On the Psalms (part 4 of 4)

Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–430)

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Psalm 138

1. The title of this Psalm is brief and simple, and need not detain us; since we know whose resemblance David wore, and since in him we recognise ourselves also, for we too are members of that Body. The whole title is, "To David himself. Let us see then, what is to David himself. The title of the Psalm is wont to tell us what is treated of within it: but in this, since the title informs us not of this, but tells us only to Whom it is chanted, the first verse tells us what is treated of in the whole Psalm, "I will confess to Thee. This confession then let us hear. But first I remind you, that the term confession in Scripture, when we speak of confession to God, is used in two senses, of sin, and of praise. But confession of sin all know, confession of praise few attend to. So well known is confession of sin, that, wherever in Scripture we hear the words, "I will confess to Thee, O Lord," or, "we will confess to Thee," forthwith, through habitually understanding in this way, our hands hurry to beating our breast: so entirely are men wont not to understand confession to be of aught, save of sin. But was then our Lord Jeans Christ Himself too a sinner, who saith in the Gospel, "I confess to Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth"?

He goeth on to say what He confesseth, that we might understand His confession to be of praise, not of sin, "I confess to Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. He praised the Father, he praised God, because He despiseth not the humble, but the proud. And such confession are we now going to hear, of praise of God, of thanksgiving. "With my whole heart. My whole heart I lay upon the altar of Thy praise, an whole burnt-offering of praise I offer to Thee. ..."I will confess to Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart: for Thou hast heard the words of my mouth" (ver. 1). What mouth, save my heart? For there have we the voice which God heareth, which ear of man knoweth not at all. We have then a mouth within, there do we ask, thence do we ask, and if we have prepared a lodging or an house for God, there do we speak, there are we heard. "For He is not far from every one of us, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being. Nought maketh thee far off from God, save sin only. Cast down the middle wall of sin, and thou art with Him whom thou askest.

2. "And before the Angels will I sing unto Thee." Not before men will I sing, but before the Angels. My song is my joy; but my joy in things below is before men, my joy in things above before the Angels. For the wicked knoweth not the joy of the just: "There is no joy. saith my

God, to the wicked." The wicked rejoiceth in his tavern, the martyr in his chain. In what did that holy Crispina rejoice, whose festival is kept to-day? She rejoiced when she was being seized, when she was being carried before the judge, when she was being put into prison, when she was being brought forth bound, when she was being lifted up on the scaffold, when she was being heard, when she was being condemned: in all these things she rejoiced; and the wretches thought her wretched, when she was rejoicing before the Angels.

3. "I will worship toward Thy holy Temple" (ver. 2). What holy Temple? That where we shall dwell, where we shall worship. For we hasten that we may adore. Our heart is pregnant and cometh to the birth, and seeketh where it may bring forth. What is the place where God is to be worshipped? ..."The Temple of God is holy," saith the Apostle, "which Temple ye are." But assuredly, as is manifest, God dwelleth in the Angels. Therefore when our joy, being in spiritual things, not in earthly, taketh up a song to God, to sing before the Angels, that very assembly of Angels is the Temple of God, we worship toward God's Temple. There is a Church below, there is a Church above also; the Church below, in all the faithful; the Church above, in all the Angels. But the God of Angels came down to the Church below, and Angels ministered to Him on earth, while He ministered to us; for, "I came not," saith He, "to be ministered unto, but to minister." ...The Lord of Angels died for man. Therefore, "I will worship toward Thy holy Temple;" I mean, not the temple made with hands, but that which Thou hast made for Thyself.

4. "And I will confess to Thy Name in Thy mercy and Thy truth." ...These also which Thou hast given to me, do I according to my power give to Thee in return: mercy, in siding others; truth, in judging. By these God aideth us, by these we win God's favour. Rightly, therefore, "All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth." No other ways are there whereby He can come to us, no other whereby we can come to Him. "For Thou hast magnified Thy holy Name over everything." What sort of thanksgiving is this, brethren? He hath magnified His holy Name over Abraham. Of Abraham was born Isaac; over that house God was magnified; then Jacob; God was magnified, who said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then came his twelve sons. The name of the Lord was magnified over Israel. Then came the Virgin Mary. Then Christ our Lord, "dying for our sins, rising again for our justification," filling the faithful with His Holy Spirit, sending forth men to proclaim throughout the Gentiles, "Repent ye," etc. Behold, "He hath magnified His holy Name above all things."

5. "In what day soever I call upon Thee, do Thou quickly hear me" (ver. 3). Wherefore, "quickly"? Because Thou hast said, "While yet thou art speaking I will say, Lo, here I am." Wherefore, "quickly"? Because now I seek not earthly happiness, I have learnt holy longings from the New Testament. I seek not earth, nor earthly abundance, nor temporal health, nor the overthrow of my enemies, nor riches, nor rank: nought of these do I seek: therefore "quickly hear me." Since Thou hast taught me what to seek, grant what I seek. ... 6. Let us see then what he seeketh, with what right he hath said, "quickly hear me." For what seekest thou, that thou shouldest quickly be heard? "Thou shalt multiply me." In many

ways may multiplication be understood. ...For men are multiplied in their soul with cares: a man seemeth to be multiplied in soul, in whom vices even are multiplied. That is the multiplication of want, not of fulness. What then dost thou desire, thou who hast said, "quickly hear me," and hast withdrawn thyself entirely from the body, from every earthly thing, from every earthly desire, so as to say to God, "Thou shalt multiply me in my soul"? Explain yet further what thou desirest. Thou shalt multiply me, saith he, in my soul "with virtue." ...

7. "Let all the kings of the earth confess to Thee, O Lord" (ver. 4). So shall it be, and so it is, and that daily; and it is shown that it was not said in vain, save that it was future. But neither let them, when they confess to Thee, when they praise Thee, desire earthly things of Thee. For what shall the kings of the earth desire? Have they not already sovereignty? Whatever more a man desire on earth, sovereignty is the highest point of his desire. What more can he desire? It must needs be some loftier eminence. But perhaps the loftier it is, the more dangerous. And therefore the more exalted kings are in earthly eminence, the more ought they to humble themselves before God. What do they do? "Because they have heard all the words of Thy mouth." In a certain nation were hidden the Law and the Prophets, "all the words of Thy mouth:" in the Jewish nation alone were "all the words of Thy mouth," the nation which the Apostle praiseth, saying, "What advantage hath the Jew? Much every way; chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." These were the words of God. ...What meant Gideon's fleece? It is like the nation of the Jews in the midst of the world, which had the grace of sacraments, not indeed openly manifested, but hidden in a cloud, or in a veil, like the dew in the fleece. The time came when the dew was to be manifested in the floor; it was manifested, no longer hidden. Christ alone is the sweetness of dew: Him alone thou recognisest not in Scripture, for whom Scripture was written. But yet, "they have heard all the words of thy mouth."

8. "And let them sing in the paths of the Lord, that great is the glory of the Lord" (ver. 5). Let all the kings of the earth sing in the paths of the Lord. In what paths? Those that are spoken of above, "in Thy mercy and Thy truth." Let not then the kings of the earth be proud, let them be humble. Then let them sing in the ways of the Lord, if they be humble: let them love, and they shall sing. We know travellers that sing; they sing, and hasten to reach the end of their journey. There are evil songs, such as belong to the old man; to the new man belongeth a new song. Let then the kings of the earth too walk in Thy paths, let them walk and sing in Thy paths, Sing what? that "great is the glory of the Lord," not of kings.

9. See how he willed that kings should sing on their way, humbly bearing the Lord, not lifting themselves up against the Lord. For if they lift themselves up, what follows? "For the Lord is high, and hath respect unto the lowly" (ver. 6). Do kings then desire that He have respect unto them? Let them be humble. What then? if they lift themselves up to pride, can they escape His eyes? Lest perchance, because thou hast heard, "He hath respect unto the lowly," thou choose to be proud, and say in thy soul, God hath respect unto the lowly, He hath not respect unto me, I will do what I will. O foolish one! wouldest thou say

this, if thou knewest what thou oughtest to love? Behold, even if God willeth not to see thee, dost thou not fear this very thing, that He willeth not to see thee? ...The lofty then, it seemeth, He hath not respect unto, for it is the lowly He respecteth. "The lofty"-what? "He considereth from afar." What then gaineth the proud? To be seen from afar, not to escape being seen. And think not that thou must needs be safe on that account, for that He seeth less clearly, who seeth thee from afar. For thou indeed seest not clearly, what thou seest from afar; God, although He see thee from afar, seeth thee perfectly, yet is He not with thee. This thou gainest, not that thou art less perfectly seen, but that thou art not with Him by whom thou art seen. But what doth the lowly gain? "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart." Let the proud then lift himself up as much as he will, certainly God dwelleth on high, God is in heaven: wishest thou that He come nigh to thee? Humble thyself. For the higher will He be above thee, the more thou liftest thyself up.

10. "If I walk in the midst of tribulation, Thou shalt revive me" (ver. 7). True it is: whatsoever tribulation thou art in, confess, call on Him; He freeth thee, He reviveth thee. ...Love the other life, and thou shalt see that this life is tribulation, whatever prosperity it shine with, whatever delights it abound and overflow with; since not yet have we that joy most safe and free from all temptation, which God reserveth for us in the end, without doubt it is tribulation. Let us understand then what tribulation he meaneth here too, brethren. Not as though he said, "If perchance there shall any tribulation have befallen me, Thou shall free me therefrom." But how saith he? "If I walk," etc.; that is, otherwise Thou wilt not revive me, unless I walk in the midst of tribulation. 11. "Thou hast stretched forth Thine hand over the wrath of mine enemies, and Thy right hand hath made me safe." Let mine enemies rage: what can they do? They can take my money, strip, proscribe, banish me; afflict me with grief and tortures; at last, if they be allowed, even kill me: can they do aught more? But over that which mine enemies can do, Thou hast stretched forth Thine hand. For mine enemies cannot separate me from Thee: but Thou avengest me the more, the more Thou as yet delayest. ...Yet not to make me despair; for it follows, "and Thy right hand hath made me safe."

12. "Thou, Lord, shalt recompense for me" (ver. 8). I recompense not: Thou shalt recompense. Let mine enemies rage their full: Thou shall recompense what I cannot. ..."Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves," saith the Apostle, "but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." There is here another sense not to be neglected, perhaps even to be preferred. "Lord" Christ, "Thou shall repay for me." For I, if I repay, have seized; Thou hast paid what Thou hast not seized. Lord, Thou shall "repay for me." Behold Him repaying for us. They came to Him, who exacted tribute: they used to demand as tribute a didrachma, that is, two drachmas for one man; they came to the Lord to pay tribute; or rather, not to Him, but to His disciples, and they said to them, "Doth not your Master pay tribute?" They came and told Him. He saith unto Peter, "lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up: and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shall find a staler: that take, and give for Me and thee." The first that riseth from the sea, is the First-begotten from the dead.

In His mouth we find two didrachmas, that is, four drachmas: in His mouth we find the four Gospels. By those four drachmas we are free from the claims of this world, by the four Evangelists we remain no longer debtors; for there the debt of all our sins is paid. He then hath repaid for us, thanks to His mercy. He owed nothing: He repaid not for Himself: He repaid for us. ...

13. "Lord, Thy mercy is for everlasting." ...Not for a time only do I desire to be freed. "Thy mercy is for everlasting," wherewith Thou hast freed the martyrs, and so hast quickly taken them from this life. "Despise not Thou the works of Thine own hands." I say not, Lord, "despise not the works of my hands:" of mine own works I boast not. "I sought," indeed, "the Lord with my hands in the night season before Him, and have not been deceived;" but yet I praise not the works of mine own hands; I fear lest, when Thou shall look into them, Thou find more sins in them than deserts. Behold in me Thy Work, not mine: for mine if Thou seest, Thou condemnest; Thine, if Thou seest, Thou crow nest. For whatever good works there be of mine, from Thee are they to me; and so they are more. Thine than mine. Therefore whether in regard that we are men, or in regard that we have been changed and justified from our iniquity, Lord, "despise not Thou the works of Thine own hands."

Psalm 139

1. ...Our Lord Jesus Christ speaketh in the Prophets, sometimes in His own Name, sometimes in ours, because He maketh Himself one with us; as it is said, "they twain shall be one flesh." Wherefore also the Lord saith in the Gospel, speaking of marriage, "therefore they are no more twain, but one flesh." One flesh, because of our mortality He took flesh; not one divinity, for He is the Creator, we the creature. Whatsoever then our Lord speaketh in the person of the Flesh He took upon Him, belongeth both to that Head which hath already ascended into heaven, and to those members which still toil in their earthly wandering. Let us hear then our Lord Jesus Christ speaking in prophecy. For the Psalms were sung long before the Lord was born of Mary, yet not before He was Lord: for from everlasting He was the Creator of all things, but in time He was born of His creature. Let us believe that Godhead, and, so far as we can, understand Him to be equal to the Father. But that Godhead equal to the Father. was made partaker of our mortal nature, not of His own store, but of ours; that we too might be made partakers of His DivineNature, not of our store, but of His.

2. "Lord, Thou hast tried me, and known me" (ver. 1). Let the Lord Jesus Christ Himself say this; let Him too say, "Lord," to the Father. For His Father is not His Lord, save because He hath deigned to be born according to the flesh. He is Father of the God, Lord of the Man. Wouldest thou know to whom He is Father? To the coequal Son. The Apostle saith, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." To this "Form" God is Father, the "Form" equal to Himself, the only-begotten Son, begotten of His Substance. But forasmuch as for our sakes, that we might be re-made, and made partakers of His Divine Nature, being renewed unto life eternal, He was made partaker of our mortal nature, what saith the Apostle of Him? He saith, "yet He emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man." He was in the Form of God, equal to the Father; He took upon Him the form of a servant, so as therein to be less than the Father. ...

3. "Thou hast known My down-sitting and Mine up-rising" (ver. 2). What here is "down-sitting," what "up-rising"? He who sitteth, humbleth himself. The Lord then "sat" in His Passion, "up-rose" in His Resurrection. "Thou," he saith, hast known this; that is, Thou hast willed, Thou hast approved; according to Thy will was it done. But if thou choosest to take the words of the Head in the person of the Body: man sitteth when he humbleth

himself in penitence, he riseth up when his sins are forgiven, and he is lifted up to the hope of everlasting life. Lift not up yourselves, unless ye have first been humbled. For many wish to rise before they have sat down, they wish to appear righteous, before they have confessed that they are sinners. ...

