

Against the Arians and concerning Himself.

Delivered at Constantinople about the middle of the year 380.

I. Where are they who reproach us with our poverty, and boast themselves of their own riches; who define the Church by numbers, and scorn the little flock; and who measure Godhead, and weigh the people in the balance, who honor the sand, and despise the luminaries of heaven; who treasure pebbles and overlook pearls; for they know not that sand is not in a greater degree more abundant than stars, and pebbles than lustrous stones — that the former are purer and more precious than the latter? Are you again indignant? Do you again arm yourselves? Do you again insult us? Is this a new faith? Restrain your threats a little while that I may speak. We will not insult you, but we will convict you; we will not threaten, but we will reproach you; we will not strike, but we will heal. This too appears an insult! What pride! Do you here also regard your equal as your slave? If not, permit me to speak openly; for even a brother chides his brother if he has been defrauded by him.

II. Would you like me to utter to you the words of God to Israel, stiff-necked and hardened? "O my people what have I done unto thee, or wherein have I injured thee, or wherein have I wearied thee?" This language indeed is fitter from me to you who insult me. It is a sad thing that we watch for opportunities against each other, and having destroyed our fellowship of spirit by diversities of opinion have become almost more inhuman and savage to one another than even the barbarians who are now engaged in war against us, banded together against us by the Trinity whom we have separated; with this difference that we are not foreigners making forays and raids upon foreigners, nor nations of different language, which is some little consolation in the calamity, but are making war upon one another, and almost upon those of the same household; or if you will, we the members of the same body are consuming and being consumed by one another. Nor is this, bad though it be, the extent of our calamity, for we even regard our diminution as a gain. But since we are in such a condition, and regulate our faith by the times, let us compare the times with one another; you your Emperor, and I my Sovereigns; you Ahab and I Josias. Tell me of your moderation, and I will proclaim my violence. But indeed yours is proclaimed by many books and tongues, which I think future ages will accept as an immortal pillory for your actions and I will declare my own.

III. What tumultuous mob have I led against you? What soldiers have I armed? What general boiling with rage, and more savage than his employers, and not even a Christian, but one who offers his impiety against us as his private worship to his own gods? Whom have I besieged while engaged in prayer and lifting up their hands to God? When have I put a stop to psalmody with trumpets? or mingled the Sacramental Blood with blood of massacre? What spiritual sighs have I put an end to by cries of death, or tears of penitence by tears of tragedy? What House of prayer have I made a burialplace? What liturgical vessels which the multitude may not touch

have I given over to the hands of the wicked, of a Nebuzaradan, chief of the cooks, or of a Belshazzar, who wickedly used the sacred vessels for his revels, and then paid a worthy penalty for his madness? "Altars beloved" as Holy Scripture saith, but "now defiled." And what licentious youth has insulted you for our sake with shameful writhings and contortions? O precious Throne, seat and rest of precious men, which hast been occupied by a succession of pious Priests, who from ancient times have taught the divine Mysteries, what heathen popular speaker and evil tongue hath mounted thee to inveigh against the Christian's faith? O modesty and majesty of Virgins, that cannot endure the looks of even virtuous men, which of us hath shamed thee, and outraged thee by the exposure of what may not be seen, and showed to the eyes of the impious a pitiable sight, worthy of the fires of Sodom? I say nothing of deaths, which were more endurable than this shame.

IV. What wild beasts have we let loose upon the bodies of Saints, — like some who have prostituted human nature, — on one single accusation, that of not consenting to their impiety; or defiled ourselves by communion with them, which we avoid like the poison of a snake, not because it injures the body, but because it blackens the depths of the soul? Against whom have we made it a matter of criminal accusation that they buried the dead, whom the very beasts revered? And what a charge, worthy of another theater and of other beasts! What Bishop's aged flesh have we carded with hooks in the presence of their disciples, impotent to help them save by tears, hung up with Christ, conquering by suffering, and sprinkling the people with their precious blood, and at last carried away to death, to be both crucified and buried and glorified with Christ; with Christ Who conquered the world by such victims and sacrifices? What priests have those contrary elements fire and water divided, raising a strange beacon over the sea, and set on fire together with the ship in which they put to sea? Who (to cover the more numerous part of our woes with a veil of silence) have been accused of inhumanity by the very magistrates who conferred such favor on them? For even if they did obey the lusts of those men, yet at any rate they hated the cruelty of their purpose. The one was opportunism, the other calculation; the one came of the lawlessness of the Emperor, the other of a consciousness of the laws by which they had to judge.

