the Father also is. And next we must believe, that " God raised Him from the dead," that is, when having become man, He had suffered in the flesh for our sakes: for so He arose from the dead. The Son therefore is, as I said, Lord; yet must He not be reckoned with those other lords, to whom the name of lordship is given and imputed: for He alone, as I said, is Lord by nature, being God the Word, Who transcends every created thing. And this the wise Paul teaches us saying; "That though there be in heaven or in earth certain Gods many, and Lordships many: yet to us there is one God the Father, from Whom is everything and we from Him: and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom is everything and we by Him." But even though there be but one God, Whose name is the Father; and one Lord, Who is the Son; yet neither is the Father put aside from being Lord, by reason of His being God by nature: nor does the Son cease from being God, because He is Lord by nature. For perfect freedom is the attribute of the divine and supreme substance only, and to be entirely separate from the yoke of servitude: or rather, to have the creation put in subjection under Its feet. And therefore, though the Only-begotten Word of God became like unto us, and, as for as regarded the measure of the human nature, was placed under the yoke of slavery:---for He purposely paid the Jewish tax-gatherers the two drachms according to the law of Moses; ---yet He did not conceal the splendour of the glory that dwelt in Him. For He asked the blessed Peter; "The kings of the earth, of whom do they receive tribute and poll-tax; of their own children, or of strangers? And when he had said, Of strangers: Then, said He, are the children free." The Son therefore is in His own nature Lord as being free: as the wise Paul has again taught us, thus writing: "But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same likeness, from glory to glory, as by the Lord, the Spirit." "Now the Spirit is the Lord: but where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Observe therefore how he affirms that the Spirit is Lord: not as possessed of sonship; for He is the Spirit, and not the Son; but as being co-essential with the Son, Who is Lord and free, and proved by this natural equality with Him to possess that freedom which befits God.

Whosoever therefore confesses Christ before men, as God and Lord, shall be acknowledged by Him before the angels of God. But where and how? Evidently at that time, when He shall descend from heaven in the glory of His Father with the holy angels at the end of this world: then shall He crown His true confessor, who possessed an unwavering and genuine faith, and so made profession. There also shall the company of the holy martyrs shine, who endured the conflict even unto life and blood, and honoured Christ by their patient endurance: for they denied not the Saviour, nor was His glory unknown to them, but they kept their fealty to Him. Such shall be praised by the holy angels; and shall themselves glorify Christ the Saviour of all, for bestowing upon the saints those honours which especially are their due. And so the

Psalmist also declares, "And the heavens shall declare His righteousness; because God is judge." And such then shall be the lot of those who confess Him.

But the rest, those who denied and despised him, shall be denied: when the Judge shall say to them that, as it were, which was spoken by the holy prophets to certain of old; "As you have done, it shall be done unto you; and your requital shall be requited upon yours own head;" and shall deny them in these words: "Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity, I know you not." And who then are they that shall be denied? First of all, those who when persecution was pressing upon them, and tribulation had overtaken them, deserted the faith. The hope of such shall depart utterly from its very root: for such no human words can suffice; for wrath and judgment and the unappeasable fire shall receive them.

And in like manner both the followers and teachers of heresy deny him. For they venture to say that the Only-begotten Word of God is not by nature and in truth God; and they traduce His ineffable generation, by saying that He is not of the substance of the Father: yes rather, they count among things created Him Who is the Creator of all, and wickedly class with those who are under the yoke Him Who is Lord of all; although Paul affirms, that we must say that "Jesus is Lord."

The disciples also of the vain babbling of Nestorius deny Him by acknowledging two sons, one false, and one true; the true one, the Word of God the Father: the false one, to whom the honour and name of a son belongs by imputation only, who in their phrase is the son only, and sprung from the seed of the blessed David, according to the flesh. Most heavy is the judgment of these also; for they have denied "the Lord Who bought them." They have not understood the mystery of His dispensation in the flesh: for "there is one Lord, one faith," as it is written. For we do not believe in a man and a God, but in one Lord, the Word Who is from God the Father, Who became man, and took upon Him our flesh. And thus then these also are numbered among those Who deny Him.

And that blasphemy is a most wicked crime for men to commit, He has further taught us by saying, "that whosoever shall speak a word against the son of man", it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven." And in what way is this too to be understood? Now if the Saviour means this, that if any scornful word be used by any one of us towards some more man, he will obtain forgiveness if he repent, the matter is free from all difficulty. For as God is by nature good, He will free from blame all those who repent. But if the declaration has reference to Christ himself, the Saviour of all, how can he be innocent, or secure from condemnation, who has spoken against Him? What then we say is this; that whenever any one, who has not yet learnt the meaning of His mystery, nor understood that being by nature God, He humbled Himself to our estate, and became man, speaks anything against Him, blasphemous to a certain extent, but yet not so wicked as to pass forgiveness, such things God will pardon in those who have sinned from ignorance. And to explain my meaning by an example; Christ somewhere said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven, and gives life to the world." Because therefore some did not know His glory, but thought that he was a mere man, they said, "Is not this the carpenter's son, Whose father and mother we know? How does He now say that I came down from heaven?" And again, He was once standing teaching in a synagogue, and was wondered at by them all. But some, it tells us, said, "How knows this man learning, having never been taught?" For of course they knew not that "in Him are all the treasures of wisdom, and the hidden things of

knowledge." Such things might well be forgiven, as being spoken inconsiderately from ignorance.

But for those who have blasphemed the Godhead itself, condemnation is inevitable, and the punishment eternal both in this world and in that which is to come.

For by the Spirit He here means not only the Holy Spirit, but also the whole nature of the Godhead, as understood (to consist) in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And the Saviour Himself also somewhere said, "God is a Spirit." Blasphemy therefore against the Spirit, is against the whole supreme substance: for as I said, the nature of the Deity, as offered to our understanding in the holy and adorable Trinity, is one.

Let us therefore, as the writer of the book of Proverbs says, "put a door and a bar to the tongue," and draw near to the God over all, thus saying, "Set a watch, O Lord, upon my mouth; and a door of safety about my lips; incline not my heart to wicked words;" for those are wicked words which are against God. And if thus we rightly fear Him, Christ will bless us: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Sermon 89.**

***12:13-21. And one of the multitude said unto Him, Teacher, bid my brother divide with me the inheritance. But He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you? And He said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all greediness: for a man's life is not from his possessions by reason of his having a superfluity. And He spoke a parable unto them, saying, The land of a certain rich man brought forth unto him plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to gather my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my storehouses, and build greater: and there will I gather all my crops and my goods. And I will say to myself, Self you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, enjoy thyself But God said unto him, You fool, this night they demand of you your soul. But whose shall those things be which you have provided? So is he that lays up treasures for himself, and is not rich toward God.***

PAUL, as a wise man, recommends constancy in prayer: for he said, "Pray without ceasing." And in very truth it is a thing full of benefit. But I say this, that whosoever draws near unto God, ought not to do so carelessly; nor may he offer unbefitting petitions. And one may very justly affirm, of a multitude of petitions, that they are unbefitting, and such as are not suitable for God to give, nor beneficial for us to receive. And if we will direct the penetrating glance of the mind upon the passage before us, we shall see without difficulty the truth of what I have said. For a certain man drew near to Christ, the Saviour of us all, and said, "Teacher, bid my brother divide with me the inheritance. But He said unto him, Man, who set Me as judge or divider over you?" For the Son indeed, when He appeared in our likeness, was set by God the Father as "Head and King over Sion, His holy mount," according to the Psalmist's words: and the nature of His office He again Himself makes plain, "For I am come, He says, to preach the commandment of the Lord." And what is this? Our virtue-loving Master wishes us to depart far from all earthly and temporal matters; to flee from the love of the flesh, and from the vain

anxiety of business, and from base lusts; to set no value on hoards, to despise wealth, and the love of gain; to be good and loving unto one another; not to lay up treasures upon earth; to be superior to strife and envy, not quarrelling with the brethren, but rather giving way to them, even though they seek to gain an advantage over us; "for from him, He says, who takes away what is yours, demand it not again;" and rather to strive after all those things which are useful and necessary for the salvation of the soul. And for those who habitually thus live, Christ lays down laws by which they become illustrious and praiseworthy. For He said, "Possess neither silver nor gold: nor two coats, nor scrip, nor brass in your purses." And again, "Make for yourselves purses that grow not old: a treasure that does not fail for ever in heaven." And when a young man drew near saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" "Go, He answered, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven, and come after Me." To those therefore who bow down to Him the obedient neck of their minds, He both gives commandments and appoints laws: He lays down for them precepts, distributes to them the heavenly inheritance, gives them spiritual blessings, and is a storehouse for them of never-failing gifts. While for those who think only of earthly things, and whose heart is set on wealth, and their mind hardened, and unmerciful, and without gentleness or love for the poor, to such He will justly say, "Who set Me as ruler or divider over you? He rejects the man therefore as troublesome, and as having no desire to learn ought fitting for him to know.

But He does not leave us without instruction: for having found, so to speak, a seasonable opportunity, He frames a profitable and saving discourse; and protesting as it were against them, declares, "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness." He showed us that pitfall of the devil, covetousness, a thing hateful to God, and which the wise Paul even calls idolatry, perhaps as being suitable for those only who know not God, or as being equal in the balance with the defilement of those men who choose to serve stocks and stones. It is a snare of evil spirits, by which they drag down man's soul to the meshes of hell. For this reason He says very justly, as setting them on their guard, "Take heed and keep yourselves from all covetousness:" that is, from great and small, and from defrauding any one whoever he may be. For as I said, it is a thing hateful to God and men. For who does not flee from him who uses violence, and is rapacious and greedy, and ready for iniquity in those things to which he has no right, and who with avaricious hand gathers that which is not his? What beast of prey does not such a man surpass in savageness? Than what rocks is he not more hard? For the heart of him who is defrauded is torn, and even melted sometimes by the penetrating pain as it were by fire: but he takes pleasure therein, and is merry, and makes the pains of them that suffer a cause of rejoicing. For the wronged man is sure generally to be one without power, who can but raise his eyes to Him Who alone is able to be angry for what he has suffered. And He, because He is just and good, accepts his supplication, and pities the tears of the sufferer, and brings punishment on those who have done the wrong.