4. "Thou hast understood my thoughts from afar; Thou hast tracked out my path and may limit" (ver. 3); "and all my ways Thou hast seen beforehand" (ver. 4). What is, "from afar"? While I am yet in my pilgrimage, before I reach that, my true country, Thou hast known my thoughts. ...The younger son went into a far country. After his toil and suffering and tribulation and want, he thought on his father, and desired to return, and said, "I will arise, and go to my father. "I will arise," said he, for before he had sat. Here then thou mayest recognise him saying, "Thou hast known my down-sitting and up-rising. I sat, in want; I arose, in longing for Thy Bread. "Thou hast understood my thoughts from afar. For far indeed had I gone; but where is not He whom I had left? Wherefore the Lord saith in the Gospel, that his father met him as he was coming. Truly; for "he had understood his thoughts from afar. "My path," he saith; what, but a bad path, the path he had walked to leave his father? ...What is, "my path"? that by which I have gone. What is, "my limit"? that whereunto I have reached. "Thou hast tracked out my path and my limit. That limit of mine, far distant as it was, was not far from Thine eyes. Far had I gone, and yet Thou wast there. "And all my ways Thou hast seen beforehand. He said not, "hast seen," but, "hast seen beforehand.

Before I went by them, before I walked in them, Thou didst see them beforehand; and Thou didst permit me in toil to go my own ways, that, if I desired not to toil, I might return into Thy ways. "For there is no deceit in my tongue. What meant he by this? Lo, I confess to Thee, I have walked in my own way, I am become far from Thee, I have departed from Thee, with whom it was well with me, and to my good it was ill with me without Thee. ...

5. "Behold Thou, Lord, hast known all my last doings, and the ancient ones" (ver. 5). Thou hast known my latest doings, when I fed swine; Thou hast known my ancient doings, when I asked of Thee my portion of goods. Ancient doings were the beginnings to me of latest ills: ancient sin, when we fell; latest punishment, when we came into this toilsome and dangerous mortality. And would that this may be "latest" to us; it will be, if now we will to return. For there is another "latest" for certain wicked ones, to whom it shall be said, "Go ye into everlasting fire." ..."Thou hast fashioned me,and hast laid Thine hand upon me." "Fashioned me," where? In this mortality; now, to the toils whereunto we all are born. For none is born, but God has fashioned him in his mother's womb; nor is there any creature, whereof God is not the Fashioner. But "Thou hast fashioned me" in this toil, "and laid Thine hand upon me," Thine avenging hand, putting down the proud. For thus healthfully hath He cast down the proud, that He may lift him up humble.

6. "Thy skill hath displayed itself wonderfully in me: it hath waxed mighty: I shall not be able to attain unto it" (ver. 6). Listen now and hear somewhat, which is obscure indeed, yet bringeth no small pleasure in the understanding thereon. Moses, the holy servant of God,

with whom God spake by a cloud, for, speaking after human fashion, He must needs speak to His servant through some work of His hands which He assumed, ...longed and desired to see the true appearance of God, and said to God, who was conversing with him, "If now I have found grace in Thy sight, show me Thyself. When this he desired vehemently, and would extort from God in that sort of friendly familiarity, if we may so speak, wherewith God deigned to treat him, that he might see His Glory and His Face, in such wise as we can speak of God's Face, He said unto him, "Thou canst not see My Face; for no one hath seen My Face, and lived; but I will place thee in a clift of the rock, and will pass by, and will set My hand upon thee; and when I have passed by, thou shalt see My back parts. And from these words there ariseth another enigma, that is, an obscure figure of the truth. "When I have passed by," saith God, "thou shalt see My back parts; as though He hath on one side His face, on another His back.

Far be it from us to have any such thoughts of that Majesty! For whoso hath such thoughts of God, what advantageth it him that the temples are closed? He is building an idol in his own heart. In these words then are mighty mysteries. ...They who raged against the Lord, whom they saw, now seek counsel how they may be saved; and it is said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, and your sins shall be forgiven you. Behold, they saw the back parts of Him, whose face they could not see. For His Hand was upon their eyes, not for ever, but while He passed by. After He had passed He took away His Hand from their eyes. When the hand was taken from their eyes, they say to the disciples, "What shall we do? At first they are fierce, afterwards loving; at first angry, afterwards fearful; at first hard, then pleasant; at first blind, then enlightened. ...

7. Behold thou findest that the runaway in a far country cannot escape His eyes, from whom he fleeth. And whither can he go now, whose "limit is tracked out"? Behold, what saith he? "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?" (ver. 7). Who can in the world flee from that Spirit, with whom the world is filled? "And whither shall I flee from Thy Face?" He seeketh a place whither to flee from the wrath of God. What place will shelter God's runaway? Men who shelter runaways, ask them from whom they have fled; and when they find any one a slave of some master less powerful than themselves, him they shelter as it were without any fear, saying in their hearts, "he hath not a master by whom he can be tracked out." But when they are told of a powerful master, they either shelter not, or they shelter with great fear, because even a powerful man can be deceived. Where is God not? Who can deceive God? Whom doth not God see? From whom doth not God demand His runaway? Whither then shall that runaway go from the Face of God? He turneth him hither and thither, as though seeking a spot to flee to.

8. "If I go up," saith he, "to heaven, Thou art there: if I go down to Hades, Thou art present" (ver. 8). At length, miserable runaway, thou hast learnt, that by no means canst thou make thyself far from Him, from whom thou hast wished to remove far away. Behold, He is everywhere; thou, whither wilt thou go? He hath found counsel, and that inspired by Him, who now deigneth to recall him. ...If by sinning I go down to the depths of wickednesses,

and spurn to confess, saying, "Who seeth me" (for "in Hades who shall confess to Thee?") there also Thou art present, to punish. Whither then shall I go that I may flee from Thy presence, that is, not find Thee angry? This plan he found: So will I flee, saith he, from Thy Face, so will I flee from Thy Spirit; from Thy avenging Spirit, Thy avenging Face thus will I flee. How? "If I take again my wings right forward, and abide in the utmost parts of the sea" (ver. 9). So can I flee from Thy Face. If he will flee to the utmost part of the sea from the Face of God, will not He from whom he fleeth be there? ...For what are "the utmost parts of the sea," but the end of the world? Thither let us now flee in hope and longing, with the wings of twofold love; let us have no rest, save in "the utmost parts of the sea." For if elsewhere we wish for rest, we shall be hurled headlong into the sea. Let us fly even to the ends of the sea, let us bear ourselves aloft on the wings of twofold love; meanwhile let us flee to God in hope, and in faithful hope let us meditate on that "end of the sea."

9. Now listen who may bring us thither.The very same One whose face in wrath we wish to flee from. For what followeth? "Even thither shall Thy hand conduct me, and Thy right hand lead me" (ver. 10). This let us meditate on, beloved brethren, let this be our hope, this our consolation. Let us take again through love the wings we lost through lust. For lust was the lime of our wings, it clashed us down from the freedom of our sky, that is, the free breezes of the Spirit of God. Thence dashed down we lost our wings, and were, so to speak, imprisoned in the power of the fowler; thence "He" redeemed us with His Blood, whom we fled from to be caught. He maketh us wings of His commandments; we raise them aloft now free from lime. ...Needs then must we have wings, and needs must He conduct us, for He is our Helper. We have free-will; but even with that free-will what can we do, unless He help us who commandeth us?

10. And considering the length of the way, what said he to himself? "And I said, Peradventure the darkness shall overwhelm me" (ver. 11). Lo, now I have believed in Christ, now am I wafted aloft on the wings of twofold love. ...Regarding the length of the way, i said to myself, "And the night was light in my delight." The night was made to me light, because in the night I despaired of being able to cross so great a sea, to surmount so long a journey, to reach the utmost parts by persevering to the end Thanks to Him who sought me when a runaway, who smote my back with strokes of the scourge, who by calling me recalled me from destruction, who made my night light. For it is night so long as we are passing through this life. How was the night made light? Because Christ came down into the night. ...

11. "For darkness shall not be darkened by Thee" (ver. 12). Do not thou then darken thy darkness; God darkeneth it not, but enlighteneth it yet more; for to Him is said in another Psalm, "Thou, Lord, shalt light my candle: my God shall enlighten my darkness." But who are they who "darken their darkness," which God darkeneth not? Evil men, perverse men; when they sin, verily they are darkness; when they confess not their sins which they have committed but go on to defend them, they "darken their darkness." Wherefore now if thou hast sinned thou art in darkness, but by confessing thy darkness thou shall obtain to have thy darkness lightened; by defending thy darkness, thou shall "darken thy darkness." And

where wilt thou escape from double darkness, who wast in difficulty in single darkness? ...Let us not "darken our darkness" by defending our sins, and "the night shall be light in our delight."

12. "And night shall be lightened as the day." "Night, as the day." "Day" to us is worldly prosperity, night adversity in this world: but, if we learn that it is by the desert of our sins that we suffer adversities, and our Father's scourges are sweet to us, that the Judge's sentence may not be bitter to us, so shall we find the darkness of this night to be, as it were, the light of this night. ...But when Christ our Lord has come, and has dwelt in the soul by faith, and promised other light, and inspired and given patience, and warned a man not to delight in prosperity or to be crushed by adversity, the man, being faithful, begins to treat this world with indifference; not to be lifted up when prosperity befalls him, nor crushed when adversity, but in all things to praise God, not only when he aboundeth, but also when he loseth; not only when he is in health, but also when he is sick. ..."As is His darkness, so is also His light." His darkness overwhelms me not, because His light lifts me not up.

13. "For Thou, O Lord, hast possessed my reins" (ver. 13). The Possessor is within; He occupieth not only the heart, but also the reins; not only the thoughts, but also the delights: He then possesseth that whence I should feel delight at any light in this world: He occupieth my reins: I know not delight, save from the inward light of His Wisdom. What then? Dost thou not delight that thy affairs are very prosperous, times fortunate to thee? dost thou not delight in honour, in riches, in thy family? "I do not," saith he. Wherefore? Because "Thou hast possessed my reins, O Lord; Thou hast taken me up from my mother's womb." While I was in my mother's womb, I did not regard with indifference the darkness of that night and the light of that night. ...Now, having been taken up from the womb of that our mother, we look on them with indifference, and say, "As is His darkness, so is also His light." Neither doth earthly prosperity make us happy, nor earthly adversity wretched. We must maintain righteousness, love faith, hope in God, love God, love our neighbours also. After these toils we shall have unfailing light, day without setting. Fleeting is all the light and darkness of this night.

14. "I will confess to Thee, O Lord, for terribly hast Thou been made wonderful: wondrous are Thy works, and my soul knoweth it right well" (ver. 14). Aforetime "Thy knowledge was made wonderful from me, it had waxed great, nor could I attain unto it." From me then "it had waxed great." Whence doth "my soul" now "know right well," save because the "night is light in my delight?" save because Thy grace hath come unto me, and enlightened my darkness? save because Thou hast possessed my reins? save because Thou hast taken me up from my mother's womb?

15. "My bone is not hid from Thee, which Thou hast made in secret" (ver. 15). "His bone," he saith. What the people call ossum, is in Latin called os. This is the word in the Greek. For we might think the word os is here the one which makes in the plural ora, not os (short), which makes ossa. He saith then, I have a certain bone (ossum) in secret. For this word let us prefer to use; better is it that scholars find fault with us, than that the people understand

us not. "There is then," saith he, "a certain bone of mine, within, hidden; Thou hast made within a bone for me in secret, yet is it not hidden from Thee. In secret hast Thou made it, but hast Thou therefore hidden it from Thyself? This my bone made by Thee in secret men see not, men know not: Thou knowest, who hast made. What "bone" then meaneth he, brethren? Let us seek it, it is "in secret. But because as Christians we are speaking in the Name of the Lord to Christians, now we find what bone is of this kind. It is a sort of inward strength; for strength and fortitude are understood to be in the bones. There is then a sort of inward strength of the soul, wherein it is not broken. Whatever tortures, whatever tribulations, whatever adversities rage around, that which God hath made strong in secret in us, cannot be broken, yieldeth not.

For by God is made a certain strength of patience, of which is said in another Psalm, "But my soul shall be subjected to God, for of Him is my patience." ...Wherein dost thou glory? "In tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience. See how that strength is fashioned within in his heart: "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. So is fashioned and made strong that hidden bone, that it maketh us even to glory in tribulations. But to men we seem wretched, because that which we have within is hidden from them. "And my substance is in the lower parts of the earth. Behold, in flesh is my substance, yet have I a bone within, which Thou hast fashioned, such as to cause me never to yield to any persecutions of this lower region, where still my substance is. For what great matter is it, if an Angel be brave? This is a great matter, if flesh is brave. And whence is flesh brave, whence is an earthen vessel brave, save because in it is made a bone in secret?

16. ..."Thine eyes did see Mine imperfect one, and in Thy book shall all be written" (ver. 16), not only the perfect, but also the imperfect. Let not the imperfect fear, only let them advance. Nor yet, because I have said, "let them not fear," let them love their imperfection, and remain there, where they are found. Let them advance, as far as in them lieth. Daily let them add, daily let them approach; yet let them not fall back from the Body of the Lord: that, compacted in one Body and among these members, they may be counted worthy to have that said of them. "By day shall they wander, and none among them." "The Day" was yet on earth, even our Lord Jesus Christ. Whence He said, "Walk while ye have the day." But "by day shall" His imperfect ones "wander." They too thought that our Lord Jesus Christ was only man, that He had not within Him the hidden Godhead, that He was not secretly God, but that He was that only which was seen: this they too thought. ...But what is, "In the day they shall wander"? Shall they perish? Where then is, "In Thy book shall all be written"? When then did they "wander in the day"? When they understood not the Lord set upon earth. And what followeth? "But to me Thy friends are made very honourable, O God" (ver. 17); those very ones, who "wandered in the day, and none was in them," became Thy friends, and were made very honourable to me. That bone was made in them in secret after the resurrection of the Lord, and they suffered for His Name, at whose death they had been amazed. "Mightily strengthened were their chieftainships." They became Apostles, they became leaders of the Church, they became rams leading their flocks, "mightily strengthened."