V. And to speak of older things, for they too belong to the same fraternity; whose hands living or dead have I cut off — to bring a lying accusation against Saints, and to triumph over the faith by bluster? Whose exiles have I numbered as benefits, and failed to reverence even the sacred colleges of sacred philosophers, whence I sought their suppliants? Nay the very contrary is the case; I have reckoned as Martyrs those who incurred anger for the truth. Upon whom have I, whom you accuse of licentiousness of language, brought harlots when they were almost fleshless and bloodless? Which of the faithful have I exiled from their country and given over to the hands of lawless men, that they might be kept like wild beasts in rooms without light, and (for this is the saddest part of the tragedy) left separated from each other to endure the hardships of hunger and thirst, with food measured out to them, which

they had to receive through narrow openings, so that they might not be permitted even to see their companions in misery. And what were they who suffered thus? Men of whom the world was not worthy. Is it thus that you honor faith? Is this your kind treatment of it? Ye know not the greater part of these things, and that reasonably, because of the number of these facts and the pleasure of the action. But he who suffers has a better memory. There have been even some more cruel than the times themselves, like wild boars hurled against a fence. I demand your victim of yesterday the old man, the Abraham-like Father, whom on his return from exile you greeted with stones in the middle of the day and in the middle of the city. But we, if it is not invidious to say so, begged off even our murderers from their danger. God says somewhere in Scripture, How shall I pardon thee for this? Which of these things shall I praise; or rather for which shall I bind a wreath upon you?

VI. Now since your antecedents are such, I should be glad if you too will tell me of my crimes, that I may either amend my life or be put to shame. My greatest wish is that I may be found free from wrong altogether; but if this may not be, at least to be converted from my crime; for this is the second best portion of the prudent. For if like the just man I do not become my own accuser in the first instance, yet at any rate I gladly receive healing from another. "Your City, you say to me, is a little one, or rather is no city at all, but only a village, arid, without beauty, and with few inhabitants." But, my good friend, this is my misfortune, rather than my fault; — if indeed it be a misfortune; and if it is against my will, I am to be pitied for my bad luck, if I may put it so; but if it be willingly, I am a philosopher. Which of these is a crime? Would anyone abuse a dolphin for not being a land animal, or an ox because it is not aquatic, or a lamprey because it is amphibious? But we, you go on, have walls and theatres and racecourses and palaces, and beautiful great Porticoes, and that marvelous work the underground and overhead river, and the splendid and admired column, and the crowded marketplace and a restless people, and a famous senate of highborn men.

VII. Why do you not also mention the convenience of the site, and what I may call the contest between land and sea as to which owns the City, and which adorns our Royal City with all their good things? This then is our crime, that while you are great and splendid, we are small and come from a small place? Many others do you this wrong, indeed all those whom you excel; and must we die because we have not reared a city, nor built walls around it, nor can boast of our racecourse, or our stadia, and pack of hounds, and all the follies that are connected with these things; nor have to boast of the beauty and splendor of our baths, and the costliness of their marbles and pictures and golden embroideries of all sorts of species, almost rivaling nature? Nor have we yet rounded off the sea for ourselves, or mingled the seasons, as of course you, the new Creators, have done, that we may live in what is at once the pleasantest and the safest way. Add if you like other charges, you who say, The silver is mine and the gold is mine, those words of God. We neither think much of riches, on which, if they increase, our Law forbids us to set our hearts, nor do we count up yearly and daily revenues; nor do we rival one another in loading our tables with enchantments for

our senseless belly. For neither do we highly esteem those things which after we have swallowed them are all of the same worth, or rather I should say worthlessness, and are rejected. But we live so simply and from hand to mouth, as to differ but little from beasts whose sustenance is without apparatus and inartificial.