And this you may learn from what He Himself says thereupon by the mouth of the holy prophets; "Therefore because you have bruised the heads of the poor, and taken from them chosen gifts, you shall build houses of carved stone, but you shall not dwell therein: and you shall plant desirable vineyards, but you shall not drink of their wine. For I know your many wickednesses, and mighty are your sins." And again, "Woe unto those who add house to house, and join field to field, that they may take away something from their neighbour. Will you dwell alone in the earth? For these things have been heard in the ears of the Lord of hosts. For though your houses be many, they shall be a desolation: though they be great and fair, there shall be none to inhabit them. For the ground that ten yoke of oxen till shall produce one pitcher full: and he that sows six artabae shall gather three measures," Although therefore

houses and fields may be the fruit of the oppression of others, yet these, He says, shall lie waste, without inhabitants, and shall yield no profit whatsoever to those who will act wickedly, because the just wrath of God is poured out upon them. In every way therefore there is no profit in covetousness.

And to view it in yet another light; it avails nothing, because a man's life, as He says, is not from his possessions, by reason of his having a superfluity. And this is plainly true: for the duration of a man's life is not extended in proportion to his wealth, nor does the sum of his life run parallel with that of his wicked gains. And this the Saviour has clearly and manifestly shown us, by very excellently adding the present parable in connexion with His previous argument. "For the ground, He said, of a certain rich man brought forth abundant crops." Consider it exactly, that you may admire the beautiful art of the discourse. For He has not pointed out to us an estate of which one portion only brought forth abundant harvests; but the whole of it was fertile for its owner, showing thereby the vastness of his wealth. Similar to this is that passage of one of the holy apostles; "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped your land, which is of you kept back by fraud, cries out: and the supplications of those that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." The Saviour therefore said that all his estate brought forth abundant harvests.

What therefore does the rich man do, surrounded by a profusion of so many blessings beyond all numbering? In distress and anxiety he utters the words of poverty. "For what, he says, shall I do? The man who is in want of necessaries constantly ejaculates this miserable language: but lo! one here of boundless wealth uses similar expressions. He determined then to build more spacious storehouses: he purposed to enjoy for himself alone those revenues that were sufficient for a populous city. He looks not to the future; he raises not his eyes to God; he does not count it worth his while to gain for the mind those treasures which are above in heaven: he does not cherish love for the poor, nor desire the estimation to be gained thereby: he sympathizes not with suffering; it gives him no pain, nor awakens his pity. And what is still more irrational, he settles for himself the duration of his life, as if he would reap this too from the ground: for he says, "I will say to myself, Self, you have goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, enjoy thyself." 'But, O rich man, one may say, you have indeed storehouses for your fruits, but from where will you obtain your many years? for by the decree of God your life is shortened. For God, it tells us, said unto him, You fool, this night they shall require of you your soul. But whose shall these things be that you have prepared?'

It is true therefore, that a man's life is not from his possessions, by reason of his having a superfluity: but very blessed, and of glorious hope is he who is rich towards God. And who is he? Evidently one who loves not wealth, but virtue rather, and to whom few things are sufficient: and whose hand is open to the necessities of the indigent, comforting the sorrows of those in poverty, according to his means, and the utmost of his power. It is he who gathers in the storehouses that are above, and lays up treasures in heaven. Such a one shall find the usury of his virtue, and the recompense of his upright and blameless life; Christ shall bless him: by Whom, and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

#### **Sermon 90.**

**12:22-31. And He said unto His disciples; Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what you shall eat: nor for your body, what you shall put**

***on. For the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment. Consider the ravens, that they sow not nor reap: which have neither closet nor store, and God feeds them: how much more are you better than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add to his stature one cubit? If you then be not able to do even that which is least, why are you anxious about any thing else? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin: but I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will He you, O you of little faith? And seek not what you shall eat, nor what you shall drink, neither let your mind be unsettled: for all these things the nations of the world seek after: but your Father knows that you have need of them. But seek His kingdom, and all these things shall be added unto you.***

THE law of Moses was ordained for the Israelites, to guide them unto all which it was their duty to do, and to set clearly before them whatever was for their benefit. And they made this a matter of the greatest joy, saying, "Blessed are the children of Israel: for unto us are made known the things that please the Lord." But I affirm, that we can even more fitly and appropriately use these words: for it was not a prophet, nor yet an angel, who spake unto us, but the Son in His own person, even He Who is Lord of the holy angels and of the prophets. And this the wise Paul, the minister of His mysteries, clearly teaches us, thus writing; "God, Who in manifold parts and manifold manners spoke in old times to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by the Son, Whom He has appointed Heir of all; and by Whom also He made the worlds." Blessed therefore are we, in that we are taught by Himself His good and saving will, by which we are guided into all virtuous pursuits, that having so fulfilled a life worthy of emulation, such as befits the elect, we may reign with Him.

Observe therefore how carefully, and with what great skill He fashions the lives of the holy apostles unto spiritual excellence. But with them He benefits us also: for He wills that all mankind should be saved, and should choose the wise and more excellent life. For this reason He makes them abandon superfluous anxiety, and does not permit them to practise a careworn and urgent industry through the wish of gathering what exceeds their necessities; for in these matters a superfluity adds nothing to our benefit. "Be not anxious therefore, He says, for your life, what you shall eat: nor for your body, what you shall put on. For the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment." He did not simply say, "Be not anxious;" but added "for your life:" that is, do not expend any careful study on these things, but bestow your earnestness on things of far higher importance. For the life indeed is of more importance than food, and the body than raiment. Since therefore a risk is laid upon us that concerns both life and body, and pain and punishment are decreed against those who will not live uprightly, let all anxiety be laid aside respecting raiment and food.

And besides how is it not a base thing for those who are lovers of virtue, and earnest followers after such manly virtues as are excellent and approved of God, to be intoxicated with fine apparel like young boys, and to run after expensive banquets! For there follow immediately upon these things a savage crowd also of other lusts: and the result is apostasy from God: for it is written, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." And again; "Know you not that the love of the world is enmity with God!" It is our duty therefore to keep our foot apart from all worldly desires, and rather to take delight in those things which please God.

But perchance you will reply to this, 'Who then will give us the necessaries of life?' And to this be our answer as follows; The Lord is worthy to be trusted; and He clearly promises it to you, and by little things gives you full assurance that He will be true also in that which is great. "For consider, He says, the ravens: that they sow not, nor reap: they have neither closet nor store: and God feeds them." For just as, when He was strengthening us unto spiritual fortitude, He taught us to despise even death itself by saying, "Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul;" and in the same way to make His providence plain to you, used for His proof things utterly valueless, saying; "Are not two sparrows sold for one halfpenny? and not one of them falls to the ground without your Father: and the individual hairs of your head are all counted: fear not therefore; for you are of more value than many sparrows:" so also here, from the birds and the flowers of the field, he produces in you a firm and unwavering faith. Nor does He permit us at all to doubt, but that most certainly He will grant us His mercy, and stretch out His comforting hand, to bestow upon us in all things a sufficiency. It is moreover a very wicked thing, that while those who are placed under the yoke of bodily slavery depend upon their masters, as sufficient to supply them with food and clothing; we will not consent to put our trust in Almighty God, when He promises us the necessaries of life.

And what benefit at all is there in living luxuriously? Or rather, will it not bring with it utter destruction? For quickly of a certainty there enter along with luxurious pleasures the infamies of sensuality, and the assaults of base and contemptible lusts;----things whose approach is difficult to combat. And the being clad too in splendid apparel is of no benefit whatsoever. "For consider," He says, "the lilies, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin. I tell you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these." And this also is true: for both in lilies and other flowers that spring up in the fields, the lustre of the colours possesses an admirable beauty, both by the diversity of the hues, and the variety of the arrangement, as they glitter in their natural purple, or shine with the brilliancy of other colours: but all that is made by the art of man in imitation of them, whether by the painter's skill, or in embroidery, altogether falls short of the reality: and even though it be successful as a work of art, it scarcely even approaches the truth.

If therefore these representations by means of art, are so inferior to the glory of the lily, and the beautiful colours of other flowers, how is it not true, that even Solomon, though so magnificent a king, in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these? Vain therefore is our toil for beautiful apparel. Sufficient is it for men of sense that their raiment being such as necessity requires should be decorous, and easily procurable; and with it such a bare sufficiency of food as merely satisfies the demands of nature. Let their banquet in Christ be sufficient for the saints: a banquet spiritual, divine, and intellectual: and the glory that will follow. "For He shall change the body of our humiliation into the likeness of the body of His glory;" and as He Himself says, " They shall shine like the sun in the glory of their Father." What garments therefore are not surpassed in splendour by the magnificence that is in Christ?

And in another view it was unbecoming for those who were to be the type and pattern for others of holy conduct, themselves carelessly to fall into those things, which as soon as they became the world's teachers, they would have to warn others to abandon. And it would have been no slight injury both to their zeal, and to the usefulness of their sacred preaching, for the disciples to have been burdened with the care of worldly pursuits. On the contrary, it was their duty with determined mind entirely to disregard such things, and simply and earnestly to be

anxious for apostolic victories. Very justly for this reason He openly rebrotes the pursuit of the things of time, "for the nations of the world," He says, "seek after them:" and raises them to the unwavering conviction, that certainly and under all circumstances they will have enough, because their Father well knows of what things they have need, even He Who is in heaven. And at a most fitting season He calls Him Father, that they may know, that He will not forget His children, but be kind and loving unto them.