17. ”I will number them, and they shall be multiplied above the sand” (ver. 18). By means of them, who ”wandered in the day,” lo! there has been born all this great multitude, which now is like the sand innumerable, save by God. For He said, ”they shall be multiplied above the sand,” and yet He had said, ”I will number them.” The very same who are numbered, ”shall be multiplied above the sand.” For by Him is the sand numbered, by whom ”the very hairs of our head are numbered.” ”I have risen, and yet am I with Thee.” Already have I suffered, saith He, already have I been buried; lo! I have risen, and not yet do they understand that I am with them. ”Yet am I with Thee,” that is, not yet with them, for not yet do they recognise Me. For thus do we read in the Gospel, that after the resurrection of oar Lord Jesus Christ, when He appeared to them, they did not at once know Him. There is another meaning also: ”I have risen, and yet am I with Thee,” as though He would signify this present time, wherein He is as yet hidden at the right hand of the Father, before He is revealed in the brightness, wherein He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

18. And then He telleth what meanwhile, during this whole time when He already has risen, and remaineth still with the Father, He suffereth by the intermixture of sinners in His Body, the Church, and by the separation of heretics. ”If Thou, O God, shalt slay the sinners (since Thou shall say in Thy thought, Depart from Me, ye men of blood), they shall receive in vanity their cities” (ver. 19, 20). The words seem to be connected in this order; ”If Thou, O God, shall slay the sinners, they shall receive in vanity their cities. Thus are sinners slain, because, ”having their understandings darkened, they are alienated from the life of God. For on account of elation they lose confession, and so they are slain, and in them is fulfilled what Scripture saith, ”Confession perisheth from the dead, as from one that is not. And so ”they receive in vanity their cities,” that is, their vain peoples, who follow their vanity; when, puffed up by the name of righteousness, they persuade men to burst the bond of unity, and blindly and ignorantly follow them, as being more righteous. ...But now the Body of Christ, the Church, saith, Why do the proud speak falsely against me, as though I were stained by other men’s sins, and so, by separating themselves, ”receive in vanity their cities”? ”Have not I hated those who hated Thee, Lord? (ver. 21).

Why do those who are worse themselves require of me to separate myself in body as well as spirit from the wicked, so as to root up the wheat, together with the tares, before the time of harvest, that before the time of winnowing I lose my power of enduring the chaff; that before all the different sorts of fishes are brought to the end of the world, as to the shore, to be separated, I tear the nets of peace and unity? Are the sacraments which I receive, those of evil men? Do I; by consent, communicate in their life and deeds? ...But where is, ”Love your enemies”? Is it because He said ”yours,” not ”God’s”? ”Do good to them that hate you. He saith not, ”who hate God. So he followeth the pattern, and saith, ”Have not I hated those who hated Thee; Lord? He saith not, ”Who have hated me. ”And at Thine enemies did I waste away. ”Thine,” he said, not ”mine. But those who hate us and are enemies unto us, only because we serve Him, what else do they but hate Him, and are His enemies. Ought we then to love such enemies as these? Or do not they suffer persecution for God’s sake, to whom it is said, ”Pray for them that persecute you”? Observe then what followeth. ”With a

perfect hatred did I hate them" (ver. 22). What is, "with a perfect hatred"? I hated in them their iniquities, I loved Thy creation.

This it is to hate with a perfect hatred, that neither on account of the vices thou hate the men, nor on account of the men love the vices. For see what he addeth, "They became mine enemies. Not only as God's enemies, but as his own too doth he now describe them. How then will he fulfil in them both his own saying, "Have not I hated those that hated Thee, Lord," and the Lord's command, "Love your enemies"? How will he fulfil this, save with that "perfect hatred," that he hate in them that they are wicked, and love that they are men? For in the time even of the Old Testament, when the carnal people was restrained by visible punishments, how did Moses, the servant of God, who by understanding belonged to the New Testament, how did he hate sinners when he prayed for them, or how did he not hate them when he slew them, save that he "hated them with a perfect hatred"? For with such perfection did he hate the iniquity which he punished, as to love the manhood for which he prayed.

19. Since then the Body of Christ is in the end to be severed in body also from the unholy and wicked, but now meanwhile groaneth among them, what doeth the "love of Christ among the daughters, as the lily among thorns"? What are her words? what her conscience? what is the "appearance of the king's daughter within"? Lo, hear what she saith. "Prove me, O God, and know my heart" (ver. 23). Do Thou, O God, Thou prove me, Thou know; not man, not an heretic, who neither knoweth how to prove, nor can know my heart, whereas Thou provest, and knowest that I consent not to the deeds of the wicked, while they think that I can be defiled by the sins of others; so that, while I in my long wandering do what I mourn in another Psalm, that is, while I "labour for peace among them that hate peace," until I come to that Vision of peace, which is called Jerusalem, "which is the mother of us all," the city "eternal in the heavens;" they, contending, and falsely accusing and separating themselves, may "receive," not, evidently, in eternity, but "in vanity, their cities." Why this? Observe what followeth.

20. "And see," saith he, "if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (ver. 24). "Search," he saith, "my paths," that is, my counsels and thoughts. What else saith he, but "lead me in Christ"? For who is "the way everlasting," save He that is the life everlasting? For everlasting is He who said, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." If then thou findest anything in my way which displeaseth Thine eyes, since my way is mortal, do Thou "lead me in the way everlasting," wherein is no iniquity; for even "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins;" He is "the Way everlasting" without sin; He is the Life everlasting without punishment.

21. These are great mysteries, brethren. How doth the Spirit of God speak with us? how doth it make us delights in this night.? What is this, we ask you, brethren, whence are they sweeter, the darker they are? He mixeth us our potion after His love, in certain wondrous ways. He maketh His own sayings wondrous, so that while we were speaking what

ye already knew, yet forasmuch as it was dug out of passages which seemed obscure, the knowledge itself seemed to be made new. Did ye not know, brethren, that the wicked are to be tolerated in the Church, and schisms not to be made? Did ye not already know, that within those nets which hold both good and bad fishes, we must abide even to the shore, nor must the nets be burst, because on the shore the good shall be separated into vessels, and the bad thrown away? Ye know this already; but these verses of this Psalm ye did not understand; that which ye did not understand is explained; that which ye knew has been renewed.

Psalm 140

1. Our Lords have bidden me, brethren, and in them the Lord of all, to bring this Psalm to your understanding, so far as God giveth me to. May He help your prayers, that I may say those things which I ought to say, ye to hear, that to all of us the Word of God may be profitable. For all it doth not profit, for "all have not faith." ... 2. What this Psalm containeth, I believe that ye perceived when it was being chanted; for therein the Church of Christ, set in the midst of the wicked, complaineth and groaneth, and poureth out prayer to God. For her voice is in every such prophecy the voice of one in need and want, not yet satisfied, "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," for whom a certain fulness in the end hath been promised, and is reserved. ... 3. "To the end, a Psalm to David himself." No other end mayest thou look to, than is laid down for thee by the Apostle himself. For "Christ is the end." ...He was of the seed of David, not after His Godhead, whereby He is the Creator of David, but after the flesh; therefore He deigned to be called David in prophecy: look to this "end," for the Psalm is chanted "to David Himself;" hear the voice of His Body; be in His Body. Let the voice which thou hast heard be thine, and pray, and say what followeth.

4. "Deliver me, O Lord, from the wicked man" (ver. 1). Not from one only, but from the class; not from the vessels only, but from their prince himself, that is, the devil. Why "from man," if he meaneth from the devil? Because he too is called a man in a figure. ...Now then being made light, not in ourselves, but in the Lord, let us pray not only against darkness, that is, against sinners, whom still the devil possesseth, but also against their prince, the devil himself, who worketh in the children of disobedience. "Deliver me from the unrighteous man. The same as "from the wicked man. For he called him wicked because unrighteous, lest perchance thou shouldest think that any unrighteous man could be a good man. For many unrighteous men seem to be harmless; they are not fierce, are not savage, do not persecute nor oppress; yet are they unrighteous, because, following some other habit, they are luxurious, drunkards, given to pleasure. ...Wicked then is every unrighteous man, who must needs be harmful, whether he be gentle or fierce. Whoever falls in his way, whoever is taken by his snares, will find how harmful is that which he thought harmless. For, brethren, even thorns prick not with their roots. Pull up thorns from the ground, handle their roots, and see whether thou feelest pain. Yet that in the upgrowth which causeth thee pain, proceeded from that root.

Let not then men please you who seem gentle and kind, yet are lovers of carnal pleasure, followers of polluted lusts, let them not please you. Though as yet they seem gentle, they are roots of thorns. ...And so, my brethren, body of Christ, members of Christ groaning among such wicked men, whomsoever ye find hurrying headlong into evil lusts and deadly pleasures, at once chide, at once punish, at once burn. Let the root be burnt, and there remaineth not whence the thorn may grow up. If ye cannot, be sure that ye will have them as enemies. They may be silent, they may hide their enmity, but they cannot love you. But since they cannot love you, and since they who hate you must needs seek your harm, let not your tongue and heart be slow to say to God, "Deliver me, O Lord, from the unrighteous man."

5. "Who have imagined unrighteousnesses in their heart" (ver. 2). ...From them free me, from them let Thy hand be most powerful to deliver me. For easy is it to avoid open enmities, easy is it to turn aside from an enemy declared and manifest, while iniquity is in his lips as well as his heart; he is a troublesome enemy, he is secret, he is with difficulty avoided, who beareth good things in his lips, while in his heart he concealeth evil things. "All the day long did they make war." What is, "war"? They made for me what I was to fight against all the day. For from thence, from such hearts as these, ariseth all that the Christian fighteth against. Be it sedition, be it schism, be it heresy, be it turbulent opposition, it springeth not save from these imaginings which were concealed, and while they spake good words with their lips, "all the day long did they make war." Ye hear words of peace, yet making war departeth not from their thoughts. For the words, "all the day long," signify without intermission, throughout the whole time. "They have sharpened their tongues like serpents" (ver. 3). If still thou seekest to make out the man, behold a comparison. In the serpent above all beasts is there cunning and craft to hurt; for therefore does it creep. It hath not even feet, so that its footsteps when it cometh may be heard. In its progress it draweth itself, as it were, gently along, yet not straightly. Thus then do they creep and crawl to hurt, having poison hidden even trader a gentle touch. And so it followeth, "the poison of asps is under their lips." Behold, it is "under" their lips, that we may perceive one thing under their lips, another in their lips. ...

6. "Preserve me, O Lord, from the hand of the sinner, from unrighteous men deliver me" (ver. 4). Here they wear their real colours, they are known; here we have no need to understand, but to act: we have need to pray, not to ask who they are. But how thou shouldest pray against such men, he explaineth in what followeth. For many pray unskilfully against wicked men. "Who have imagined," saith he, "to trip up my steps. Thus far it may be understood carnally. Every one has enemies, who seek to cheat him in trade, to rob him of money, where they are engaged together in business; every one has some neighbour his enemy, who deviseth how to bring mischief upon his family, to injure in some way his property and surely he deviseth this by deceit, by fraud, by devilish devices he endeavoureth to accomplish this: no one can doubt it. Yet not for these reasons are they to be guarded against, but lest they lay in wait for thee and draw thee to themselves, that is, separate thee from the Body of Christ, and make thee of their body. For as Christ is the Head of the good,

so is the devil their head. What is, "to trip up my steps"? Not as though thou shouldest be deceived in the business thou hast with him, or he cheat thee in a case which thou hast with him in the law courts. He hath "tripped up thy steps," if he have hindered thee in the way of God;

so that what thou didst direct aright may stumble, or fall from the way, or fall in the way, or draw back from the way, or stop on the way, or go back to the place from whence it had come. Whatsoever hath done this to thee, hath tripped thee up, hath deceived thee. Against such snares as these pray thou, lest thou lose thy heavenly inheritance, lest thou lose Christ thy Joint-heir, for thou art destined to live for ever with Him, who hath made thee an heir. For thou art made an heir, not by one whom thou art to succeed after his death, but One together with whom thou art to live for ever.

7. "The proud have hidden a trap for me" (ver. 5). He hath briefly described the whole body of the devil, when he saith, "the proud." Hence is it that for the most part they call themselves righteous when they are unrighteous. Hence is it that nothing is so grievous to them as to confess their sins. They are men who, being falsely righteous, must needs envy the truly righteous. For none envieth another in that which he wisheth not either to be or to seem. ...Hence come all allurings and trippings up of others. This the devil first wished, when falling himself he envied man who stood. ...

8. But those "proud ones have hidden a trap for me;" they have sought to trip up my steps. And what have they done? "And have stretched out cords as traps." What cords? The word is well known in holy Scripture, and elsewhere we find what "cords" signify. For "each one is holden with the cords of his sins," saith Scripture. And Esaias saith openly, "Woe to them that draw sin like a long rope." And why is it called a "cord"? Because every sinner who persevereth in his sins, addeth sin to sin; and when he ought by accusing his sins to amend, by defending he doubleth what by confession he might have removed, and often seeketh to fortify himself by other sins, on account of the sins he hath already committed. ...But these their sins they "spread" for the righteous, when they persuade them to do the evils which they themselves do. Therefore he said, "they spread cords and traps;" that is, by their sins they desired to overthrow me. And where did they this? "Beside the paths have they laid a stumbling-block for me:" not in the paths, but, "beside the paths." Thy "paths" are the commandments of God. They have "laid stumbling-blocks beside the paths;" do not thou withdraw out of the paths, and thou wilt not rush upon stumbling-blocks. Yet will I not that thou shouldest say, "God should prevent them from laying stumbling-blocks beside my paths, and then they would not lay them." Nay, rather, God permitted them to "lay stumbling-blocks beside thy paths," that thou shouldest not leave the paths.