VIII. Do you also find fault with the raggedness of my dress, and the want of elegance in the disposition of my face? for these are the points upon which I see that some persons who are very insignificant pride themselves. Will you leave my head alone, and not jeer at it, as the children did at Elissaeus? What followed I will not mention. And will you leave out of your allegations my want of education, and what seems to you the roughness and rusticity of my elocution? And where will you put the fact that I am not full of small talk, nor a jester popular with company, nor great hunter of the marketplace, nor given to chatter and gossip with any chance people upon all sorts of subjects, so as to make even conversation grievous; nor a frequenter of Zeuxippus, that new Jerusalem; nor one who strolls from house to house flattering and stuffing himself; but for the most part staying at home, of low spirits and with a melancholy cast of countenance, quietly associating with myself, the genuine critic of my actions; and perhaps worthy of imprisonment for my uselessness? How is it that you pardon me for all this, and do not blame me for it? How sweet and kind you are.

IX. But I am so old fashioned and such a philosopher as to believe that one heaven is common to all; and that so is the revolution of the sun and the moon, and the order and arrangement of the stars; and that all have in Common an equal share and profit in day and night, and also change of seasons, rains, fruits, and quickening power of the air; and that the flowing rivers are a common and abundant wealth to all; and that one and the same is the Earth, the mother and the tomb, from which we were taken, and to which we shall return, none having a greater share than another. And further, above this, we have in common reason, the Law, the Prophets, the very Sufferings of Christ, by which we were all without exception created anew, who partake of the same Adam, and were led astray by the serpent and slain by sin, and are saved by the heavenly Adam and brought back by the tree of shame to the tree of life from whence we had fallen.

X. I was deceived too by the Ramah of Samuel, that little fatherland of the great man; which was no dishonor to the Prophet, for it drew its honor not so much from itself as from him; nor was he hindered on its account from being given to God before his birth, or from uttering oracles, and foreseeing the future; nor only so, but also anointing Kings and Priests, and judging the men of illustrious cities. I heard also of Saul, how while seeking his father's asses he found a kingdom. And even David himself was taken from the sheepfolds to be the shepherd of Israel. What of Amos? Was he not, while a goatherd and scraper of sycamore fruit entrusted with the gifts of prophecy? How is it that I have passed over Joseph, who was both a slave and the giver of corn to Egypt, and the father of many myriads who were promised before to Abraham? Aye and I was deceived by the Carmel of Elias, who received the car of fire;

and by the sheepskin of Elissaeus that had more power than a silken web or than gold forced into garments. I was deceived by the desert of John, which held the greatest among them that are born of women, with that clothing, that food, that girdle, which we know. And I ventured even beyond these, and found God Himself the Patron of my rusticity. I will range myself with Bethlehem, and will share the ignominy of the Manger; for since you refuse on this account honor to God, it is no wonder that on the same account you despise His herald also. And I will bring up to you the Fishermen, and the poor to whom the Gospel is preached, as preferred before many rich. Will you ever leave off priding yourselves upon your cities? Will you ever revere that wilderness which you abominate and despise? I do not yet say that gold has its birthplace in sand; nor that translucent stones are the product and gifts of rocks; for if to these I should oppose all that is dishonorable in cities perhaps it would be to no good end that I should use my freedom of speech.

XI But perhaps some one who is very circumscribed and carnally minded will say, "But our herald is a stranger and a foreigner." What of the Apostles? Were not they strangers to the many nations and cities among whom they were divided, that the Gospel might have free course everywhere, that nothing might miss the illumination of the Threefold Light, or be unenlightened by the Truth; but that the night of ignorance might be dissolved for those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death? You have heard the words of Paul, "that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the Circumcision." Be it that Judaea is Peter's home; what has Paul in common with the Gentiles, Luke with Achaia, Andrew with Epirus, John with Ephesus, Thomas with India, Marc with Italy, or the rest, not to go into particulars, with those to whom they went? So that you must either blame them or excuse me, or else prove that you, the ambassadors of the true Gospel, are being insulted by trifling. But since I have argued with you in a petty way about these matters, I will now proceed to take a larger and more philosophic view of them.