Let us seek, therefore, not such food as is unnecessary and superfluous, but whatsoever tends unto the salvation of the soul: not raiment of great price, but how to deliver our body from the fire, and from judgment. And this let us do, seeking His kingdom; even all that will aid us in becoming partakers of the kingdom of Christ: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen. **Sermon 91.**

**12:32-34. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom,. Sell your possessions, and give alms: make you purses that do not grow old: and a treasure in heaven that does not fail, where no thief approaches, nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**

AGAIN the Saviour deigns to bestow upon us a pathway to eternal life, and opens wide the door of salvation; that travelling thereon, and adorning the soul with every virtue, we may attain to the city which is above, and of which the prophet Isaiah also bore witness, saying; "Your eyes shall see Jerusalem, the wealthy city, even the tents that shake not." For immoveable is that tabernacle which is in heaven, and unending joy is the lot of those that dwell therein. And the nature of the way that leads us thereto He shows us, by saying; "Fear not, little flock: for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." This therefore is indeed spiritual consolation, and the pathway that leads us to assured faith.

I think, however, that I ought first of all to show you the reason why the Saviour spake words such as these; for so the full signification of the passage before us will become the more plain to the hearers. In teaching therefore His disciples not to be covetous of wealth, He also withdraws them from worldly anxiety, and from vain toils and luxury and splendour of attire, and whatsoever evil habits follow upon these things: and bids them rather courageously be earnest in the pursuit of these things, [which <sup>1</sup> are good and more excellent, by saying; "Be not anxious for your life, what you shall eat: nor for your body, what you shall put on. For the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment?" And He also] added to this, that "your Father which is in heaven knows that these things are needed by you." And, so to speak, He enounced as a general law, useful and necessary for salvation, not only to the holy apostles, but to all who dwell upon the earth, that men must seek His kingdom, as being sure that what He gives will be sufficient, so as for them to be in need of nothing. For what does He say? "Fear not, little flock." And by Do not fear, He means that they must believe that certainly and without doubt their heavenly Father will give the means of life to them that love Him. He will not neglect His own: rather He will open unto them His hand, which ever fills the universe with goodness.

And what is the proof of these things? "It is," He says, "your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And He Who gives things thus great and precious, and bestows the kingdom of heaven, what unwillingness can there be on His part to be kind towards us; or how will He not supply us with food and clothing? For what earthly good is equal to the kingdom of heaven? or

what is worthy to be compared with those blessings, which God is about to bestow, and which neither the understanding can conceive, nor words describe? "For eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him." When you praise earthly wealth, and admire worldly power, these things are but as nothing compared with that which is in store. "For all flesh," it says, "is grass: and all the glory of man as the flower of grass." And if you speak of temporal affluence and luxuries and banquets, yet "the world," it says, "passes away, and the desire thereof." The things therefore which are of God surpass in an incomparable degree ought which this world possesses. If therefore God bestow the kingdom of heaven upon those that love Him, how can He be unwilling to give food and raiment?

And He calls these on earth a "little flock." For we are inferior to the multitude of the angels, who are innumerable, and incomparably surpass in might our mortal things. And this too the Saviour has Himself taught us, in that parable in the Gospels so excellently framed for our instruction: for He said, "What man of you, that has a hundred sheep, and one of them go astray, will not leave the ninety and nine upon the mountains, and go to seek that which has strayed? And if he chance to find it, verily I say unto you, that he will rejoice in it more than in the ninety and nine which went not astray." Observe therefore, that while the number of rational created beings extends to ten times ten, the flock that is upon earth is but as one out of a hundred. But though it is little, both by nature and number and dignity, compared with the countless troops of the spirits that are above, yet has the goodness of the Father, which surpasses all description, given also to it the portion of those transcendent spirits, I mean the kingdom of heaven: for permission is given to whosoever will to attain thereunto.

¶ [And the means by which we may attain to it, we learn from the Saviour's words: for He says, "Sell that you have, and give alms." And this perchance] is a commandment hard and difficult for the rich to endure: for so He Himself has somewhere said; "That hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God." And yet the commandment is not impossible for them that are of perfect mind. For come, let me address a few words to those who are rich. Withdraw your attention a little from these temporal things; cease from too worldly a mind; fix the eye of the understanding upon the world that is to be hereafter: for that is of long duration; but this is limited and short: the time of every individual's life here is allotted by measure; but his life in the world to come is incorruptible and enduring. Let our earnestness therefore after things to come be unwavering: let us store up as our treasure the hope of what will be hereafter: let us gather beforehand for ourselves those things, by which we shall even then be counted worthy of the gifts which God bestows.

To persuade us, however, to take due care of our souls, come, and let us consider the matter among ourselves with reference to men's ordinary calculations. Suppose one of us wanted to sell a fertile and productive farm, or, if you will, a very beautifully-built house; and so one of you, who had plenty of gold and plenty of silver, were to conceive the desire of purchasing it; would he not feel pleasure in buying it, and readily give the money that was laid up in his coffers, and even add to what he had by him other money on loan? Of this I think there can be no doubt, and that he would feel pleasure in giving it: for the transaction would not expose him to loss, but rather the expectation of his future gains would make him in a flutter of joy. Now what I say is somewhat similar to this. The God of all offers to sell you paradise. There you will reap eternal life; an unending joy; an honourable and glorious habitation. Once there, right blessed will you be, and will reign with Christ. Draw near therefore with eagerness: purchase the estate: with these earthly things obtain things eternal: give that which abides

not, and gain that which is secure: give these earthly things, and win that which is in heaven: give that which you must leave, even against your will, that you may not lose things hereafter: lend to God your wealth, that you may be really rich.

And the way in which to lend it He next teaches us, saying; "Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make you purses that grow not old: and a treasure that fails not, eternal, in "heaven." And the very same the blessed David also teaches us in the Psalms, where he says by inspiration of every merciful and good man: "He has dispersed, and given to the poor, and his righteousness is stored up for ever." For worldly wealth has many foes: for thieves are numerous, and this world of ours is full of oppressors; of whom some are wont to plunder by secret means, while others use violence, and tear it away even from those who resist. But the wealth that is laid up above in heaven, no one injures: for God is its Keeper, Who sleeps not.

And besides it is a very absurd thing, that while we often entrust men of probity with our earthly wealth, and feel no fear lest any loss should result from our confidence in the uprightness of those who receive it; we will not trust it to God, Who receives from us these earthly things, so to speak, as a loan, and promises to give us things eternal, and that with usury. "For good measure," He says, "and pressed close, and weighing down the scale, and running over, shall they give into your bosom." And for the measure to run over, is a direct proof of its great abundance. Away then with this pleasure-loving wealth; this parent of base lusts; this inciter to carnal impurity; this friend of covetousness; this worker of boasting: which, as with indissoluble bonds, chains the human mind in effeminacy and indolence towards all that is good, and stretches out, so to speak, a stiff and haughty neck against God: for it yields not itself to that yoke which would lead it unto piety. And be gentle, and merciful, ready to communicate, and courteous. For the Lord is true, Who says; "that where your treasure is, there is your heart also." For the whole earnestness of those who value these temporal things is set upon them; while those who wish for that which is in heaven, direct thither the eye of the mind. Be therefore, as I said, friendly to your companions, and merciful. And the blessed Paul makes me speak unto you, where he writes; "Charge them who are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in riches, wherein is no reliance, but on God, Who gives us all things richly to enjoy: that they do good: that they be rich in good works, ready to give, and willing to share with others; laying up for themselves treasures that shall be a good foundation for that which is to come, that they may lay hold upon true life." These are the things which, if we earnestly practise, we shall become heirs of the kingdom of heaven, by Christ; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and over, Amen.

#### **Sermon 92.**

**12:35-40. *Let your loins be girt, and your lamps burning, and be like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the banquet: that when he has come and knocked they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom their lord at his coming shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that he will gird up his loins, and make them sit down to meat, and pass by and minister unto them. And if he come in the second watch, or if he come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief would come, he would be awake, and not have suffered his house to be dug through. Be you therefore also ready, for in an hour that you expect not the Son of man cometh.***

THE Psalmist has somewhere said unto Christ, the Saviour of all; "Your commandment is exceeding broad." And any one may see if he will from the very facts that this saying is true: for He establishes for us pathways in countless numbers, so to speak, to lead us unto salvation, and make us acquainted with every good work, that we, winning for our heads the crown of piety, and imitating the noble conduct of the saints, may attain to that portion which is fitly prepared for them. For this reason He says, "Let your loins be girt, and your lamps burning." For He speaks to them as to spiritually-minded persons, and describes once again things intellectual by such as are apparent and visible.

For let no one say, that He wishes us to have our bodily loins girt, and burning lamps in our hands:----such an interpretation would suit only Jewish dullness:----but our loins being girt, signifies the readiness of the mind to labour industriously in every thing praiseworthy; for such as apply themselves to bodily labours, and are engaged in strenuous toil, have their loins girt. And the lamp apparently represents the wakefulness of the mind, and intellectual cheerfulness. And we say that the human mind is awake when it repels any tendency to slumber off into that carelessness, which often is the means of bringing it into subjection to every kind of wickedness, when being sunk in stupor the heavenly light within it is liable to be endangered, or even already is in danger from a violent and impetuous blast, as it were, of wind. Christ therefore commands us to be awake: and to this His disciple also arouses us by saying; Be awake: be watchful." And further, the very wise Paul also says; "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead: and Christ shall give you light."