9. And what remaineth? what remedy amid such ills, in such temptations, such dangers? "I said unto the Lord, Thou art my God" (ver. 6). Loud is the voice of prayer, it exciteth confidence. Is He not the God of the others? Of whom is not He God, who is the true God? Yet is He specially theirs, who enjoy Him, who serve Him, who willingly submit to Him. For the wicked too, though unwillingly, are subject to Him. ..."Hear with Thine ears the voice

of my prayer." He did not say, "Hear with Thine ears my prayer;" but, as though expressing more plainly the affection of his heart, "the voice of my prayer," the life of my prayer, the soul of my prayer, not that which soundeth in my words, but that which giveth life to my words. For all other noises without life may be called sounds, but not words. Words belong to those that have souls, to the living. But how many pray to God, yet have neither perception of God, nor right thoughts concerning God! These may have the sound of prayer, the voice they cannot, for there is no life in them. This was the voice of the prayer of one who was alive, forasmuch as he understood that God was his God, saw by Whom he was freed, perceived from whom he was freed.

10. Commending this to the ears of God, let him say, "Lord, Lord." Thou Lord-Lord, that is, most truly Lord, not like unto the lords-men, not like the lords who buy with money-bags, but the Lord who buyeth with His Blood. "Lord, Lord, Thou strength of my health" (ver. 7), that is, who givest strength to my health. What is the meaning of "strength of my health"? He complained of the stumbling-blocks and snares of sinners, of wicked men, vessels of the devil, that barked around him and laid snares around him, of the proud that envy the righteous. But He forthwith added a comfort, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." This he observed and feared, and, distressed at the abundance of iniquities, turned himself to hope. Verily I shall be saved, if I endure unto the end: but endurance, so as to win salvation, pertaineth unto strength; Thou art "the strength of my salvation;" Thou makest me to endure, that I may attain salvation. ...Toiling then in this warfare, he looked back to the grace of God; and because already he had begun to be heated and parched, he found, as it were, a shade, whereunder to live. "Thou hast overshadowed my head in the day of battle:" that is, in the heat, lest I be heated, lest I be parched.

11. "Deliver me not over, O Lord, by my own longing to the sinner" (ver. 8). Behold to what end Thy overshadowing shall avail for me, that I suffer not heat from myself. And what could that "sinner" do to me, rage as he would? For wicked men raged against the martyrs, dragged them away, bound them with chains, shut them up in prisons, slew them with the sword, exposed them to wild beasts, consumed them with fire: all this they did; yet did not God deliver them over to the sinners, because they were not delivered over by their own longing. This then pray with all thy might, that God "delivered thee not over by thine own longing to the sinner." For thou by thine own longing givest place to the devil. For lo, the devil hath set before thee gain, invited thee to dishonesty; thou canst not have the gain, unless thou commit the dishonesty: the gain is the bait, dishonesty the snare: do thou so look on the bait, that thou see the snare also; for thou canst not obtain the gain, unless thou commit the dishonesty; and if thou commit the dishonesty, thou wilt be caught. ...Hence is thine head overshadowed in the day of battle. For longing causeth heat, but the overshadowing of the Lord tempers longing, that we may be able to bridle that whereby we were being hurried away, that we be not so heated as to be drawn to the snare. "They have thought against me; leave me not, lest perchance they be exalted." Thou hast in another place, "They that oppress me will exult if I be moved." Such are they, because such is the devil also himself. ...

12. ”The head of their going about, the toil of their own lips shall cover them” (ver. 9). Me, he saith, the shadow of Thy wings shall cover: for, ”Thou hast covered me in the day of battle.” Them what shall cover? ”The head of their going about;” that is, pride. What is, ”their going about”? How they go about and stand not, how they go in the circle of error, where is journeying without end. He who goeth in a straight line, beginneth from some point, endeth at some point: he who goeth in a circle, never endeth. That is the toil of the wicked, which is set forth yet more plainly in another Psalm, ”The wicked walk in a circle.” But ”the head of their going about” is pride, for pride is the beginning of every sin. But whence is pride ”the toil of their own lips”? Every proud man is false, and every false man is a liar. Men toil in speaking falsehood; for truth they could speak with entire facility. For he toileth, who maketh what he saith: he who wisheth to speak the truth, toileth not, for truth herself speaketh without toil. ...

13. ”Coals of fire shall fall upon them upon earth, and Thou shalt cast them down” (ver. 10). What is, ”upon earth”? Here, even in this life, here ”coals of fire shall fall upon them.” What are, ”coals of fire”? We know these coals. Are they different from those of which we are about to speak? For these I see avail for punishment, those that I am about to speak of, for salvation. For we have spoken of certain coals, when man was seeking aid against a treacherous tongue. ...The examples of the ”coals” are added to the wound of the arrows (for I need not fear to say ”the wound,” when the Spouse herself saith, ”I am wounded with love”), and then the hay is consumed, and so they are called ”devouring coals.” The hay is devoured, but the gold is purified, and the man exchanges death for life, and begins to be himself too a burning coal; such a coal as was the Apostle, ”who before was a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious,” a coal black and extinguished; but when he had obtained mercy, he was set on fire from heaven, the voice of Christ set him on fire, all the blackness in him perished, he began to be fervent in spirit, to set others on fire with that wherewith he was set on fire himself. ...

14. ”A man full of words shall not be guided upon earth” (ver. 11). ”A man full of words” loveth lies. For what pleasure hath he, save in speaking? He careth not what he speaketh, so long as he speaks. It cannot be that he will be guided. What then ought the servant of God to do, who is kindled with these ”coals,” and himself made a coal of salvation, what should he do? He should wish rather to hear than to speak; as it is written, ”Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak.” And if it may be so, let him desire this, not to be obliged to speak and talk and teach. ...I can quickly tell you wherein each one may prove himself, not by never speaking, but by requiring a case where it is his duty to speak; let him be glad to be silent, in will, let him speak to teach, when he must. For when must thou needs speak and teach? When thou meetest with one ignorant, when thou meetest with one unlearned. If it delight thee always to teach, thou wishest always to have some ignorant one to teach. ...”Evil shall hunt the unrighteous man to destruction.” Evils come, and he standeth not; therefore said he, ”they shall hunt him to destruction.” For many good men, many righteous men evils have befallen, evils have, as it were, found them. Therefore when the evil pursued the good, that is, our martyrs, when they seized them, they ”hunted” them, but not ”to destruction.”

For the flesh was pressed down, the spirit was crowned; the spirit was cast out from the body, yet was nought done to the flesh which might hinder it for the future. Let the flesh be burned, scourged, mangled; is it therefore withdrawn from its Creator, because it is given into the hands of its persecutor? Will not He who created it from nothing, remake it better than it was?

15. "I know that the Lord will maintain the right of the needy" (ver. 12). This "needy" one is not "full of words;" for he that is full of words, wisheth to abound, knoweth not to hunger. He is "needy" of whom it is said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." They groan among the stumbling-blocks of the wicked, they pray to their Head, "to be delivered from the wicked man. "And the cause of the poor." These then are they whose cause the Lord will not neglect; although now they suffer hardships, their glory shall appear, when their Head appeareth. For to such while placed here it is said, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." So then we are poor, our life is hid; let us cry to Him that is our Bread. ...

16. "But the just shall confess to Thy Name" (ver. 13). Both when Thou shalt plead their cause, and when Thou shalt maintain their right, they "shall confess to Thy Name;" nought shall they attribute to their own merits, all they shall attribute to nought save to Thy mercy. ...Therefore see what followeth, see wherewith he concludeth. "The upright shall dwell with Thy Countenance." For ill was it with them in their own countenance; well will it be with them with Thy Countenance. For when they loved their own countenance, "In the sweat of their countenance did they eat bread." Thy Countenance shall come to them with abundance to satisfy them. Nought more shall they seek, for nought better have they; no more shall they abandon Thee, nor be abandoned by Thee. For after His Resurrection, what was said of the Lord? "Thou shalt fill me with joy with Thy Countenance." Without His Countenance He would not give us joy. For this do we cleanse our countenance, that we may rejoice in His Countenance. ...Because too, "blessed are the poor in heart, for they shall see God;" He gave the Form of Man both to good and evil, the Form of God He preserved for the pure and good, that we may rejoice in Him, and it may be well with us for ever with His Countenance.

Psalm 141

1. ...The Psalm which we have just sung is in many parts somewhat obscure. When by the help of the Lord what has been said shall begin to be expounded and explained, ye will see that ye are hearing things which ye knew already. But for this cause are they said in manifold ways, that variety of expression may remove all weariness of the truth. ... 2. ”Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hear Thou me” (ver. 1). This we all can say. This not I alone say: whole Christ saith it. But it is said rather in the name of the Body: for He too, when He was here and bore our flesh, prayed; and when He prayed, drops of blood streamed down from His whole Body. So is it written in the Gospel: ”Jesus prayed earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood.” What is this flowing of sweat from His whole Body, but the suffering of martyrs from the whole Church? ”Listen unto the voice of my prayer, while I cry unto Thee.” Thou thoughtest the business of crying already finished, when thou saidst, ”I have cried unto Thee.” Thou hast cried; yet think not thyself safe. If tribulation be finished, crying is finished: but if tribulation remain for the Church, for the Body of Christ, even to the end of the world, let it not only say, ”I have cried unto Thee,” but also, ”Listen unto the voice of my prayer.”

3. ”Let my prayer be set forth in Thy sight as incense, and the lifting up of my hands an evening sacrifice” (ver. 2). That this is wont to be understood of the Head Himself, every Christian acknowledgeth. For when the day was now sinking towards evening, the Lord upon the Cross ”laid down His life to take it again,” did not lose it against His will. Still we too are figured there. For what of Him hung upon the tree, save what He took of us? And how can it be that the Father should leave and abandon His only begotten Son, especially when He is one God with Him? Yet, fixing our weakness upon the Cross, where, as the Apostle saith, ”our old man is crucified with Him,” He cried out in the voice of that our ”old man,” ”Why hast Thou forsaken Me?” That then is the ”evening sacrifice,” the Passion of the Lord, the Cross of the Lord, the offering of a salutary Victim, the whole burnt offering acceptable to God. That ”evening sacrifice” produced, in His Resurrection, a morning offering. Prayer then, purely directed from a faithful heart, riseth like incense from a hallowed altar. Nought is more delightful than the odour of the Lord: such odour let all have who believe.

4. ...”Set, O Lord, a watch before my mouth, and a door of restraint around my lips” (ver. 3). He said not a barrier of restraint, but ”a door of restraint.” A door is opened as well

as shut. If then it be a "door," let it be both opened and shut; opened, to confession of sin; closed, to excusing sin. So will it be a "door of restraint," not of ruin. For what doth this "door of restraint" profit us? What doth Christ pray in the name of His Body? "That Thou turn not aside My heart to wicked words" (ver. 4). What is, "My heart"? The heart of My Church; the heart, that is, of My Body. ... 5. But when thine heart hath not been turned aside, O member of Christ, when thy heart hath not been turned aside "to wicked words, to making excuses in sins, with men that work in iniquity," thou shalt also not unite with their elect. For this followeth, "And I will not unite with their elect." Who are "their elect"? Those who justify themselves. Who are their elect? Those "who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others," as the Pharisee said in the temple, "Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are." Who are their elect? "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know what manner of woman this is that touched His feet." Here thou recognisest the words of that other Pharisee, who invited our Lord to his house; when the woman of that city, who was a sinner, came and approached His Feet. ...

For even this woman herself, "if her heart had turned aside to wicked words," would not have lacked wherewith to defend her sins. Do not women daily, her equals in defilement, but not her equals in confession, harlots, adulteresses, doers of shameful deeds, defend their sins? If they have not been seen, they deny them: if they have been caught and convicted, or have done their deeds openly, they defend them. And how easy is their defence, how ready, yet how headlong; how common, yet how blasphemous! "Had God not willed it, I had not done it: God willed it: fortune willed it: fate willed it." ...These are the defences of "the elect" of this world. But 'let the members of Christ, the Body of Christ, say, let Christ say in the name of His Body, "Turn not Thou aside, My Heart, to wicked words," etc., "and I will not unite with their elect." ...

6. "With men that work wickedness." What wickedness? Let me mention some sinful wickedness of theirs. Let me tell you one open sinful wickedness, which they acknowledge. They say, it is better for a man to be an usurer than a husbandman. Thou askest the reason, and they assign one. ...He vexeth the members of Christ, who cleanseth the earth with a furrow: he vexeth the members of Christ, who pulleth grass from the earth: he vexeth the members of Christ, who plucketh an apple from a tree. To avoid committing their imaginary murders in the farm, he committeth real murders in usury. He dealeth no bread to the needy. See whether there can be greater unrighteousness than this righteousness. He dealeth not bread to the hungry. Thou askest, wherefore? Lest the beggar receive the life which is in the bread, which they call a member of God, the substance of God, and bind it in flesh. What then do ye? why do ye eat? Have ye not flesh? Yes; but we, they say, forasmuch as we are enlightened by faith in Manes, by our prayers and our Psalms, forasmuch as we are elect, we cleanse thereby that bread, and transmit it into the treasure-house of the heavens. Such are the elect, that they are not to be saved by God, but saviours of God. And this is Christ, they say, crucified in the whole universe. I received in the Gospel Christ a Saviour, but ye are in your books the saviours of Christ. Plainly ye are blasphemers of Christ, and therefore not to be saved by Christ. Therefore lest a crumb be given to the hun-

gry, and in the crumb a member of Christ suffer, is the hungry to die of hunger? False mercy to a crumb causeth true murder of a man. But who are their elect? "Turn not thou aside, my heart, to wicked words, and I will not unite with their elect."

7. "The righteous One shall amend me in mercy, and convict me" (ver. 5). Behold the sinner confessing. He desireth to be amended in mercy, rather than praised deceitfully. ..."Shall convict me," but "in mercy:" shall convict, yet hateth not: yea, shall all the more convict, because He hateth not. And why doth he therefore give thanks? Because, "rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee." "The righteous One shall amend me." Because He persecuteth thee? God forbid. He requireth rather amending himself, who amendeth in hate. Wherefore then doth He amend? "In mercy. And shall convict me." Wherein? "In mercy. For the oil of a sinner shall not enrich my head." My head shall not grow by flattery. Undue praise is flattery: undue praise of a flatterer is "the oil of a sinner." Therefore men too, when they have mocked any one with false praise, say, "I have anointed his head." Love then to be "convicted by the righteous One in mercy;" love not to be praised by a sinner in mockery. Have oil in yourselves, and ye shall not seek the "oil of a sinner." ...