XII. My friend, every one that is of high mind has one Country, the Heavenly Jerusalem, in which we store up our Citizenship. All have one family — if you look at what is here below the dust — or if you look higher, that In-breathing of which we are partakers, and which we were bidden to keep, and with which I must stand before my Judge to give an account of my heavenly nobility, and of the Divine Image. Everyone then is noble who has guarded this through virtue and consent to his Archetype. On the other hand, everyone is ignoble who has mingled with evil, and put upon himself another form, that of the serpent. And these earthly countries and families are the playthings of this our temporary life and scene. For our country is whatever each may have first occupied, either as tyrant, or in misfortune; and in this we are all alike strangers and pilgrims, however much we may play with names. And the family is accounted noble which is either rich from old days, or is recently raised; and of ignoble birth that which is of poor parents, either owing to misfortune or to want of ambition. For how can a nobility be given from above which is at one time beginning and at another coming to an end; and which is not given to some, but is bestowed on

others by letters patent? Such is my mind on this matter. Therefore I leave it to you to pride yourself on tombs or in myths, and I endeavor as far as I can, to purify myself from deceits, that I may keep if possible my nobility, or else may recover it.

XIII. It is thus then and for these reasons that I, who am small and of a country without repute, have come upon you, and that not of my own accord, nor self-sent, like many of those who now seize upon the chief places; but because I was invited, and compelled, and have followed the scruples of my conscience and the Call of the Spirit. If it be otherwise, may I continue to fight here to no purpose, and deliver no one from his error, but may they obtain their desire who seek the barrenness of my soul, if I lie. But since I am come, and perchance with no contemptible power (if I may boast myself a little of my folly), which of those who are insatiable have I copied, what have I emulated of opportunism, although I have such examples, even apart from which it is hard and rare not to be bad? Concerning what churches or property have I disputed with you; though you have more than enough of both, and the others too little? What imperial edict have we rejected and emulated? What rulers have we fawned upon against you? Whose boldness have we denounced? And what has been done on the other side against me? "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," even then I said, for I remembered in season the words of Stephen, and so I pray now. Being reviled, we bless: being blasphemed we retreat.

XIV. And if I am doing wrong in this, that when tyrannized over I endure it, forgive me this wrong; I have borne to be tyrannized over by others too; and I am thankful that my moderation has brought upon me the charge of folly. For I reckon thus, using considerations altogether higher than any of yours; what a mere fraction are these trials of the spittings and blows which Christ, for Whom and by Whose aid we encounter these dangers, endured. I do not count them, taken altogether, worth the one crown of thorns which robbed our conqueror of his crown, for whose sake also I learn that I am crowned for the hardness of life. I do not reckon them worth the one reed by which the rotten empire was destroyed; of the gall alone, the vinegar alone, by which we were cured of the bitter taste; of the gentleness alone which He shewed in His Passion. Was He betrayed with a kiss? He reproves with a kiss, but smites not. Is he suddenly arrested? He reproaches indeed, but follows; and if through zeal thou cuttest off the ear of Malchus with the sword, He will be angry, and will restore it. And if one flee in a linen sheet, he will defend him. And if you ask for the fire of Sodom upon his captors, he will not pour it forth; and if he take a thief hanging upon the cross for his crime he will bring him into Paradise through His Goodness. Let all the acts of one that loves men be loving, as were all the sufferings of Christ, to which we could add nothing greater than, when God even died for us, to refuse on our part to forgive even the smallest wrongs of our fellowmen.