It is the duty therefore of those who would be partakers of eternal life, and firmly believe that in due season Christ will descend from heaven as Judge, not to be lax, and dissolved in pleasures; nor, so to speak, poured out and melted in worldly dissipation: but rather let them have their will tightly girt, and distinguish themselves by their zeal in labouring in those duties with which God is well pleased. And they must further possess a vigilant and wakeful mind, distinguished by the knowledge of the truth, and richly endowed with the radiance of the vision of God; so as for them, rejoicing therein, to say, "You, O Lord, will light my lamp: You, my God, will lighten my darkness."

Quite unbecoming is an expression like this for heretics, whether they be the sectaries or the teachers. For as Christ Himself said, "Darkness has blinded their eyes." And this Paul explains to us, saying, that "the god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ may not shine upon them." It is our duty therefore carefully to avoid their false speaking, and not to turn aside from the doctrines of the truth; and admit into our minds the darkness of the devil; but rather to draw near to the true light, even Christ, praising Him in psalms and sayings "Lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not for death." For it is in very deed death, and that not of the body, but of the soul, to fall from the uprightness of true doctrines, and choose falsehood instead of the truth. Let therefore our loins be girt, and our lamps burning, according to what has here been spoken unto us.

And let us know that the law also of the very wise Moses is found to have commanded something of the kind to the Israelites. For a lamb was sacrificed on the fourteenth day of the first month, as a type of Christ. "For our passover, Christ is sacrificed," according to the testimony of most sacred Paul. The hierophant Moses then, or rather God by his means, commanded them, when eating its flesh, saying, "Let your loins be girt, and your shoes on your feet, and your staves in your hands." For I affirm that it is the duty of those who are partakers of Christ, to beware of a barren indolence; and yet further, not to have as it were

their loins ungirt and loose, but be ready cheerfully to undertake whatever labours become the saints; and to hasten besides with alacrity whithersoever the law of God leads them. And for this reason He very appropriately made them wear [at the passover] the garb of travellers.

And that we ought to look for the coming again of Christ from heaven;----for He will come in the glory of the Father with the holy angels;----He has taught us saying, "That we must be like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the banqueting-house, that when he has come and knocked, they may open to him immediately." For Christ will return as from a feast: by which is plainly shown, that God over dwells in festivals, such as befit Him. For above there is no sadness whatsoever: since nothing can grieve That nature Which is incapable of passion, and of being affected by anything whatsoever of this kind.

When therefore He comes and finds us girt and wakeful, and with our heart enlightened, then forthwith He will make us blessed: for "He will gird up His loins, and serve them." By which we learn that he will requite us proportionately: and because we are as it were weary with toil, He will comfort us, setting before us spiritual banquets, and spreading the abundant table of His gifts.

"And whether He come in the second watch, it says, or whether He come in the third watch, blessed are they." Here observe I pray, the breadth of the divine gentleness, and the bountifulness of His mildness towards us. For verily He knows our frame, and the readiness with which man's mind wanders into sin. He knows that the power of fleshly lust tyrannizes over us, and that the distractions of this world even, so to speak, against our will drag us on by force, leading the mind into all that is unseemly. But in that He is good, He does not leave us to despair, but on the contrary, pities us, and has given us repentance as the medicine of salvation. For this reason He says, that "whether He come in the second watch, or whether He come in the third watch, and find them so doing, blessed are they." Now the meaning of this you will certainly wish clearly to understand. Men therefore divide the night into three or four watches. For the sentinels on city walls, who watch the motions of the enemy, after being on guard three or four hours, deliver over the watch and guard to others. So with us there are three ages: the first, that in which we are still children; the second, in which we are young men; and the third, that in which we come to old age. Now the first of these, in which we are still children, is not called to account by God, but is deemed worthy of pardon, because of the imbecillity as yet of the mind, and the weakness of the understanding. But the second and the third, the periods of manhood and old age, owe to God obedience and piety of life, according to His good pleasure. Whosoever therefore is found watching, and, so to speak, well girt, whether, if it so chance, he be still a young man, or one who has arrived at old age, blessed shall he be. For he shall be counted worthy of attaining to Christ's promises.

And in commanding us to watch, He adds further for our safety a plain example, which very excellently shows that it is dangerous to act otherwise. For He says, "that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief would come, he would be awake, and not have suffered his house to be dug through. Be you therefore also ready, for in an hour that you expect not, the Son of man comes." For as His disciple said, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief, in which the heavens shall suddenly pass away, and the elements being on fire shall melt, and the earth, and the works that are therein shall be utterly burned. But we look for new heavens and a new earth, and His promises." And to this he adds, "Since then all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be found, being holy and without blame before Him? " For no one at all knows the time of the consummation of all

things, at which Christ shall appear from above, from heaven, to judge the world in righteousness. Then shall He give an incorruptible crown to them that are watching; for He is the Giver, and Distributor, and Bestower of the Divine gifts: by Whom, and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

### **Sermon 93.**

**12:41-48. And Peter said, Lord do You speak this parable unto us, or also unto all? And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give the portion of food in its season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord at his coming shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will appoint him over all that he has. But if that servant say in his heart, My lord delays his coming, and begin to beat the men servants and female servants, and to eat and drink, and be drunken: the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he expects not, and at an hour of which he is not aware, and will cut him asunder, and give him a portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who knew his lord's will, and did it not, neither prepared according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But He who knew it not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will require the more.**

IT is a good and saving thing for us to direct the penetrating glance of the mind unto the words of God. For it is written of the words which God speaks, "Who is wise, and he will understand them? or prudent, and he will know their meaning?" For simply to hear, and receive the spoken word in the ear, is common to all men, both to the wise, and to those who are not so: but the habit of penetrating deep into profitable thoughts is found only with those who are truly wise. Let us therefore ask this of Christ: let us imitate the blessed Peter, that chosen disciple, that faithful steward and true believer; who, when he had heard Christ say somewhat highly advantageous for their benefit, prayed that it might be explained to him, and did not allow it to pass by, because he had not as yet clearly understood it. For he said, "Lord, speak You this parable unto us, or also unto all? Is it, he asks, a general law, and one that appertains in equal measure to all, or is it fitting for those only who are superior to the rest? What then was it which troubled the wise disciple, or what led him to wish to learn things such as this from Christ? This point then we will first discuss.

There are then some commandments which befit those who have attained to apostolic dignities, or possess a more than ordinary knowledge, and the higher spiritual virtues; while others belong to those in an inferior station. And that this is true, and according to my words, we may see from what the blessed Paul wrote unto certain of his disciples, "I have given you milk to drink, and not meat: for you were not as yet strong enough, nor even yet could you bear it." "For solid food belongs to them that are full grown, who by reason of perfectness have the senses of the heart exercised for the discerning of good and evil." For just, for instance, as very heavy burdens can be carried by persons of a very powerful frame, to which men of weaker stature are unequal, so those of a vigorous mind may justly be expected to fulfil the weightier and more excellent commands among those which become the saints; while such as are, so to speak, simple, and quite easy, and free from all difficulty, suit those who have not yet attained to this spiritual strength. The blessed Peter therefore, considering with himself the force of what Christ had said, rightly asked, which of the two was meant; whether

the declaration referred to all believers, or only to them; that is, to those who had been called to the discipleship, and especially honoured by the grant of apostolic powers?

And what is our Lord's reply? He makes use of a clear and very evident example, to show that the commandment especially belongs to those who occupy a more dignified position, and have been admitted into the rank of teachers. "For who, He says, is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord will set over his household, to give the allowance of food at its season," 'Let us suppose, He says, a householder; who being about to go upon a journey,, has entrusted to one of his faithful slaves the charge of all his house, to give his household, that is, his servants, their allowance of corn at its due season. When therefore, He says, he shall return, if on coming to his house he shall find him so doing as he commanded, very blessed shall that servant be. For he will set him, He says, over all that he has. But if he be neglectful and indolent, and take pleasure in oppressing his fellow-servants, eating and drinking, and given up to self-indulgent voluptuousness, he will be cut asunder, that is, will have to bear the severest punishment, when his lord shall come to him in a day that he expects not, and at an hour of which he is not aware.'

Such then is the simple and plain meaning of the passage: but if we now fix our mind accurately upon it, we shall see what is signified by it, and how useful it is for their benefit who have been called to the apostleship, to the office, that is, of teacher. The Saviour has ordained as stewards, so to speak, over his servants;----that is, over those who have been won by faith to the acknowledgment of His glory;----men faithful and of great understanding, and well instructed in the sacred doctrines. And He has ordained them, commanding them to give their fellow-servants their allowance of food; and that not simply and without distinction, but rather at its proper season: by which is meant such food, I mean spiritual food, as is sufficient and fitting for each individual. For it is not fitting to address simply to all who have believed in Christ instruction upon all points; for it is written, "With knowledge learn the souls of your flock." For very different is the way in which we establish in the paths of truth one who has but just now become a disciple, using simple teaching, in which there is nothing profound nor difficult to understand, counselling him to escape from the error of polytheism, and fittingly persuading him to discern by the beauty of things created, the universal Creator and Artificer, Who is One by nature, and verily God: from the way in which we instruct those who are more confirmed in mind, and able to understand what is the height and depth, and what the length and breadth, of the definitions of the supreme Godhead. For as we have already said, "Solid meat belongs to them that are full grown."

Whoever therefore shall wisely in due season, and according to their need, divide to his fellow-servants their portion, that is, their food, very blessed shall he be, according to the Saviour's word. For he shall be counted worthy of still greater things, and shall receive a suitable recompense for his fidelity. "For he will set him, He says, over all that he has." And this the Saviour has elsewhere taught us, where praising the active and faithful servant, He said, "O good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over few things, I will set you over many things: enter into the joy of your lord."