8. Thou sayest to me, What am I doing? I am beset with flatterers; they cease not to besiege me; they praise in me what I would not, that praise in me what I hold in little esteem; what I hold dear they blame in me; flatterers, treacherous, deceivers. For instance, "Gaiuseius is a great man, great, learned, wise; but why is he a Christian? For great is his learning, great his reading, great his wisdom. If great is his wisdom, approve of his being a Christian; if great his learning, learnedly hath he chosen. In fine, what thou revilest, that pleaseth him whom thou praisest. But what? That praise sweeteneth not: it is "the oil of a sinner. Yet ceaseth be not to speak so. Let him not therewith "fatten thy head; that is, rejoice not in such things; agree not to such things; consent not to such things; rejoice not in such things; and then, if he have applied to thee the oil of flattery, yet hath thy head remained as it was, it has not been puffed up, it hath not swollen. ..."For still shall My word be well-pleasing to them. Wait awhile: now they revile Me, saith Christ. In the early times of the Christians, the Christians were blamed on all sides. Wait as yet; and "My word shall be well-pleasing to them. The time shall come when they shall conquer thousands of men, who shall beat their breasts, and say, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Even now, how many remain who blush to beat their breasts? Let them then blame us: let us bear it. Let them blame; let them hate, accuse, detract; "still shall My word be well-pleasing to them; the time shall come when My word shall please them. ...O wordy defence of iniquity! Verily now whole nations say this, and the thunder of nations beating their breasts ceaseth not. Rightly do the clouds thunder, wherein now God dwelleth. Where is now that wordiness, where that boasting, "I am righteous; nought of ill have I done"? Verily, when thou hast contemplated in Holy Scripture the law of righteousness, how far soever thou hast advanced, thou shall find thyself a sinner. ...What sort of man am I now speaking of, brethren? I speak of him who worshippeth God alone, who confesseth Christ, who knoweth the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost to be one God; who committeth

not fornication against Him; who worshippeth not devils; who seeketh him not aid from the devil; who holdeth the Catholic Church; whom no one complaineth of as cheating; under whose oppression no weak neighbour groaneth; who assaileth not another's wife; who is content with his own, or even without his own, in such wise as is lawful, and as Apostolical discipline permitteth, with consent of both, or when she is not yet married. Even he who is such as this, is yet overtaken in such things as I have mentioned.

For all these daily sins then what is our hope, save to say with humble heart in the Lord's Prayer, while we defend not our sins, but confess them, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and to "have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," that He may be "the propitiation for our sins"? See what followeth: "their judges have been swallowed up beside the Rock" (ver. 6). What is, "swallowed up beside the Rock? That Rock was Christ. They have been swallowed up beside the Rock. "Beside," that is, compared, as judges, as mighty, powerful, learned: they are called "their judges," as judging about morals, and laying down their opinions. This Aristotle said. Set him beside the Rock, and he is swallowed up. Who is Aristotle? let him hear, "Christ hath said," and he trembleth among the dead. This Pythagoras said, that Plato said. Set them beside the Rock, compare their authority to the authority of the Gospel, compare the proud to the Crucified. Say we to them "Ye have written your words in the hearts of the proud; He hath planted His Cross in the hearts of kings: finally, He died, and rose again; ye are dead, and I will not ask how ye rise again. So "their judges have been swallowed up beside" that "Rock. So long do their words seem somewhat, till they are compared with the Rock. Therefore if any of them be found to have said what Christ too hath said, we congratulate him, but we follow him not.

But he came before Christ. If any man speak what is true, is he therefore before the Truth itself? Regard Christ, O man, not when He came to thee, but when He made thee. The sick man too might say, "But I took to my bed before the physician came to me. Why, for that very reason has He come last, because thou first has sickened.

9. "They shall hear My Words, for they have prevailed." My Words have prevailed over their words. They have spoken clever things, I true things. To praise one who talketh well is one thing, to praise One who speaketh truth is another. "They shall hear My Words, for they have prevailed." How have they prevailed? Who of them has been taken offering sacrifice, when such things were forbidden by the law, and has not denied it? Who of them has been taken worshipping an idol, and has not exclaimed, "I did it not," and feared lest he should be convicted? Such servants hath the devil. But how have the Words of the Lord prevailed? "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Fear not those who kill the body," etc. He gave them fear, He suggested hope, He kindled love. "Fear not death," He saith. Do ye fear death? I die first. Fear ye, lest a hair of your head perish? I first rise again in the flesh uninjured. Rightly have ye heard His Words, for they have prevailed. They spake, and were slain; they fell, and yet stood. And what was the result of so many deaths of martyrs, save that those words prevailed, and the earth being, so to speak, watered by the blood of Christ's witnesses, the cross of the Church shot up everywhere? How have they "prevailed"?

We have said already, when they were preached by men who feared not. Feared not what? Neither banishment, nor losses, nor death, nor crucifixion: for it was not death alone that they did not fear; but even crucifixion, a death than which none was thought more accursed. It the Lord endured, that His disciples might not only not fear death, but not even that kind of death. When then these things are said by men that fear not, they have prevailed.

10. What then have all those deaths of the martyrs accomplished? Listen: "As the fatness of the earth is spread over the earth, our bones have been scattered beside the pit" (ver. 7). "The bones" of the martyrs, that is, the bodies of the witnesses of Christ. The martyrs were slain, and they who slew them seemed to prevail. They prevailed by persecution, that the words of Christ might prevail by preaching. And what was the result of the deaths of the saints? What meaneth, "the fatness of the earth is spread over the earth"? We know that everything that is refuse is the fatness of the earth. The things which are, as it were, contemptible to men, enrich the earth. ..."Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." As it is contemptible to the world, so is it precious to the husbandman. For he knoweth the use thereof, and its rich juice; he knoweth what he desireth, what he seeketh, whence the fertile crop ariseth; but this world despiseth it. Know ye not that "God hath chosen the contemptible things of the world, and those which are not, like as those which are, that the things which are may be brought to nought"? From the dunghill was Peter lifted up, and Paul; when they were put to death, they were despised: now, the earth having been enriched by them, and the cross of the Church springing up, behold, all that is noble and chief in the world, even the emperor himself, cometh to Rome, and whither does he hasten? to the temple of the emperor, or the memorial of the fisherman?

11. "For unto Thee, Lord, are mine eyes; in Thee have I hoped, take not Thou away my life" (ver. 8). For they were tortured in persecutions, and many failed. It occurreth to him that many have failed, many have been in hazard, and as it were in the midst of the tribulation of persecution is sent forth the voice of one praying; "For unto Thee, Lord, are mine eyes:" I care not what they threaten who stand around, "unto Thee, Lord, are mine eyes." More do I fix mine eye on Thy promises than on their threats. I know what Thou hast suffered for me, what Thou hast promised me. 12. "Keep me from the trap which they have laid for me" (ver. 9). What was the trap? "If thou consentest, I spare thee." In the trap was set the bait of the present life; if the bird love this bait, it falleth into the trap: but if the bird be able to say, "The day of man have I not desired: Thou knowest:" "He shall pluck his feet out of the net," etc. Two things he hath mentioned to be distinguished the one from the other: the trap he said was set by persecutors; the stumbling-blocks came from those who have consented and apostatised: and from both he desires to be guarded. On the one side they threaten and rage, on the other consent and fall: I fear lest the one be such, that I fear him; the other such, that I imitate him. "This I do to thee, if thou consent not." "Keep me from the trap," etc. "Behold, thy brother hath already consented." "And from the stumbling-blocks," etc.

13. "Sinners shall fall into his nets" (ver. 10). Not all sinners, certain sinners, who are so great sinners, as to love this life to such a degree as to prefer it to everlasting life, "shall

fall into his trap." But what sayest thou? Shall they that are such, thinkest thou, fall into his nets? what of Thy disciples, O Christ? Behold, when persecution was raging, when they all "left Thee alone, and went every one to his own:" lo! they who were closest to Thee, in Thy trial and persecution, when Thine enemies demanded Thee to be crucified, abandoned Thee. And that bold one, who had promised Thee that he would go with Thee even unto death, heard from the Physician what was being done in him, the sick man. For being in a fever, he had said he was whole; but the Lord touched the vein of his heart. Then came the trial; then came the test; then came the accusation; and now, questioned not by some great power, but by a humble slave, and that a woman, questioned by a handmaid, he yielded; he denied thrice. ..."He wept bitterly," it saith. Not yet was he fitted to suffer. To him was said, "Thou shall follow Me afterwards." Hereafter he was to be firm, having been strengthened by the Lord's Resurrection. Not yet then was it time that those "bones" should be "scattered beside the pit." For see how many failed, even to those who first hung on His mouth; even they failed. Wherefore? "I am alone, until I pass over:" for this followeth in the Psalm. ...

14. Pascha, as they say who know, and who have explained to us what to read, meaneth "Passover. When then the Lord's Passion was about to come, the Evangelist, as though he would use this very word, saith, "When the hour was come that Jesus should pass over to the Father. We hear then of Pascha in this verse, "I am alone, until I pass over. After Pascha I shall no longer be alone, after passing-over I shall no longer be alone. Many shall imitate Me, many shall follow Me. And if afterward they shall follow, what shall be the case now? "I am alone, until I pass over. What is it that the Lord saith in this Psalm, "I am alone, until I pass over"? What is it that we have expounded? If we have understood it, listen to His own words in the Gospel. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." ...Therefore He was alone before He was put to death. ...So far was any from dying for the Name, that is, for confessing the Name of Christ, before that Corn of wheat fell into the ground, that even John, who was slain just before Him, being given by a wicked king to a dancing woman, was not put to death because he confessed Christ. Of course he might have been put to death for this, and that by many.

If for another reason he was put to death by one man, how much more might he have been put to death by those very men, who put Christ to death? For John gave testimony to Christ. They who heard Christ, wished to slay Him; the man who gave testimony to Him they slew not. ...He is not slain by the Jews who gave free testimony to Christ, whom the Jews slew; he is slain by Herod, because he said to him, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. For his brother had not died without issue. For the law of truth, for equity, for righteousness' sake, he did die: therefore is he a saint, therefore a martyr; but yet he died not for that Name whereby we are Christians, wherefore, save that the saying might be fulfilled, "I am alone, until I pass over."

Psalm 142

1. ..."With my voice have I cried unto the Lord" (ver. 1). It were enough to say, "with voice:" not for nothing perhaps has "my" been added. For many cry unto the Lord, not with their own voice, but with the voice of their body. Let the "inner man" then, in whom "Christ" hath begun to "dwell by faith," cry unto the Lord, not with the din of his lips, but with the affection of his heart. God heareth not, where man heareth: unless thou criest with the voice of lungs and side and tongue, man heareth thee not: thy thought is thy cry to the Lord. "With my voice have I prayed unto the Lord." What he meant by, "I have cried," he explained when he said, "I have prayed." For they too who blaspheme, cry unto the Lord. In the former part he set down his crying, in the latter he explained what it was. As though it were demanded, With what cry hast thou cried unto the Lord? Unto the Lord, saith he, I have prayed. My cry is my prayer, not reviling, not murmuring, not blaspheming.

2. "I will pour out before Him my prayer" (ver. 2). What is, "before Him"? In His sight. What is, in His sight? Where He seeth. But where doth He not see? For so do we say, 'where He seeth,' as though somewhere He seeth not. But in this assemblage of bodily substances men too see, animals too see: He seeth where man seeth not. For thy thoughts no man seeth, but God seeth. There then pour out thy prayer, where He alone seeth, who rewardeth. For the Lord Jesus Christ bade thee pray in secret: but if thou knowest what "thy closet" is, and cleansest it, there thou prayest to God. "But thou," saith He, "when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and shut the door, and pray to thy Father in secret, and He who seeth in secret shall reward thee." If men are to reward thee, pour out thy prayer before men: if God is to reward thee, pour out thy prayer before Him; and close the door, lest the tempter enter. Therefore the Apostle, because it is in our power to shut the door, the door of our hearts, not of our walls, for in it is our "closet,"-because it is in our power to shut this door, saith, "neither give place to the devil." But what is to "shut the door"? This door hath as it were two leaves, desire and fear. Either thou desireth something earthly, and he enters by this; or thou fearest something earthly, and he enters by that. Close then the door of fear and desire against the devil, open it to Christ. How dost thou open these folding doors to Christ? By desiring the kingdom of heaven, by fearing the fire of hell. By desire of this world the devil entereth, by desire of eternal life Christ entereth; by fear of temporal punishment the devil entereth, by fear of everlasting fire Christ entereth. ...

3. ”My tribulation I will proclaim in His sight. There is a repetition, both in the two preceding sentences, and in these which follow: the sentiments are two, but both twice expressed. ...For, ”in His sight,” is the same as ”before Him; ”I will proclaim my tribulation,” is the same as, ”I will pour out my prayer. When doest thou this? Being set in the midst of persecution, he saith, ”while my spirit failed from me” (ver. 3). Wherefore hath thy spirit failed, O martyr, set in tribulation? That I may not claim my strength as mine own, that I may know that Another worketh in me the goodness I have. And men perhaps have heard that my spirit hath failed within me, and have despaired of me, and have said, ”we have taken him captive, we have overpowered him; ”and Thou hast known my paths. They thought me cast down, Thou didst see me standing upright. They who persecuted me and had seized me, thought my feet entangled, ”but their feet were entangled, and they fell, but we are risen, and stand upright. For mine eyes are ever unto the Lord, for He shall pluck my feet out of the net. I have persevered in walking, for ”lie that shall persevere unto the end, the same shall be saved. They thought me overpowered, but I continued walking. Where did I walk?

In paths which they saw not, who thought me prisoner, in the paths of Thy righteousness, in the paths of Thy commandments. ...For every path is a way, but not every way is a path. Why then are those ways called paths, save because they are narrow? Broad is the way of the wicked, narrow the way of the righteous. That which is ”the way” is also ”the ways,” just as ”the Church” is also ”the Churches,” the ”heaven” also the ”heavens: they are spoken of in the plural, they are spoken of also in the singular. On account of the unity of the Church it is one Church; ”My dove is one, she is the only one of her mother. On account of the congregation of brethren in various places there are many Churches. ”The Churches of Judaea which are in Christ rejoiced,” saith Paul, ”and they glorified God in me. Thus he spake of Churches; and of one Church he thus speaketh, ”Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.” ...