XV. Moreover this also I reckoned and still reckon with myself; and do you see if it is not quite correct. I have often discussed it with you before. These men have the houses, but we the Dweller in the house; they the Temples, we the God; and besides it

is ours to be living temples of the Living God, lively sacrifices, reasonable burnt-offerings, perfect sacrifices, yea, gods through the adoration of the Trinity. They have the people, we the Angels; they rash boldness, we faith; they threatenings, we prayer; they smiting, we endurance; they gold and silver, we the pure word. "Thou hast built for thyself a wide house and large chambers (recognize the words of Scripture), a house celled and pierced with windows." But not yet is this loftier than my faith, and than the heavens to which I am being borne onwards. Is mine a little flock? But it is not being carried over a precipice. Is mine a narrow fold? But it is unapproachable by wolves; it cannot be entered by a robber, nor climbed by thieves and strangers. I shall yet see it, I know well, wider. And many of those who are now wolves, I must reckon among my sheep, and perhaps even amongst the shepherds. This is the glad tidings brought me by the Good Shepherd, for Whose sake I lay down my life for the sheep. I fear not for the little flock; for it is seen at a glance. I know my sheep and am known of mine. Such are they that know God and are known of God. My sheep hear my voice, which I have heard from the oracles of God, which I have been taught by the Holy Fathers, which I have taught alike on all occasions, not conforming myself to the fortune, and which I will never cease to teach; in which I was born, and in which I will depart.

XVI. These I call by name (for they are not nameless like the stars which are numbered and have names), and they follow me, for I rear them up beside the waters of rest; and they follow every such shepherd, whose voice they love to hear, as you see; but a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, because they have a habit of distinguishing the voice of their own from that of strangers. They will flee from Valentinus with his division of one into two, refusing to believe that the Creator is other than the Good. They will flee from Depth and Silence, and the mythical Aeons, that are verily worthy of Depth and Silence. They will flee from Marcion's God, compounded of elements and numbers; from Montanus' evil and feminine spirit; from the matter and darkness of Manes; from Novatus' boasting and wordy assumption of purity; from the analysis and confusion of Sabellius, and if I may use the expression, his absorption, contracting the Three into One, instead of defining the One in Three Personalities; from the difference of natures taught by Arius and his followers, and their new Judaism, confining the Godhead to the Unbegotten; from Photinus earthly Christ, who took his beginning from Mary. But they worship the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, One Godhead; God the Father, God the Son and (do not be angry) God the Holy Ghost, One Nature in Three Personalities, intellectual, perfect, Self-existent, numerically separate, but not separate in Godhead.

XVII. These words let everyone who threatens me today concede to me; the rest let whoever will claim. The Father will not endure to be deprived of the Son, nor the Son of the Holy Ghost. Yet that must happen if They are confined to time, and are created Beings... for that which is created is not God. Neither will I bear to be deprived of my consecration; One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism. If this be canceled, from whom shall I get a second? What say you, you who destroy Baptism or repeat it? Can a man

be spiritual without the Spirit? Has he a share in the Spirit who does not honor the Spirit? Can he honor Him who is baptized into a creature and a fellow- servant? It is not so; it is not so; for all your talk. I will not play Thee false, O Unoriginate Father, or Thee O Only-begotten Word, or Thee O Holy Ghost. I know Whom I have confessed, and whom I have renounced, and to Whom I have joined myself. I will not allow myself, after having been taught the words of the faithful, to learn also those of the unfaithful; to confess the truth, and then range myself with falsehood; to come down for consecration and to go back even less hallowed; having been baptized that I might live, to be killed by the water, like infants who die in the very birthpangs, and receive death simultaneously with birth. Why make me at once blessed and wretched, newly enlightened and unenlightened, Divine and godless, that I may make shipwreck even of the hope of regeneration? A few words will suffice. Remember your confession. Into what were you baptized? The Father? Good but Jewish still. The Son?... good... but not yet perfect. The Holy Ghost?... Very good... this is perfect. Now was it into these simply, or some common name of Them? The latter. And what was the common Name? Why, God. In this common Name believe, and ride on prosperously and reign, and pass on from hence into the Bliss of Heaven. And that is, as I think, the more distinct apprehension of These; to which may we all come, in the same Christ our God, to Whom be the glory and the might, with the Unoriginate Father, and the Lifegiving Spirit, now and for ever and to ages of ages. Amen.