But if, He says, neglecting the duty of being diligent and faithful, and despising watchfulness in these things as superfluous, he let his mind grow intoxicated with worldly cares, and is seduced into improper courses, dragging by force, and oppressing those who are subject to him, and not giving them their portion, in utter wretchedness shall he be. For this I think, and this only, is the meaning of his being cut asunder. "And his portion too," He says, "shall be

with the unbelievers." For whosoever has done wrong to the glory of Christ, or ventured to think slightingly of the flock entrusted to his charge, differs in no respect whatsoever from those who know Him not: and all such persons will justly be counted among those who have no love for Him. For Christ even once said to the blessed Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me? feed My sheep; feed My lambs." If therefore he who feeds his flock loves it, then of course he that neglects it, and leaves the flock that has been entrusted to him without oversight, hates it: and if he hate it he will be punished, and be liable to the condemnation pronounced upon the unbelievers, as being convicted by the very facts of being negligent and contemptuous. Such was he who received the talent to trade with in things spiritual, and did not do so, but on the contrary brought that which had been given him without increase, saying, "Lord, I knew that you are a hard man, that you reap where others have sown, and gather whence others have scattered; and I was afraid, and hid the talent: lo! you have what is yours." But those who had received the five talents, or even yet more, and laboured and loved service, were honoured with glorious dignities. For they heard, the one of them, "Be you over ten," and the other, "Be you over five cities:" while that contumelious and slothful servant suffered the severest condemnation. To be negligent therefore in discharging the duties of the ministry is everywhere dangerous, or rather, brings upon men perdition: but to perform them with unwearying zeal earns for us life and glory. And this means to discourse to our fellow servants correctly and without error the things which relate to God, and whatsoever is able to benefit them in attaining both to the knowledge and the ability to walk uprightly. And the blessed Paul [Peter] also writes to certain persons, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, that when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, you may receive your reward." And as knowing that slothfulness is the door of perdition, he again said, "Woe is me, if I preach not."

And that bitter and inevitable punishment is threatened against those who are slothful in this duty, the Saviour immediately showed, by adding to what had been already said two examples one after the other. "For the servant," He says, "who knew his master's will, and did it not, neither prepared according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes: but he who knew it not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." Now the guilt is indisputable in the case of him who knew his master's will, but afterwards neglected it, and did nothing that was fitting, and which it was his duty to do. For it is manifest contumely, and therefore the many stripes. But for what reason were the few stripes inflicted on him who neither knew nor did his master's will? For some one, for instance, may say, How can he who knew it not be guilty? The reason is, because he would not know it, although it was in his power to learn. But if he who is entirely ignorant of it does not escape from anger, because when it was his duty to know he neglected the means of learning, what plea can deliver him from justly bearing many stripes, who knew, and disregarded it? "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will require the more."

Very severe therefore is the condemnation of those who teach. And this Christ's disciple shows us, saying, "Let there not be many teachers among you, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." For abundant is the bestowal of spiritual gifts upon those who are the chiefs of the people: for so the wise Paul also somewhere wrote to the blessed Timothy; "The Lord shall give you wisdom in every thing." And, "Despise not the gift that is in you, which was given you by the laying on of my hands." From such as these then, the Saviour of all, in that He has given them much, requires much in return. And what are the virtues He requires? Constancy in the faith; correctness in teaching; to be well grounded in hope; unwavering in patience; invincible in spiritual strength; cheerful and brave in every more

excellent achievement: that so we may be examples to others of the evangelic life. For if we will thus live, Christ will bestow upon us the crown; by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

#### **Sermon 94.**

**12:49-53. *I am come to cast fire upon the earth: and what will I, if already it be kindled? And I have a baptism to be baptized with: and how am I straitened, until it be accomplished! You think that I am come to give peace upon earth: I tell you, Nay, but division. For henceforth there shall be five in one house divided; three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.***

GOD the Father for the salvation of all sent down for us the Son from heaven. For to the Israelites indeed He gave the law to be their helper, according to the Scripture; and also spoke to them by the holy prophets such things as were profitable for their salvation, promising them the deliverance that is by Christ. But when the season had arrived, in which those things that had been prophesied of old were to be accomplished, He Who is God and Lord shone forth upon us. And He tells us the cause thereof in these words; "I am come to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I if already it be kindled? Come therefore, and let us examine of what nature is this fire, concerning which He here speaks. Is it useful for those upon earth? Is it for their salvation? Or does it torture men, and cause their perdition, like that which is prepared for the devil and his angels?"

We affirm therefore that the fire which is sent forth by Christ is for men's salvation and profits': God grant that all our hearts may be full thereof. For the fire here is, I say, the saving message of the Gospel, and the power of its commandments; by which all of us upon earth, who were so to speak cold and dead because of sin, and in ignorance of Him Who by nature and truly is God, are kindled unto a life of piety, and made "fervent in spirit," according to the expression of the blessed Paul. And besides this we are also made partakers of the Holy Spirit, Who is as fire within us. For we have been baptized with fire and the Holy Spirit. And we have learnt the way thereto, by what Christ says to us: for listen to His words; "Verily I say unto you, that except a man be born of water and spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

It is the custom moreover of the divinely inspired Scripture to give the name of fire sometimes to the divine and sacred words, and to the efficacy and power which is by the Holy Spirit, and whereby we are made, as I said, "fervent in spirit." For one of the holy prophets thus spoke as in the person of God respecting Christ our common Saviour: "The Lord, Whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, Whom you desire: behold He comes, says the Lord. And who shall endure the day of His coming? or who shall stand at the sight of Him? For lo! He comes like the fire of a furnace, and like the sulphur of the bleacher. And He shall sit, like one that smelts and purifies as silver and as gold." Now by the temple he here means the body, holy of a truth and undefiled, which was born of the holy virgin by the Holy Spirit in the power of the Father. For so was it said to the blessed virgin, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you." And he styles Him the Messenger of the covenant," because He makes known and ministers unto us the good-will of the Father. For He has Himself said to us, "All things that I have

heard of the Father, I have made known unto you." And the prophet Isaiah also thus writes respecting Him; "Unto us a Child is born; yes, unto us a Son is given: and His government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called, The Messenger of the great counsel." Just therefore as those who know how to refine gold and silver, melt out the dross contained in them by the use of fire; so also the Saviour of all cleanses by the doctrines of the Gospel in the power of the Spirit, the mind of all those who have believed in Him.

And further the prophet Isaiah also said, that "He saw the Lord of Sabaoth sitting upon a throne high, and lifted up: and around Him stood the Seraphim, praising Him. Then said He to himself, Alas for me a sinner, for I repent me: in that being a man, and of unclean lips, I dwell among a people of unclean lips, and have seen with my eyes the King, the Lord of Sabaoth." But to this he adds, that "one of the Seraphim was sent unto me, and in his hand he had a live coal, which he had taken with the tongs from the altar, and he touched with it my mouth, and said, Lo! this has touched your lips, and it shall take away your sins, and cleanse you of your iniquities." What interpretation then are we to put upon the coal which touched the prophet's lips, and cleansed him from all sin? Plainly it is the message of salvation, and the confession of faith in Christ, which whosoever receives with his mouth is forthwith and altogether purified. And of this Paul thus assures us; "that if you say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

We say then that the power of the divine message resembles a live coal and fire. And the God of all somewhere said to the prophet Jeremiah, "Behold, I have made My words in your mouth to be fire, and this people to be wood, and it shall devour them." And again, "Are not My words as burning fire, says the Lord? Rightly therefore did our Lord Jesus Christ say unto us, "I am come to throw fire upon earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled!" For already some of the Jewish crowd believed on Him, whose first-fruits were the divine disciples: and the fire being once kindled was soon to seize upon the whole world, immediately that the whole dispensation had attained to its completion: as soon, that is, as He had borne His precious passion upon the cross, and had commanded the bonds of death to cease. For He rose on the third day from the dead.

And this He teaches us by saying, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" And by His baptism He means His death in the flesh: and by being straitened because of it He means, that He was saddened and troubled until it was accomplished. For what was to happen when it was accomplished? That henceforth not in Judaea only should the saving message of the Gospel be proclaimed: comparing which to fire He said, "I am come to send fire upon earth:"----but that now it should be published even to the whole world. For before the precious cross, and His resurrection from the dead, His commandments and the glory of His divine miracles, were spoken of in Judaea only. But because Israel sinned against Him, for they killed the Prince of Life, as far as they were concerned, even though He arose having spoiled the grave: then immediately He gave commandment to the holy apostles in these words: "Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; and teaching them to observe all those things which I have commanded you." Behold therefore, yes see, that throughout all nations was that sacred and divine fire spread abroad by means of the holy preachers.

And of the holy apostles and evangelists Christ somewhere spoke by one of the prophets: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will make the heads of the thousands of Judaea like a firebrand among wood, and like a fiery lamp among reeds; and they shall devour on the right hand and on the left all the nations round about." For, so to speak, like fire they ate up all the nations, and fed upon the whole earth, kindling all its inhabitants, who as I said were cold, and had suffered the death of ignorance and sin.

Would you like to see the effects of this divine and rational fire? hear then again His words: "Or think you that I am come to give peace upon earth? I tell you, no, but division." And yet Christ is our peace, according to the Scriptures. "He has broken down the middle wall: He has united the two people in one now man, so making peace: and has reconciled both in one body unto the Father." He has united the things below to them that are above: how therefore did He not come to give peace upon earth? What then say we to these things?