4. ”In this way, wherein I was walking, they hid a trap for me. This ”way wherein I was walking,” is Christ; there have they laid a trap for me, who persecute me in Christ, for Christ’s Name’s sake. There then ”have they hid for me a trap. What in me do they hate, what in me do they persecute? That I am a Christian. ...For the heretics too wish to hide a stumbling-block for us in the Name of Christ, and are themselves deceived. What they think that they put in the way, they put outside the way, for they themselves are outside the way. They cannot set a trap where themselves are not. ...The Pagan thinketh to put a stumbling-block in the way, when he saith to me, ”Thou worshippest a crucified God. He findeth fault with the Cross of Christ, which he understandeth not. He thinketh that he setteth in Christ, what he setteth near the way. I will not depart from Christ, so shall I not fall from the way into the trap. Let him mock at Christ crucified, let me see the Cross of Christ on the foreheads of kings. What he laugheth at, therein am I saved. Nought is prouder than a sick man, who laugheth at his own medicine. If he laughed not at it, he would take it, and be healed. The Cross is the sign of humility, but he through excess of pride acknowledgeth not that whereby may be healed the swelling of his soul.

But if I acknowledge, I am walking in the way. So far am I from blushing at the Cross, that in no secret place do I keep the Cross of Christ, but bear it on my forehead. Many sacraments we receive, one in one way another in another: some as ye know we receive with the mouth, some we receive over the whole body. But because the forehead is the seat of the blush of shame, He who said, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me before men, of him will I be ashamed before My Father which is in heaven," set, so to speak, that very ignominy which the Pagans mock at, in the seat of our shame. Thou hearest a man assail a shameless man and say, "He hath no forehead. What is, "He hath no forehead"? He hath no shame. Let me not have a bare forehead, let the Cross of my Lord cover it. ...

5. "I considered upon the right hand, and saw" (ver. 4). He considered upon the right hand, and saw: whoso considereth upon the left hand, is blinded. What is to consider on the right hand? Where they will be to whom shall be said, "Come, ye blessed of My Father," etc., ...He goeth on to say, "and there was none that knew me. For when thou fearest all things, who knoweth what thou regardest, whether thou directest thine eyes to the right hand or to the left? If, in bearing, thou seekest the praise of men, thou hast regarded the left: if, in bearing, thou seekest the promises of God, thou hast regarded the right hand. Hast thou regarded the right hand, thou shalt see: hast thou regarded the left hand, thou shalt be blinded. But even when thou seest on the right hand, there will be none to know thee. For who comforteth thee save the Lord? "Flight hath perished from me. He speaketh as though he were hemmed in. Let the persecutors rejoice over him; he is overpowered, he is taken, he is hemmed in, he is conquered. "Flight hath perished" from him who fleeth not. But he who fleeth not, suffereth whatever he can for Christ: that is, he fleeth not in soul. For in body it is lawful to flee; it is allowed, it is permitted; for the Lord saith, "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another. He then who fleeth not in soul, from him "flight hath perished.

But it maketh a difference why he fleeth not; whether because he is hemmed in, because he is caught, or because he is brave. For both from him that is caught flight hath perished, and from him that is brave flight hath perished. What flight then is to be avoided? what flight shall we allow to perish from us? That whereof the Lord speaketh in the Gospel, "The Good Shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, when he seeth the wolf coming, fleeth. When he seeth the ravager, why fleeth he? "Because he careth not for the sheep." ...In two ways a man's life is sought, either by his persecutors or by his lovers. So then "there is none to seek my life," he said of them; verily they persecute my life, and they seek not my life. But if they seek my life, they will find it clinging to Thee: and if they know to seek it, they know also to imitate it.

6. "Unto thee have I cried, O Lord: I have said, Thou art my hope" (ver. 5). When I endured, when I was in tribulation, "I said, Thou art my hope." My hope here, therefore I endure. But "my portion," not here, but "in the land of the living." God giveth a portion in the land of the living; but not something from Himself without Himself. What will He give to one that loveth Him, save Himself?

7. ”Give heed unto my prayer, for much have I been humbled” (ver. 6). Humbled by persecutors, humbled in confession. He humbleth himself out of the sight of man: he is humbled by enemies in their sight. Therefore is he lifted up by Him both visibly and invisibly. Invisibly are the martyrs already lifted up; visibly shall they be lifted up, ”when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption” in the resurrection of the dead; when this very part of him, against which alone her persecutors could rage, shall be renewed. ”Fear not them that kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. And what perisheth? what kill they? ...Why then art thou anxious about the rest of thy members, when thou shall not lose even a hair? ”Deliver me from them that persecute me. From whom thinkest thou that he prayeth to be delivered? From men who persecuted him? Is it so? are merely men our enemies? We have other enemies, invisible, who persecute us in another way. Man persecuteth, that he may slay the body; another persecuteth, that he ensnare the soul. ...There are then other enemies of ours too, from whom we ought to pray God to deliver us, lest they lead us astray, either by crushing us with troubles of this world, or alluring us by its enticements. Who are these enemies? Let us see whether they are plainly described by any servant of the Lord, by any soldier, now perfected, who hath engaged with them.

Hear the Apostle saying, ”We wrestle not against flesh and blood: as though he would say, Turn not your hatred against men; think not them your enemies; think not that it is by their hostility you are being bruised; these men whom ye fear are flesh and blood. ...”For they are strengthened over me. Who said, ”they are strengthened over me”? The Body of Christ crieth out; it is the voice of the Church; the members of Christ cry out, ”Much hath the number of sinners increased. ”Because iniquity hath abounded, the love of many waxeth cold.”

8. ”Bring forth my soul out of prison, that it may confess to Thy Name” (ver. 7). This ”prison” has been variously understood by former writers. And perhaps it is the prison which is called in the title, ”the cave. For the title of this Psalm runneth thus: ”Of understanding to David himself, a prayer when he was in the cave. That which is the cave, the same is also the prison. Two things have we set before us to understand, but when we have understood one, both will be understood. A man’s deserts make a prison. For in one dwelling place one man finds a house, another a prison. ...To some then it has seemed that the ”cave” and ”prison” are this world; and this the Church prayeth, that it may be brought out of prison, that is, from this world, from under the sun, where all is vanity. Beyond this world then God promiseth that we shall be in some sort of rest; therefore perhaps do we cry concerning this place, ”Bring my soul out of prison. Our soul by faith and hope is in Christ; ”Your life is hid with Christ in God. But our body is in this prison, in this world. ...But some have said, that this prison and cave is this body, so that this is the meaning of, ”Bring my soul out of prison. But this interpretation too is somewhat at fault. For what great thing is it to say, ”Bring my soul out of prison,” bring my soul out of the body?

Do not the souls of robbers and wicked men go forth from the body, and go into worse punishment than here they have endured? What great request then is this, ”Bring my soul out

of prison," when, sooner or later, it must needs come forth? Perhaps the righteous saith, "Let me die now; bring forth my soul from this prison of the body. If he be too hasty, he hath not love. He ought indeed to long for and desire, as the Apostle saith, "having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, which is far better. But where is love? Therefore it followeth, "but to abide in the flesh is needful for you. Let God then lead us forth from the body, when He will. Our body too might be said to be a prison, not because that is a prison which God hath made, but because it is under punishment and liable to death. For there are two things to be considered in our body, God's workmanship, and the punishment it has deserved. ...Perhaps then he meant by, "Bring my soul out of prison," bring my soul out of corruption. If thus we understand it, it is no blasphemy, the meaning is consistent. Lastly, brethren, as I think, he meant this; "Bring my soul out of prison," bring it out of straitness. For to one who rejoiceth, even a prison is wide; to one in sorrow, a field is strait. Therefore prayeth he to be brought out of straitness.

For though in hope he have enlargement, yet in reality at at present he is straitened. ...It is not the body that weigheth down the soul, but the corruptible body. It is not the body then that maketh the prison, but the corruption. "Bring my soul out of prison, that it may give thanks to Thy Name. Now the words which follow seem to come from the Head, our Lord Jesus Christ. And they are the same as yesterday's last words. Yesterday's last words, if ye remember, were, "I am alone, until I pass over. And here what are the last words? "The righteous shall sustain me, until thou recompense me."

Psalm 143

1. ...The title of the Psalm is, "To David himself, when his son was pursuing him." We know from the Books of Kings that this happened: ...but we must recognise here another David, truly "strong in hand," which is the explanation of David, even our Lord Jesus Christ. For all those events of past time were figures of things to come. Let us seek then in this Psalm our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, announcing Himself beforehand in His prophecy, and foretelling what should happen at this time by things which were done long ago. For He Himself foretold Himself in the Prophets: for He is the Word of God. Nor did they say ought of this kind, save when filled with the Word of God. They announced then Christ, being filled with Christ, they went before Him about to come, and He deserted not them going before. ...

2. Let then our Lord speak; let Christ with us, whole Christ, speak. "Lord, hear my prayer, receive with Thine ears my entreaty" (ver. 1). "Hear" and "receive with ears" are the same thing. It is repetition, it is confirmation. "In Thy truth hear me, in Thy righteousness." Take it not without emphasis when it is said, "in Thy righteousness." For it is a commendation of grace, that none of us think his righteousness his own. For this is the righteousness of God, which God hath given thee to possess. For what saith the Apostle of them, who would boast of their own righteousness? Speaking of the Jews, he saith, "they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." ...Thou art perverse, because thou imputest what thou hast done ill to God, what well to thyself: thou wilt be right, when thou imputest what thou hast done ill to thyself, what well to God. ...Behold, "in Thy righteousness hear me." For when I look upon myself, nought else do I find mine own, save sin.

3. "And enter not into judgment with Thy servant" (ver. 2). Who are willing to enter into judgment with Him, save they who, "being ignorant of the righteousness of God, go about to establish their own? "Wherefore have we fasted, and Thou hast not seen; wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and Thou takest no knowledge? As though they would say, "We have done what Thou hast commanded, wherefore dost Thou not render to us what Thou hast promised? God answereth thee: I will give to thee to receive what I have promised: I have given thee that thou shouldest do that whereby thou mayest receive. Finally, to such proud ones the Prophet speaketh; "Wherefore will ye plead with Me? ye have all transgressed against Me, saith the Lord. Why will ye enter into judgment with Me, and recount your

own righteousnesses? ..."For before Thee every one living shall not be justified. "Every one living; living, that is, here, living in the flesh, living in expectation of death; born a man; deriving his life of man; sprung from Adam, a living Adam; every one thus living may perhaps be justified before himself, but not before Thee. How before himself? By pleasing himself, displeasing Thee. Enter not then into judgment with me, O Lord my God. How straight soever I seem to myself, Thou bringest forth a standard from Thy store-house, Thou fittest me to it, and I am found crooked. Well is it said, "with Thy servant.

It is unworthy of Thee to enter into judgment with Thy servant, or even with Thy friend. ...What of the Apostles themselves? ...That ye may perceive it at once, they learnt to pray what we pray: to them was given the pattern of prayer by the heavenly Counsellor. "After this manner," saith He, "pray ye. And having set down certain things first, He laid down this too to be said by the leaders of the sheep, the chief members of the Shepherd and Gatherer of the one flock; even they learnt to say, "Forgive us our debts. They said not, "Thanks be to Thee, who hast forgiven us our debts, as we too forgive our debtors," but, "Forgive, as we forgive. But surely the faithful prayed then, surely the Apostles prayed then, for this Lord's Prayer was given rather to the faithful. If those debts only were meant which are forgiven by Baptism, it would befit catechumens rather to say, "Forgive us our debts. Let the Apostles then say, yea let them say, "Forgive us our debts. And when it is said to them, "Wherefore say ye this? what are your debts? let them answer, "for in Thy sight every one living shall not be justified."

4. "For the enemy hath persecuted my soul: he hath humbled my life on the earth" (ver. 3). Here we speak, here our Head speaketh for us. Manifestly both the devil persecuted the Soul of Christ and Judas the Soul of his Master: and now too the same devil remaineth to persecute the Body of Christ, and one Judas succeedeth another. There lacketh not then of whom the Body too may say, "For the enemy hath persecuted my soul." For what doth each one who persecuteth us endeavour save to make us abandon our heavenly hope, and savour of the earth, yield to our persecutor, and love earthly things? "They have laid me in dark places, as the dead of the world." This ye hear more readily from the Head; this ye perceive more readily in the Head. For He died indeed for us, yet was He not one of the "dead of the world." For who are the "dead of the world"? And how was not He one of the "dead of the world"? "The dead of the world" are those who have died of their own desert, receiving the reward of iniquity, deriving death from the sin transmissed to them; according as it is said, "For I was conceived in iniquity." ...In dying, saith He, I do the will of My Father, but I am not deserving of death. Nought have I done wherefore I should die, yet is it Mine own doing that I die, that by the death of an innocent One, they may be freed who had wherefore they should die. "They set me in places," as though in Hades, as though in the tomb, as though in His very Passion, "as the dead of the world."

5. "And My Spirit within me," saith He, "suffered weariness" (ver. 4). Remember, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Here we see one voice. Do we not see plainly the transition from the Head to the members, from the members to the Head? ...

6. But we too were there. He goes to the members. "I have called to mind the days of old" (ver. 5). Did He "call to mind the days of old," by whom every day was made? No, but the body speaketh, each one who has been justified by His grace, who dwelleth in Him in love and devout humility, speaketh and saith, "I have meditated upon all Thy works: plainly because Thou hast made all things good, and nothing would have stood fast, which was not established by Thee. Thy creation is made a spectacle unto me: I have sought in the work the Artificer, in all that is made the Maker. Wherefore this, to what purpose this, save that he might understand, that whatever there was of good in himself was made by Him. ...Look back then upon the Framer of thy life, the Author of thy substance, of thy righteousness, and of thy salvation: "meditate upon the works of His hands," for the righteousness too which is in thee, thou wilt find to pertain to His hand. Hear the Apostle teaching thee this, "not of works," he saith, "lest any should boast. Have we no good works? Plainly we have: but see what follows; "for we are His workmanship," saith he. "We are His workmanship: perhaps in thus speaking of workmanship, he meant to mention the nature whereby we are men? Evidently not: he was speaking of works. But let us not make conjectures;

let the text go on, "for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Think not then that thou thyself doest anything, save in so far as thou art evil. ..."Work out your own salvation," saith the Apostle, "with fear and trembling. If we do work out our own salvation, wherefore with fear, wherefore with trembling, when what we work is in our own power? Hear wherefore with fear and trembling: "for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of His good pleasure. Therefore "with fear and trembling," that it may delight our Maker to work in the lowly valley. ...