That peace is an honourable and truly excellent thing when given by God. For the prophets also say; "Lord, grant us peace: for You have given us all things." But not every peace necessarily is free from blame: there is sometimes, so to speak, an unsafe peace, and which separates from the love of God those who, without discretion or examination, set too high a value upon it. As for instance: the determination to avoid evil men. and refuse to be at peace with them;----by which I mean the not submitting to entertain the same sentiments as they do;----is a thing profitable and useful to us. And in like manner the opposite course is injurious to those who have believed in Christ, and attained to the knowledge of His mystery: to such it is unprofitable to be willing to follow the same sentiments as those who wander away from the right path, and have fallen into the net of heathen error, or been caught in the snares of wicked heresies. With these it is honourable to contend, and to set the battle constantly in array against them, and to glory in holding opposite sentiments; so that even though it be a father that believes not, the son is free from blame who contradicts him, and resists his opinions. And in like manner also the father, if he be a believer, and true unto God, but his son disobedient and evilly disposed, and that opposes the glory of Christ, is also free from blame, if he disregard natural affection, and disowns him as his child. And the same reasoning holds with respect to mother and daughter: and daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. For it is right that those who are in error should follow those who are sound in mind: and not, on the contrary, that those should give way whose choice is to entertain correct sentiments, and who have a sound knowledge of the glory of God.

And this Christ has also declared to us in another manner; "He that loves father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me: and he that loves son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me." When therefore you deny an earthly father for your piety's sake towards Christ, then shall you gain as Father Him "Who is in heaven. And if you give up a brother because he dishonours God, by refusing to serve Him, Christ will accept you as His brother: for with His other bounties He has given us this also, saying; "I will declare Your Name unto My brethren." Leave your mother after the flesh, and take her who is above, the heavenly Jerusalem, "which is our mother:" so will you find a glorious and mighty lineage in the family of the saints. With them you will be heir of God's gifts, which neither the mind can comprehend, nor language tell. Of which may we too be counted worthy by the grace and loving-kindness of Christ, the Saviour of us all; by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

**Sermon 95.**

**12:54-59. And He said also to the multitudes, When you have seen a cloud rising out of the west, straightway you say, that rain comes; and so it is. And when [you see] the south wind blowing, you say, There will be heat: and so it is. You hypocrites! you know how to prove the face of the sky, and of the earth: how then know you not how to prove this time? and why even of yourselves judge you not what is just? For whilst you are going with him who has a suit against you in the way to the magistrate, give diligence that you may be delivered, from him; lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the exactor, and the exactor cast you into prison. I tell you, you shall not come out thence, until you have made compensation unto the last mite.**

THOSE physicians who are exact in their art, and have become proficient by great practice, deliver the sick from their maladies, by making use of many kinds of drugs, by the aid of which they appease the anguish of men's sufferings, gathering from all quarters whatever may benefit them. And this we also find Christ, the Saviour of all, here doing: for He is the Physician of spirits, and delivers us from the maladies of the soul For He even said by one of the holy prophets; "Return, you returning sons; and I will heal your breaches." And as knowing this, the prophet Jeremiah offered up his supplications unto Him in these words: "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed: save me, O Lord, and I shall be saved: for You are my glory,"

Observe, therefore, how he prepares for us the medicine of admonition, not using as He so often did direct discourse, but mingling, so to speak, and entwining with it images drawn from examples, to make it the more abundantly profitable. For He cried unto the multitudes, saying; "When you see a cloud rising out of the west, straightway you say that rain comes; and it is so. And when [you see] the south wind blowing, you say there will be heat: and so it is." For men fix their attention on things of this kind, and from long observation and practice tell beforehand when rain will fall, or gusts happen of violent winds: and one especially sees sailors very skilful in this matter. Well therefore, He says, well would it become those who can calculate things of this sort, and foretell, it may be, storms that are about to happen, to fix the penetrating glance of the mind also upon matters of importance. And what are these? The law showed beforehand the mystery of Christ; and that certainly He would shine forth in the last ages of the world upon the inhabitants of the earth, and submit to be a sacrifice for the salvation of all. For it even commanded a lamb to be sacrificed as a type of Him towards evening, and at lamp-lighting; that we might understand, that when, like the day, this world was declining to its close, the great and precious and truly-saving passion would be fulfilled: and the door of salvation be thrown widely open unto those who believe in Him, and abundant happiness be their lot. For also in the Song of Songs we find Christ calling to the bride there described, and who represents the person of the Church, in these words: "Arise, come, My neighbour, My beautiful dove: for lo! the winter is past, and the rain is gone: it has passed away. The flowers appear on the ground: the time of the pruning is come." As I said, therefore, a certain springlike calm was about to arise for those who believe in Him.

But against those, who, in the greatness of their wickedness, have scorned His goodness, and rejected the Saviour, there is decreed wrath and misery; and, as it were, a winter of torment and punishment, from the blast of which hard will it be to escape. For, as the Psalmist says; "Fire, and brimstone, and the whirlwind, is the portion of their cup." And why so? Because they have rejected, as I said, the grace that is by faith; and therefore the guilt of their sins cannot be wiped away, and they must bear, as they deserve, the punishment due to those who

love sin. For so, when speaking of the Jews, He said; "Verily I say unto you, that if you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins."

And that the blessed prophets also in manifold ways preached the mystery of Christ, no one can doubt. For one of them thus speaks as in the person of God the Father: "Behold I lay in Sion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence: and whosoever believes in Him shall not be ashamed." For those who are in their sins are full of shame. For so it is somewhere said of the Israelites, who violated the law of Moses: "Like the shame of a thief when he is caught, so shall the children of Israel be ashamed." But those who are in Christ by faith, escaping from the pollutions of sin, are not only not full of shame, but have that boldness which becomes those who are free.

It was their duty, therefore, yes! their duty, He says, as being possessed of understanding, and able to discern the face of the sky and of the earth, to examine also things future, and not to let those tempests escape their observation, which come after this world. For there will be the south wind and rain: that is to say, fiery torment. For the south wind is hot: and the infliction of that punishment is vehement and inevitable, like the rain falling upon those overtaken by it. They must not, therefore, let the time of salvation pass by unnoticed: that time in which our Saviour came, and at which perfect knowledge of the truth reached mankind, and the grace shone forth which purifies the wicked. And that, not by means of the law: for "it made nothing perfect," having only types and shadows; but by faith rather in Christ, not rejecting the law, but fulfilling it by a spiritual service. For the very wise Paul wrote; "Do we then make void the law through faith? It may not be: but we establish the law." For we who are justified by Christ establish that law of faith, which in manifold ways was proclaimed beforehand by Moses and the prophets.

That it is our duty, therefore, to be watchful, in seeking quickly to attain to deliverance from our sins, and the means of escaping from blame, before we arrive at the termination of our natural lives, He has shown, by saying; "And why even of yourselves judge you not what is just? For while you are going with him who has a suit against you, in the way to the magistrate, give diligence that you may be delivered from him; lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the exactor, and the exactor cast you into prison. I tell you, you shall not come out thence, until you have made compensation unto the last mite."

Now perhaps it may be imagined that the sense of this passage is difficult to comprehend: but it will become very easy if we examine the metaphor by what takes place among ourselves. For let there be supposed, He says, some one who has brought a charge against you before one of those in authority, and has pointed you out to those whose office it is to carry the accused into court, and is causing you to be taken thither. "While therefore, He says, you are still with him on the way," that is, before you have come to the judge, "give diligence," that is, weary not, in using all your earnestness that you may be delivered from him. For otherwise he will give you up to the judge; and then, when you have been proved to be indebted to him, you will be delivered to the exactors, to those, that is, whose office it is to exact the money; and they will cast you into prison, and make you pay the last mite.

Now all of us, without exception, upon earth are guilty of offences: he who has a suit against us and accuses us is the wicked Satan: for he is "the enemy and the exactor." While therefore we are in the way: that is, ere yet we have arrived at the termination of our life here, let us deliver ourselves from him: let us do away with the offences of which we have been guilty: let

us close his mouth: let us seize upon the grace that is by Christ, which frees us from all debt and penalty, and delivers us from fear and torment: lest if our impurity be not cleansed away, we be carried before the judge, and given over to the exactors, that is, the tormentors, from whose cruelty no man can escape: yea, rather, who will exact vengeance for every fault, whether it be great or small.

Far removed from this danger are those who search for the time of Christ's coming, and are not ignorant of His mystery, but well know that the Word, though He be God, has shone forth upon the inhabitants of earth in likeness as one of us, that freeing them from all blame, He may bless with exceeding happiness those who believe in Him, and acknowledge Him as God and the Son of God: by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

### **Sermon 96.**

**13:6-9. *And He spoke this parable. A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, but found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Lo, three years indeed I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none. Out it down therefore: why does it make the ground also barren? But he answered and said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also: until I dig around it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit in the coming [year, well], and if not, you shall cut it down.***

THE Psalmist shows the surpassing gentleness of Christ, the Saviour of us all, in these words; "Lord, what is man, that You art mindful of him, or the son of man, that You visit him?" For man upon earth, as far as his bodily nature is concerned, is dust and ashes: but he has been honoured by God, by having been made in His image and likeness: not in his bodily shape, that is, but rather because he is capable of being just and good, and fitted for all virtue. The Creator therefore takes care of him, as being His creature, and for the purpose of adorning the earth. For as the prophet Isaiah says; "He made it not in vain, but that it should be inhabited:"----inhabited of course by a rational animal, who can discern with the eyes of the mind the Creator and Artificer of the Universe, and glorify Him like the spirits that are above. Put because by the deceiving arts of the serpent he had turned aside unto wickedness, and was held fast by the chains of sin, and removed far from God, Christ, to enable him once again to mount upwards, has sought him out, and fashioned him anew to what he was at first, and granted him repentance as the pathway to lead him unto salvation.

He proposes therefore a wise parable: but we ought perhaps first to explain what was the occasion which led to it, or what at all the necessity why He brought it forward.

There were therefore certain who told Christ, the Saviour of us all, that Pilate had put to death cruelly and without pity certain Galilaeans, and mingled their blood with their sacrifices. And others that the tower near Shiloh had fallen, and eighteen persons perished beneath the ruins. And afterwards referring to these things, Christ had said to His hearers; "Verily, I say unto you, that except you repent, you also shall in like manner perish." This was the head and root of the present parable, and that at which it was, as it were, aimed.

Now the outer sense of this passage needs not a single word for its explanation: but when we search into its inward and secret and unseen purport, it is, we affirm, as follows. The

Israelites, after our Saviour's crucifixion, were doomed to fall into the miseries they deserved, Jerusalem being captured, and its inhabitants slaughtered by the sword of the enemy. Nor were they to perish thus only, but their houses were to be burnt with fire, and even the temple of God demolished. It is probable therefore that He likens the synagogue of the Jews to a fig tree; for the sacred Scripture also compares them to various plants: to the vine, for instance, and the olive, and even to a forest. For the prophet Jeremiah at one time says of Jerusalem, or rather of its inhabitants; "Israel is a vine with many branches." And again at another addressing it, he says; "The Lord has called your name a beautiful olive tree, well shaded in appearance: at its pruning time a fire was kindled in it: great was the tribulation that was upon it; its branches were destroyed." And another of the holy prophets, comparing it to Mount Lebanon, thus speaks; "Open your doors, O Lebanon, and the fire shall devour your cedars." For the forest that was in Jerusalem, even the people there, many as they were and innumerable, was destroyed as by fire. He takes therefore, as I said, the fig tree spoken of in the parable as a figure of the Jewish synagogue, that is, of the Israelites: and "three years," He says, "He sought fruit upon it, and found none." By which, I think, are signified to us those three periods during which the Jewish synagogue bore no fruit. The first of these, one may say, was that in which Moses and Aaron and his sons lived: who served God, holding the office of the priesthood according to the law. The second was the period of Jeshua, the son of Nun, and the judges who succeeded him. And the third, that in which the blessed prophets flourished down to the time of John the Baptist. During these periods Israel brought forth no fruit.

But I can imagine persons making to this the following objection; 'But lo! it did fulfil the service ordained by the law, and offered the sacrifices which consisted in the blood of victims and burning incense.' But to this we reply: that in the writings of Moses there was only a type of the truth, and a gross and material service: there was not as yet a service simple, pure, and spiritual, such as we affirm God chiefly loves, having so learnt of Christ, Who said; "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth." As far therefore as regarded the good-will of the Father, and evidently that also of the Son, the service which consisted in shadows and types was unacceptable, being utterly without fruit in whatsoever appertains to a sweet spiritual savour. And therefore it was rejected: for so the Saviour teaches us, when saying to God the Father in heaven; "Sacrifice and offering You would not: and whole burnt offerings, and sin offerings You did not require." And again by the voice of Isaiah He says Himself to those who were seeking to fulfil it: "For who has required this at your hands? Tread My court no more: if you bring fine meal, it is in vain: incense is an abomination unto Me." How therefore can that which God hates and abominates be supposed to be the rational and spiritual fruit of the soul, and acceptable unto Him?

He says therefore, "Lo, three years do I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none. Cut it down therefore: why does it make the ground also useless." As though He would say, Let the place of this barren fig tree be laid bare: for then there will come up or may be planted there some other tree. And this too was done: for the multitude of the Gentiles was summoned into its room, and took possession of the inheritance of the Israelites. It became the people of God; the plant of Paradise; a germ good and honourable; that knows how to bring forth fruit, not in shadows and types, but rather by a pure and perfectly stainless service, even that which is in spirit and in truth, as being offered to God, Who is an immaterial Being.

The owner then of the ground said, that the fig-tree, which during so long a time had been barren and without fruit, must be cut down. But the vinedresser, it says, besought him,

saying; "Lord, let it alone this year also: until I dig around it and dung it: and if it bear fruit in the coming [year, well;] and if not, you shall cut it down."

Now it is necessary to inquire, who is to be understood by the vinedresser. If then any one choose to affirm that it is the angel who was appointed by God as the guardian of the synagogue of the Jews, he would not miss a suitable interpretation. For we remember that the prophet Zechariah wrote, that one of the holy angels stood offering supplications for Jerusalem, and saying, "O Lord Almighty, how long will You not have mercy upon Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah; which You have abandoned, lo! for seventy years?" And it is written also in Exodus, that when the ruler of the land of the Egyptians with his warriors was pursuing after the Israelites, and was already upon the point of engaging with them in battle, the angel of God stood between the camp of the Israelites and of the Egyptians, and the one came not near the other all the night. There is therefore nothing unbefitting in supposing here also, that the holy angel who was the guardian of the synagogue offered supplications in its behalf, and prayed for a respite, if perchance yielding to better influence it might yet bring forth fruit.

But if any one should say that the vinedresser is the Son, this view also, has a reason on its side not unbefitting right arguments. For "He is our Advocate with the Father," "and our propitiation," and the husbandman of our souls, Who prunes away constantly whatever is to our hurt, and fills us with rational and holy seeds, that so we may bring forth for Him fruits: and so He spoke of Himself. " A sower went out to sow his seed."

And it in no respect militates against the glory of the Son, that He assumes the character of the vinedresser: for the leather is Himself also found to have taken it, without being exposed to any blame for so doing. For the Son said to the holy apostles, " I am the Vine: you are the branches: My Father is the Husbandman." For the verbal expression must from time to time be made to accord with the suppositions which are laid down.

Let Him therefore be supposed to be the Advocate in our behalf: and He says, "Let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and dung it." And what then is this year? But plainly this fourth year, this time subsequent to those former periods, is that in which the Only-begotten Word of God became man, to stir up like some husbandman by spiritual exhortations the Israelites who had withered away in sin, digging round them, and warning them, to make them "fervent in spirit." For He repeatedly denounced against them destruction and ruin, wars and slaughters, burnings and captivities, and immitigable wrath: while, on the other hand, He promised, if they would believe on Him, and now at length become fruitful trees, that he would give them life and glory, the grace of adoption, the communion of the Holy Spirit, and the kingdom of heaven. But Israel was incapable of being taught even thus. It was still a barren fig tree, and continued so to be. It was cut down, therefore, that it might not make the ground useless: and in its stead there sprung up, as a fertile plant, the gentile church, beautiful, and fruit-bearing, deeply-rooted, and incapable of being shaken. For they have been counted as children unto Abraham, and have been ingrafted into the good olive-tree: for a root has been preserved, and Israel has not utterly perished.

But that it was doomed to be cut down, on account of its utter barrenness, the blessed John the Baptist also declared in these words; "Behold the axe is laid at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." And one of the holy prophets also ...

[The rest of this (96th) Exposition, the whole of the 97th, and the commencement of the 98th, having perished, their place is supplied from Mai's *Nov. Bib. Pat.* vol. ii. pp. 315-321; and Cramer, ii. 107, where some of the following extract is given anonymously: and from the *Aurea Catena*, p. 201. ed. Venet. 1775. -- *translator*]

***Behold there was a woman, who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years.***

Now there was in the synagogue a woman who for eighteen years was bowed down by infirmity. And her case may prove of no little benefit to those who have understanding: for we must gather what is to our advantage from every quarter:----since by what happened to her we may see that Satan often receives authority over certain persons, such, namely, as fall into sin, and have grown lax in their efforts after piety. Whomsoever therefore he gets into his power, he involves, it may be, in bodily diseases, since he delights in punishment and is merciless. And the opportunity for this the all-seeing God most wisely grants him, that being sore vexed by the burden of their misery, men may set themselves upon changing to a better course. For which reason St. Paul also delivered over to Satan a certain person at Corinth accused of fornication, "for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved." The woman therefore who was bowed down is said to have suffered this from the cruelty of the devil, according to our Master's words, "Whom Satan has bound for eighteen years:" God, as I said, so permitting it, either for her own sins, or rather by the operation of a universal and general law. For the accursed Satan is the cause of disease to the bodies of men, inasmuch as Adam's transgression was, we affirm, his doing, and by means of it our human frames have become liable to infirmity and decay. But when this was the state of men. God, Who by His very nature is good, did not abandon us when suffering under the punishment of a protracted and incurable malady, but freed us from our bonds, revealing as the glorious remedy for the sufferings of mankind His own presence and manifestation in the world. For He came to fashion our state again to what it was originally: for "God, as it is written, made not death: neither has He pleasure in the destruction of the living. For He created all things that they might have their being; and healthful were the generations of the world; and there is in them no poison of destruction," " but by the envy of the devil death entered into the world."

The Incarnation of the Word, and His assumption of human nature took place for the overthrow of death and destruction, and of that envy nourished against us by the wicked serpent, who was the first cause of evil. And this is plainly proved to us by facts themselves. And so He set free the daughter of Abraham from her protracted sickness, calling out and saying, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." A speech most worthy of God, and full of supernatural power: for with the kingly inclination of His will He drives away the disease. And He also lays His hands upon her: and immediately, it says, she was made straight. And hence too it is possible to see that His holy flesh bore in it the power and activity of God. For it was His own flesh, and not that of some other Son beside Him, distinct and separate from Him, as some most impiously imagine.

***And the ruler of the synagogue answered, being indignant, that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, &c.***

And yet how ought he not rather to have wondered at Christ's having freed from her bonds this daughter of Abraham? You have seen her unexpectedly delivered from her misfortune: you were an eyewitness that the Physician prayed not, nor received as a boon from another the healing of the sick woman; but that He wrought it as a deed of power. As being the ruler of

a synagogue, you know, I suppose, the writings of Moses. You saw him praying upon every occasion, and working nothing whatsoever by his own power. For when Mariam was struck with leprosy, for having merely spoken something against him in the way of reproach, and that true, "for he had taken, she says, unto himself an Ethiopian wife," Moses could not overcome the disease, but, on the contrary, fell down before God, saying, "O God, I beseech You, heal her." And not even so, though he besought it, was the penalty of her sin remitted her. And each one of the holy prophets, if anywhere at all they wrought any miracle, is seen to have done it by the power of God. But here observe, I pray, that Christ, the Saviour of all, offers no prayer, but refers the accomplishment of the matter to His own power, healing her by a word and the touch of the hand. For being Lord and God, He manifested His own flesh as of equal efficacy with Himself for the deliverance of men from their diseases. And hence it was intended that men should understand the purport of the mystery concerning Him. Had therefore the ruler of the synagogue been a man of understanding, he would have perceived Who and how great the Saviour was from so wonderful a miracle, nor would he have talked in the same ignorant manner as the multitudes, nor have accused those occupied with healing of a breach of the law respecting the traditional abstinence from labour on the sabbath day.