7. "I stretched forth," saith he, "my hands to Thee: my soul is as a land without water to Thee" (ver. 6). Rain upon me, saith he, to bring forth from me good fruit. "For the Lord shall give sweetness, that our land may give her fruit." "I have stretched forth my hands to Thee; my soul is as a land without water," not to me, but "to Thee." I can thirst for Thee, I cannot water myself. 8. "Speedily hear me, Lord" (ver. 7). For what need of delay to inflame my thirst, when already I thirst so eagerly? Thou didst delay the rain, that I might drink and imbibe, not reject, Thy inflowing. If then Thou didst for this cause delay, now give; for "my spirit hath failed." Let Thy Spirit fill me. This is the reason why Thou shouldest speedily hear me. I am now become "poor in spirit," make Thou me "blessed in the kingdom of heaven." For he in whom his own spirit liveth, is proud, is puffed up with his own spirit against God. ...

9. "Turn not Thou away Thy Face from me." Thou didst turn it away from me when proud. For once I was full, and in my fulness I was puffed up. Once "in my fulness I said, I shall never be moved." "I said in my fulness, I shall not be moved," knowing not Thy Righteousness, and establishing mine own; but "Thou, Lord, in Thy Will hast afforded strength to my beauty." "I said in my fulness, I shall not be moved," but from Thee came whatever) fulness I had. And to prove to me that it was from Thee, "Thou didst turn away Thy Facefrom me, and I was troubled." After this trouble, where into I was cast, because Thou didst turn away

Thy Face, after the weariness of my spirit, after my heart was troubled within me, because Thou didst turn away Thy Face, then became I "like a land without water to Thee: turn not Thou away Thy Face." Thou turnedst it away from me when proud; give it back to me now I am humble. Because, if Thou turn it away, "I shall be like to them that go down into the pit. What is, that go down into the pit"? When the sinner has come into the depth of sins, he will show contempt. They "go down into the pit," who lose even confession; against which is said, "Let not the pit close her mouth over me." This depth Scripture calleth mostly "a pit," into which depth when a sinner hath come, "he showeth contempt" What is, "he showeth contempt"? He no longer believeth in Providence, or if he do believe, he thinketh that he has no longer aught to do with it. ...

10. "Make me to hear in the morning Thy mercy, for in Thee have I hoped" (ver. 8). Behold, I am in the night, yet "in Thee have I hoped," until the iniquity of the night pass away. "For we have," as Peter saith, "a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts." "Morning" then he calleth the time after the end of the world, when we shall see what in this world we believe. But what here, until the morning come? For it is not enough to hope for the morning; we must do somewhat. Why do somewhat? God is to be sought with the hands in the night. What is, "with the hands"? By good works. Since then we must thus hope for the morning, and bear this night, and persevere in this patience until the day dawn, what meanwhile must we do here? lest perchance thou think that thou wilt do aught of thyself, whereby thou mayest earn to be brought to the morning. "Make known to me, O Lord, the way wherein I must walk." Therefore did He kindle the lamp of prophecy, therefore did He send the Lord in the vessel, as it were, of the flesh, who should even say, "My strength is dried up like a potsherd." Walk by prophecy, walk by the lamp of future things predicted, walk by the word of God. ...

11. "Deliver me from mine enemies, O Lord, for unto Thee have I fled for refuge" (ver. 9). I who once fled from Thee, now flee to Thee. For Adam fled from the Face of God, and hid himself among the trees of Paradise, so that of him was said in the Book of Job, "As a servant that fleeth from his Lord, and findeth a shadow." He fled from the Face of his Lord, and found a shadow. Woe to him, if he continue in the shade, lest it be said afterward, "All things are passed away like a shadow." The rulers of this world, of this darkness, the rulers of the wicked; against these ye wrestle. Great is your conflict, not to see your enemies, and yet to conquer. Against the rulers of this world, of this darkness, the devil, that is, and his angels not the rulers of that world, whereof is said, "the world was made by Him," but that world whereof is said, "the world knew Him not." "For unto Thee have I fled for refuge." ...Whither should I flee? "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?"

12. "Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God" (ver. 10). Glorious confession! glorious rule! "For Thou," saith he, "art my God." To another will I hasten to be re-made, if by another I was made. Thou art my all, "for Thou art my God." Shall I seek a father to get an inheritance? "Thou art my God," not only the Giver of mine inheritance, but mine Inheri-

tance itself. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance." Shall I seek a patron, to obtain redemption? "Thou art my God." Lastly, having been created, do I desire to be re-created? "Thou art my God," my Creator, who hast created me by Thy Word, and re-created me by Thy Word. "Teach Thou me :" for it cannot be that Thou art my God, and yet I am to' be mine own master. See how grace is commended to us. This hold fast, this drink in, this let none drive out of your hearts, lest ye have "a zeal, of God, but not according to knowledge." Say then this: "Thy good Spirit," not my bad one, "Thy good Spirit shall lead me into the right land." For my bad spirit hath led me into a crooked land. And what have I deserved? What can be reckoned as my good works without Thy aid, through which I might obtain and be worthy to be led by Thy Spirit into the right land?

13. Listen, then, with all your power, to the commendation of Grace, whereby ye are saved without price. "For Thy Name's sake, O Lord, Thou shalt quicken me in Thy righteousness" (ver. 11); not in mine own: not because I have deserved, but because Thou hast mercy. For were I to show mine own desert, nought should I deserve of Thee, save punishment. Thou hast pruned off from me mine own merits; Thou hast grafted in Thine own gifts. "Thou shalt bring forth my soul out of tribulation." "And in thy mercy shalt bring mine enemies to destruction: and thou shalt destroy all them that afflict my soul; for I am Thy servant" (ver. 12).

Psalm 144

1. The title of this Psalm is brief in number of words, but heavy in the weight of its mysteries. "To David himself against Goliath." This battle was fought in the time of our fathers, and ye, beloved, remember it with me from Holy Scripture. ...David put five stones in his scrip, he hurled but one. The five Books were chosen, but unity conquered. Then, having smitten and overthrown him, he took the enemy's sword, and with it cut off his head. This our David also did, He overthrew the devil with his own weapons: and when his great ones, whom he had in his power, by means of whom he slew other souls, believe, they turn their tongues against the devil, and so Goliath's head is cut off with his own sword.

2. "Blessed be the Lord my God, who teacheth my hands for battle, my fingers for war" (ver. 1). These are our words, if we be the Body of Christ. It seems a repetition of sentiment; "our hands for battle," and "our fingers for war," are the same. Or is there some difference between "hands" and "fingers"? Certainly both hands and fingers work. Not then without reason do we take "fingers" as put for "hands." But still in the "fingers" we recognise the division of operation, yet still a sort of unity. Behold that grace! the Apostle saith, To one, this; to another, that; "there are diversities of operations; all these worketh one and the self-same Spirit;" there is the root of unity. With these "fingers" then the Body of Christ fighteth, going forth to "war," going forth to "battle." ...By works of Mercy our enemy is conquered, and we could not have works of mercy unless we had charity, and charity we could have none unless we received it by the Holy Ghost; He then "teacheth our hands for battle, and our fingers for war:" to Him rightfully do we say, "My Mercy," from whom we have also that we are merciful: "for he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy."

3. My Mercy and my Refuge, my Upholder and my Deliverer" (ver. 2). Much toileth this combatant, having his flesh lusting against his spirit. Keep what thou hast. Then shalt thou have in full what thou wishest, when "death shall have been swallowed up in victory;" when this mortal body has been raised, and is changed into the condition of the angels, and rises aloft to a heavenly quality. ...There is life, there are good days, where nought lusteth against the spirit, where it is not said, "Fight," but "Rejoice." But who is he that lusteth for these days? Every man certainly saith, "I do." Hear what followeth. I see that thou art toiling, I see that thou art engaged in battle, and in danger; hear what followeth: ..."Depart from evil, and do good:" let not the poor first weep under thee, that the poor may rejoice

through thee. For what reward, since now thou art fighting? "Seek peace, and ensue it." Learn and say, "My Mercy and my Refuge, mine Upholder and my Deliverer, my Protector:" "mine Upholder," lest I fall; "my Deliverer," lest I stick; "my Protector," lest I be stricken. In all these things, in all my toil, in all my battles, in all my difficulties, in Him have I hoped, "who subdueth my people under me." Behold, our Head speaketh together with us.

4. "Lord, what is man, that Thou hast become known unto him?" (ver. 3). All is included in "that Thou hast become known unto him." "Or the son of man, that Thou valuest him?" Thou valuest him, that is, Thou makest him of such importance, Thou countest him of such price, Thou knowest under what Thou placest him, over what Thou placest him. For valuing is considering the price of a thing. How greatly did He value man, who for him shed the blood of His only-begotten Son! For God valueth not man in the same way as one man valueth another he, when he findeth a slave for sale, giveth a higher price for a horse than for a man. Consider how greatly He valued thee, that thou mayest be able to say, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" And how greatly did He value thee, "who spared not His own Son"? "How shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?" He who giveth this food to the combatant, what keepeth He in store for the conqueror? ...

5. "Man is made like unto vanity: his days pass away like a shadow" (ver. 4). What vanity? Time, which passeth on, and floweth by. For this "vanity" is said in comparison of the Truth, which ever abideth, and never faileth: for it too is a work of His Hand, in its degree. "For," as it is written, "God filled the earth with His good things." What is "His"? That accord with Him. But all these things, being earthly, fleeting, transitory, if they be compared to that Truth, where it is said, "I Am That I Am,"(3) all this which passeth away is called "vanity." For through time it vanisheth, like stroke into the air. And why should I say more than that which the Apostle James said, willing to bring down proud men to humility, "What is," saith he, "your life? It is even a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." ...Work then, though it be in the night, with thine hands, that is, by good works seek God, before the day come which shall gladden thee, lest the day come which shall sadden thee. For see how safely thou workest, who art not left by Him whom thou seekest; "that thy Father which seeth in secret may reward thee openly." ...

6. "Lord, bow Thy heavens, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke" (ver. 5). "Flash Thy lightning, and Thou shall scatter them; send forth Thine arrows, and Thou shall confound them" (ver. 6). "Send forth Thy Hand from above, and deliver me, and draw me out of many waters" (ver. 7). The Body of Christ, the humble David, full of grace, relying on God, fighting in this world, calleth for the help of God. What are "heavens bowed down"? Apostles humbled. For those "heavens declare the glory of God;" and of these heavens declaring the glory of God it is presently said, "There is neither speech nor language, but their voices are heard among them," etc. When then these heavens sent forth their voices through all lands, and did wonderful things, while the Lord flashed and thundered from them by miracles and commandments, the gods were thought to have come down from heaven to men. For certain of the Gentiles, thinking this, desired even to sacrifice

to them. ...But they commended to these the Lord Jesus Christ, humbling themselves, that God might be praised; because "the heavens" were "bowed," that "God" might "come down." ..."Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke." So long as they are not touched, they seem to themselves great: they are now about to say, "Great art Thou, O Lord:" the mountains also are about to say, "Thou only art the Most Highest over all the earth."

7. But there are some that conspire, that "gather themselves together against the Lord, and against His Christ. They have come together, they have conspired. "Flash forth Thy lightnings, and Thou shall scatter them. Abound with Thy miracles, and their conspiracy shall be broken. ..."Send forth Thine arrows, and Thou shall confound them. Let the unsound be wounded, that, being well wounded, they may be made sound; and let them say, being set now in the Church, in the Body of Christ, let them say with the Church, "I am wounded with Love. "Send forth Thine Hand from on high. What afterward? What in the end? How conquereth the Body of Christ? By heavenly aid. "For the Lord Himself shall come with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God shall He descend from heaven," Himself the Saviour of the body, the Hand of God. What is, "Out of many waters"? From many peoples. What peoples? Aliens, unbelievers, whether assailing us from without, or laying snares within. Take me out of many waters, in which Thou didst discipline me, in which Thou didst roll me, to free me from my filth. This is the "water of contradiction." ..."From the hand of strange children. Hear, brethren, among whom we are, among whom we live, from whom we long to be delivered. "Whose mouth hath spoken vanity" (ver. 8).

All of you to-day, if ye had not gathered yourselves together to these divine shows of the word of God, and were not at this hour engaged in them, how great vanities would ye be hearing! "whose mouth hath spoken vanity: when, in short, would they, speaking vanity, hear you speaking vanity? "And their right hand is a right hand of iniquity. What doest thou among them with thy pastoral scrip with five stones in it? Say it to me in another form: that same law which thou hast signified by five stones, signify in some other way also. "I will sing a new song unto Thee, O God" (ver. 9). "A new song" is of grace; "a new song" is of the new man; "a new song" is of the New Testament. But lest thou shouldest think that grace departeth from the law, whereas rather by grace the law is fulfilled, "upon a psaltery of ten strings will I sing unto Thee. Upon the law of ten commandments: therein may I sing to Thee; therein may I rejoice to Thee; therein may "I sing to Thee a new song; for, "Love is the fulfilling of the law. But they who have not love may carry the psaltery, sing they cannot. Contradiction cannot make my psaltery to be silent.