'But plainly to heal is to labour.' Is the law then broken when God shows mercy even on the sabbath day? Whom did He command to desist from labour? Himself? or was it not rather you? If Himself, let His providence over us cease on the sabbath: let the sun rest from his daily course; let the rains not fall; let the springs of waters, and the streams of ever-flowing rivers, and the winds be still: but if He commanded you to rest, blame not God because with power He has shown mercy on any even on the sabbath. And why did He command men at all to rest upon the sabbath? It was, you are told, that your manservant, and your ox, and your horse, and all your cattle might rest. When therefore He gives men rest by freeing them from their diseases, and you forbid it, plainly you break the law of the sabbath, in not permitting those to rest who are suffering under sickness and disease, and whom Satan had bound.

But the ruler of the unthankful synagogue, when he saw the woman whose limbs were crippled, and her body bent and crooked even to the ground, receiving mercy from Christ, and made perfectly upright by the touch alone of His hand, and walking with that erect gait which becomes man, and magnifying God for her deliverance, is vexed thereat, and burning with rage against the glory of the Lord, is entangled in envy, and calumniates the miracle; nevertheless he passes by our Lord, Who would have exposed his hypocrisy, and rebukes the multitudes, that his indignation might seem to be aroused for the sake of the sabbath day. But his object really was to prevail upon those who were dispersed throughout the week, and occupied with their labours, not to be spectators and admirers of the miracles of the Lord upon the sabbath, lest ever they also should believe.

But tell me, O you slave of envy, what kind of work did the law forbid in commanding you to abstain on the sabbath day from all manual labour? Does it forbid the labour of the mouth and speaking? Abstain then from eating and drinking, and conversing, and singing psalms on the sabbath. But if you abstain from these things, and do not even read the law, what good is the sabbath to you? If however you confine the prohibition to manual labour, how is the healing of a woman by a word a manual labour? But if you call it an act because the woman was actually healed, you also perform an act in blaming her healing.

'But says he, He said, you are loosed from your infirmity: and she is loosed.' Well! do not you also unloose your girdle on the sabbath? Do not you put off your shoes, and make your bed,

and cleanse your hands when dirtied with eating? Why then are you so angry at the single word "you art loosed?" And at what work did the woman labour after the word was spoken? Did she set about the craft of the brazier, or the carpenter, or the mason? Did she that very day begin weaving or working at the loom? 'No. She was made straight, he says. It was the healing absolutely that is a labour.' But no! you are not really angry on account of the sabbath: but because you see Christ honoured, and worshipped as God, you are frantic and choked with rage, and pine with envy. You have one thing concealed in your heart, and profess and make pretext of another; for which reason you art most excellently convicted by the Lord, Who knows your vain reasonings, and receive the title which befits you, in being called hypocrite and dissembler and insincere.

***You hypocrite! does not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?***

You wonder, He says, at Me, Who have loosed a daughter of Abraham; and yet you give rest to your ox and your ass, loosing them from their labours, and leading them away to watering: but when a human being suffering from sickness is marvellously healed, and God has shown mercy, you blame both as transgressors: the One for having healed, and the other for being delivered from her malady.

Behold, I pray, the ruler of the synagogue, how a human being is of less account in his sight than a beast, since at least he counts his ox and his ass worthy of care on the sabbath, but in his envy would not have Christ deliver from her infirmity the woman who was bowed together, nor wishes her to recover her natural form.

But the envious ruler of the synagogue would have preferred the woman who was made straight to be bowed down after the manner of four-footed beasts, rather than that she should recover the form fitting for man; having no other view than that Christ might not be magnified, nor be proclaimed as God by His deeds. But he is convicted of being a hypocrite, if at least he leads his dumb cattle upon the sabbath to watering, but is indignant that this woman, who was a daughter of Abraham by descent, and still more by her faith, should be freed from the chain of her infirmity. For he considers her deliverance from sickness as a transgression of the sabbath.

***All His adversaries were ashamed.***

Shame fell then on those who had uttered these corrupt opinions: who had stumbled against the chief corner stone, and been broken; who had resisted the Physician, who had clashed against the wise Potter, when busied in straightening His crooked vessels: and there was no reply which they could make. They had unanswerably convicted themselves, and were put to silence, and in doubt what they should say. So had the Lord closed their audacious mouth. But the multitudes, who reaped the benefit of the miracles, were glad. For the glory and splendour of His works solved all inquiry and doubt in those who sought Him without malice.

***It is like a grain of mustard seed.***

The comparison is an excellent one, and most fit to set before them what took place and happened at the divine and sacred preaching of the Gospel, to which He here gives the name of the kingdom of heaven; because it is through it that we gain the right of sharing Christ's

kingdom. At first then it was addressed to few persons, and within a narrow range, but afterwards it widened its influence, and spread abroad unto all nations. For at first it was spoken in Judaea only, where also the blessed disciples were very few in number: but when Israel disobeyed, the commandment was given to the holy apostles, "having gone to make disciples of all the nations, &c." As therefore a grain of mustard seed is far inferior in size to the seeds of other plants, but shoots up to a great height, far beyond what is usual among herbs, so as for it even to become the lodging of many sparrows, so also the kingdom of heaven, even the new and sacred preaching of salvation, by which we are guided into every good work, and learn Him Who both by nature and verily is God, being at first addressed to but few persons, and as it were small and limited, shot up afterwards into rapid growth, and became the refuge of those who fled to it for shelter, and who may be compared to sparrows, because human things are but of small measure in comparison with God.

The law of Moses was given to the Israelites: but inasmuch as the inhabitants of earth could not be saved by the shadow which alone it contained and its material service, as a necessary consequence the saving preaching of the Gospel sprang up, and is spread abroad unto all under heaven.

And this the letter of the Mosaic law has signified to us in an enigma: for it runs thus, "And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, You shall make unto thyself two trumpets of beaten metal, of silver shall you make them, and they shall be unto you to call the synagogue together, and to move the camp." And soon afterwards, "And the priests, the sons of Aaron, shall sound the trumpets, and it shall be a perpetual law for your generations." By this then you are intended to understand both the preparatory training of the law, and the perfectness attained to in Christ by the gospel mode of life, and the teaching which surpasses shadows and types. The law then is a trumpet, and equally so is the saving preaching of the Gospel; for by this name does the prophet Isaiah also make mention of it, saying, "And it shall come to pass on that day that they shall sound with the great trumpet," For in very deed a great trumpet sounded forth by the voice of the holy apostles, not setting at nought the first [trumpet], but <sup>5</sup> [*Sermon 98 restarts here*] containing it also within it; for they ever prove what they say concerning Christ by the law and the prophets, making use of the testimonies of older times.

There were then two trumpets made of beaten silver, in which the silver signifies splendour; for every word of God is glorious, having in it none of the darkness of the world: and the hammering out of the metal showed that the sacred and divine trumpet, that is, both the old and new preaching, would advance and grow onward: for that which is hammered out advances as it were continually onward, and extends in breadth and length. "For at Christ's rising for the inhabitants of earth, both the ancient law was to advance unto its spiritual interpretation; for so we preach it who have attained unto spiritual illumination in Christ: and the message of the Gospel was to spread until it embraced the whole world. And to the priests the law gave the use of the trumpets to command the people: but Christ gave the ministers of the new proclamations, by whom are meant the holy apostles, the command to preach Him and His precepts. For they proclaim His mystery, using as it were two trumpets, both preaching Him, as having been "from the beginning eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word," and adding, in confirmation of their words, the true testimonies of the law and the prophets.

And it is no difficult thing to see, that the message of the Gospel preaching, being small at first, was soon to leap forth as it were unto great increase, inasmuch as God had foretold of it by the voice of Isaiah, "that the whole earth has been filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as

the deep waters that cover the seas." For the preaching of salvation is everywhere poured forth like a sea, and its onward course is irresistible. And this too the God of all clearly told us by the voice of the prophet, "And judgment shall roll as the waters, and righteousness as an impassable flood." For He gives the names of judgment and righteousness to the gospel message, and grants us the assurance that it shall roll over the world like waters and as a flood, whose rushing streams, as it violently pours along, no man can stay.

And the same method of explanation will hold good of the kingdom of God being also compared unto leaven. For the leaven is small in quantity, yet forthwith it seizes upon the whole mass, and quickly communicates to it its own properties. And the word of God operates in us in a similar manner: for when admitted within us, it makes us holy and without blame, and pervading our mind and heart, it renders us spiritual, that as Paul says, "Our whole body and spirit and soul may be "kept blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." And that the divine word is poured out even into the depth of our understanding, the God of all clearly shows, where He says by one of the holy prophets, "Behold the days come, says the Lord, and I will accomplish upon the house of Israel and upon the house of Judah a new covenant, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, because they have not continued in My covenant, and I have also rejected them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with them, after those days, says the Lord, I will put My laws in their mind, and will write them on their hearts."

We receive therefore the rational and divine leaven in our mind and understanding, that by this precious and holy and pure leaven we may be found spiritually unleavened, as having in us none of the wickedness of the world, but being rather pure and holy and partakers of Christ; by Whom and with Whom to God the Father be praise and dominion, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.