8. "Who giveth salvation to kings, who redeemeth David His servant" (ver. 10). Ye know who David is; be yourselves David. Whence "redeemeth He David His servant"? Whence redeemeth He Christ? Whence redeemeth He the Body of Christ? "From the sword of ill intent deliver me." "From the sword" is not sufficient; he addeth, "of ill intent." Without doubt there is a sword of good intent. What is the sword of good intent? That whereof the Lord saith, "I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword." For He was about to separate believers from unbelievers, sons from parents, and to sever all other ties, while the sword

cut off what was diseased, but healed the members of Christ. Of good intent then is the sword twice sharpened, powerful with both edges, the Old and New Testaments, with the narration of the past and the promise of the future. That then is the sword of good intent: but the other is of ill intent, wherewith they talk vanity, for that is of good intent, wherewith God speaketh verity. For truly "the sons of men have teeth which are spears and arrows, and their tongue is a sharp sword." "From" this "sword deliver me" (ver. 11). "And. take me out of the hand of strange children, whose mouth hath spoken vanity:" just as before. And that which followeth, "their right hand is a right hand of iniquity," the same he had set down before also, when he called them "many waters." For lest thou shouldest think that the "many waters" were good waters, he explained them by the "sword of ill intent."

9. "Whose sons are like young vines firmly planted in their youth" (ver. 12). He wisheth to recount their happiness. Observe, ye sons of light, sons of peace: observe, ye sons of the Church, members of Christ; observe whom he calleth "strangers," whom he calleth "strange children," whom he calleth "waters of contradiction," whom he calleth a "sword of ill intent. Observe, I beseech you, for among them ye are in peril, among their tongues ye fight against the desires of your flesh, among their tongues, set in the hand of the devil wherewith he fighteth. ...What vanity hath their mouth spoken, and how is their right hand a right hand of iniquity? "Their daughters are fitted and adorned after the similitude of a temple. "Their garners are full, bursting out from one store to another: their sheep are fruitful, multiplying in their streets" (ver. 13): "their oxen are fat: their hedge is not broken down, nor their road, nor is their crying in their streets" (ver. 14). Is not this then happiness? I ask the sons of the kingdom of heaven, I ask the offspring of everlasting resurrection, I ask the body of Christ, the members of Christ, the temple of God. Is not this then happiness, to have sons safe, daughters beautiful, garners full, cattle abundant, no downfall, I say not of a wall, but not even of a hedge, no tumult and clamour in the streets, but quiet, peace, abundance, plenty of all things in their houses and in their cities? Is not this then happiness?

or ought the righteous to shun it? or findest thou not the house of the righteous too abounding with all these things, full of this happiness? Did not Abraham's house abound with gold, silver, children, servants, cattle? What say we? is not this happiness? Be it so, still it is on the left hand. What is, on the left hand? Temporal, mortal, bodily. I desire not that thou shun it, but that thou think it not to be on the right hand. ...For what ought they to have set on the right hand? God, eternity, the years of God which fail not, whereof is said, "and Thy years shall not fail. There should be the right hand, there should be our longing. Let us use the left for the time, let us long for the fight for eternity. "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them."

10. "They have called the people blessed who have these things" (ver. 15). O men that speak vanity! They have lost the true right hand, wicked and perverse, they have put on the benefits of God inversely. O wicked ones, O speakers of vanity, O strange children! What was on the left hand, they have set on the right. What dost thou, David? What dost thou, Body of Christ? What do ye, members of Christ? What do ye, not strange children, but

children of God? ...What say ye? Say ye with us, "Blessed is the people whose Lord is their God."

Psalm 145

1. ...The title is, ”Praise, to David himself. Praise to Christ Himself. And since He is called David, who came to us of the seed of David, yet He was our King, ruling us, and bringing us into His kingdom, therefore ”Praise to David himself” is understood to mean, Praise to Christ Himself. Christ according to the flesh is David, because He is the Son of David: but according to His Divine Nature He is the Creator of David, and Lord of David. ”I will exalt Thee, my God, my King; and I will bless Thy Name for the age, and age upon age” (ver. 1). Ye see that the praise of God is here begun, and this praise is carried on even to the end of the Psalm. ...Now then begin to praise, if thou intendest to praise for ever. He who will not praise in this transitory ”age,” will be silent when ”age upon age” has come. But lest any one should in any otherwise also understand what he saith, ”I will praise Thy Name for the age,” and should seek another age, wherein to praise, he saith, ”Every day will I bless Thee” (ver. 2). Praise then and bless the Lord thy God every day, that when single days have passed, and there has come one day without end, thou mayest go from praise to praise, as ”from strength to strength. No day shall pass by, wherein I bless Thee not. And it is no wonder, if in thy day of joy thou bless the Lord.

What if perchance some day of sorrow hath dawned on thee, as is natural in the circumstances of our mortal nature, as there is abundance of offences, as temptations are multiplied; what, if something sad befall thee, a man; wilt thou cease to praise God? wilt thou cease to bless thy Creator? If thou cease, thou hast lied in saying, ”every day,” etc. But if thou cease not, although it scent to thee to be ill with thee in the day of thy sorrow, yet in thy God it shall be well with thee. ...

2. ”Great is the Lord, and very much to be praised” (ver. 3). How much was he about to say? what terms was he about to seek? How vast a conception hath he included in the one word, ”very much”? Imagine what thou wilt, for how can that be imagined, which cannot be contained? ”He is very much to be praised. And of His Greatness there is no end;” therefore said he ”very much:” lest perchance thou begin to wish to praise, and think that thou canst reach the end of His praises, whose Greatness can have no end. Think not then that He, whose Greatness has no end, can ever be enough praised by thee. Is it not then better that as He has no end, so neither should thy praise have end? His Greatness is without end; let thy praise also be without end. ...

3. For how great things besides has His boundless Goodness and illimitable Greatness made, which we do not know! When we lift the gaze of our eyes even to the heaven, and then recall it from sun, moon, and stars to the earth, and there is all this space where our sight can wander; beyond the heavens who can extend the eyesight of his mind, not to say of his flesh? So far then as His works are known to us, let us praise Him through His works. "Generation and generation shall praise Thy works" (ver. 4). Every generation shall praise Thy works. For perhaps every generation is meant by "generation and generation." ...Did he perchance mean to imply two generations by that repetition? For we are in this generation sons of God, we shall be in another generation sons of the Resurrection. Scripture hath called us "sons of the Resurrection; the Resurrection itself it hath called Regeneration. "In the regeneration," it saith, "when the Son of Man shall be seated in His Majesty. So also in another place; "For they shall not marry, nor be given in marriage, for they are the sons of the Resurrection. Therefore "generation and generation shall praise Thy works. ...And they shall tell out Thine excellence. For neither shall they praise Thy works, save in order to "tell out Thine excellence. Boys at school are set to praise, and all such things are set before them to be praised, as God hath wrought:

a mortal is set to praise the sun, the sky, the earth; to come to even lesser things, to praise a rose., or a laurel; all these are works of God: they are set, they are undertaken, they are praised: the works are lauded, of the Worker they are silent. I desire in the works to praise the Creator: I love not a thankless praiser. Dost thou praise what He hath made, and art silent of Him who made? In that which thou seest, what is it that thou praisest? The form, the usefulness, some virtue, some power in the things. If beauty delight thee, what is more beautiful than the Maker? If usefulness be praised, what more useful than He who made all things? If excellence be praised, what more excellent than He by whom all things were made? ...

4. "They shall speak of the magnificence of the glory of Thy Holiness, and shall record Thy wondrous deeds" (ver. 5). "And the excellence of Thy fearful works shall they speak of: and Thy greatness, they shall relate it" (ver. 6). "The remembrance of the abundance of Thy sweetness they shall pour forth" (ver. 7): none but Thine. See whether this man, meditating on Thy works, hath turned aside from the Worker to the work: see whether he hath sunk from Him who made, to the things which He made. Of the things which He hath made, he hath made a step up to Him, not a descent from Him to them. For if thou love. these more than Him, thou wilt not have Him. And what profit is it to thee to overflow with the works, if the Worker leave thee? Truly thou shouldest love them; but love Him more, and love them for His sake. For He doth not hold out promises, without holding out threats also: if He held out no promises, there would be no encouragement; if He held out no threats, there would be no correction. They that praise Thee therefore shall "speak" also "of the excellence of Thy terrible deeds; the excellence of that work of Thy hands which punisheth and administereth discipline, they shall speak of, they shall not be silent: for they shall not proclaim Thine everlasting kingdom, and be silent about Thine everlasting fire.

For the praise of God, setting thee in the way, ought to show thee both what thou shouldest love, and what thou shouldest fear; what thou shouldest seek, and what thou shouldest shun; what thou shouldest choose, and what thou shouldest avoid. The time of choice is now, the time of receiving will be hereafter. Let then the excellence of Thy terrible things be told. Unlimited as it is, though "of Thy greatness there is no end," they shall not be silent about it. How shall they recount it, if there is no end of it? They shall recount it when they praise it; and because there is no end of it, so of His praise also there shall be no end.

5. "The remembrance of the abundance of Thy sweetness they shall pour forth." O happy feasts! What shall they eat, who thus shall "pour forth"! ...So eat, that thou mayest pour forth again; so receive, that thou mayest give. Thou eatest, when thou learnest; thou pourest forth again, when thou teachest: thou eatest, when thou hearest; thou pourest forth again, when thou preachest; but that thou pourest forth, which thou hast first eaten. Finally, that most eager feaster John, to whom the very table of the Lord sufficed not, unless he leaned on the Lord's breast, and of his inmost heart drank in divine secrets; what did he pour forth? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." How is it that it sufficeth not to say, "Thy remembrance;" or, "the remembrance of Thine abundance"? Because, what availeth it if it be abundant, yet not sweet? So also it is annoying if it be sweet but too little.

6. ...By "pouring forth" this, His preachers "shall exult in His righteousness" not in their own. What then hast Thou done unto us, O Lord, whom we praise, that we should be, that we should praise, that we should "exult in Thy righteousness," that we should "utter forth the remembrance of the abundance of Thy sweetness"? Let us tell it, and, as we tell, let us praise. 7. "Merciful and pitiful is the Lord long-suffering, and very merciful" (ver. 8). "Sweet is the Lord to all, and His compassions reach into all His works" (ver. 9). Were. He not such as this, there would be no seeking to recover us. Consider thyself: what didst thou deserve, O sinner? Despiser of God, what didst thou deserve? See if aught occur to thee but penalty, if aught occur to thee but punishment. Thou seest then what was due to thee, and what He hath given, who gave gratis. There was given pardon to the sinner; there was given the spirit of justification; there was given charity and love, wherein thou mayest do all good works; and beyond this, He will give thee also life everlasting, and fellowship with the angels: all of His mercy. ...Hear the Scripture: "I will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn, and live." By these words of God, he is brought back to hope; but there is another snare to be feared, lest through this very hope he sin the more. What then didst thou also say, thou who through hope sinnest yet more? "Whensoever I turn, God will forgive me all; I will do whatsoever I will." Say not then, "To-morrow I will turn, to-morrow I will please God; and all to-day's and yesterday's deeds shall be forgiven me." Thou sayest true: God hath promised pardon to thy conversion; He hath not promised a to-morrow to thy delay.

8. "Sweet is the Lord to all, and His compassions are over all His works." Why then doth He condemn? why doth He scourge? Are not they whom He condemneth, whom He scourgeth, His works? Plainly they are. And wilt thou know how "His compassions are over all His

works"? Thence is that long-suffering, whereby "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good." Are not "His compassions over all His works, who sendeth rain upon the just and upon the unjust"? In His long-suffering He waiteth for the sinner, saying, "Turn ye to Me, and I will turn to you." Are not "His compassions over all His works"? And when He saith, "Go ye into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," this is not His compassion, but His severity. His compassion is given to His works: His severity is not over His works, but over thy works. Lastly, if thou remove thine own evil works, and there remain in thee nought but His work, His compassion will not leave thee: but if thou leavest not thy works, there will be severity over thy works, not over His works.

9. "Let all Thy works, O Lord, confess to Thee, and let Thy saints bless Thee" (ver. 10). How so? Is not the earth His work? Are not the trees His work? Cattle, beasts, fish, fowl, are not they His works? Plainly they too are. And how shall these too confess to Him? I see indeed in the angels that His works confess to Him, for the angels are His works: and men are His works; and when men confess to Him, His works confess to Him; but have trees and stones the voice of confession? Yes, verily; "let all" His "works confess to" Him. What sayest thou? even the earth and the trees? ...But there ariseth the same question in regard of praise, as in regard of confession. For if earth and all things devoid of sensation therefore cannot confess, because they have no voice to confess with; neither will they be able to praise, because they have no voice to proclaim with. But do not those Three Children enumerate all things, as they walked amid the harmless flames, who had leisure not only not to fear, but even to praise God? They say to all things, heavenly and earthly, "Bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever. Behold how they praise. Let none think that the dumb stone or dumb animal hath reason wherewith to comprehend God. They who have thought this, have erred far from the truth. God hath ordered everything, and made everything:

to some He hath given sense and understanding and immortality, as to the angels; to some He hath given sense and understanding with mortality, as to man; to some He hath given bodily sense, yet gave them not understanding, or immortality, as to cattle: to some He hath given neither sense, nor understanding, nor immortality, as to herbs, trees, stones: yet even these cannot be wanting in their kind, and by certain degrees He hath ordered His creation, from earth up to heaven, from visible to invisible, from mortal to immortal. This framework of creation, this most perfectly ordered beauty, ascending from lowest to highest, descending from highest to lowest, never broken, but tempered together of things unlike, all praiseth God. Wherefore then doth all praise God? Because when thou considerest it, and seest its beauty, thou in it praisest God. The beauty of the earth is a kind of voice of the dumb earth. ...And this which thou hast found in it, is the very voice of its confession, that thou praise the Creator. When thou hast thought on the universal beauty of this world, doth not its very beauty as it were with one voice answer thee, "I made not myself, God made me"?

10. For when Thy saints bless Thee, what say they? "They shall tell the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy Power" (ver. 11). How powerful is God, who hath made the earth!

how powerful is God, who hath filled the earth with good things! how powerful is God, who hath given to the animals each its own life! how powerful is God, who hath given different seeds to the womb of the earth, that they might make to spring up such various shoots, such beautiful trees! how powerful, how great is God! Do thou ask, creation answereth, and by its answer, as by the confession of the creature, thou, O saint of God, blessest God, and "talkest of His power."

11. "That they may make known to the sons of men Thy power, and the glory of the greatness of the beauty of Thy kingdom" (ver. 12). Thy saints then commend "the glory of the greatness of the beauty of Thy kingdom," the glory of the greatness of its beauty. There is a certain "greatness of the beauty of Thy kingdom:" that is, Thy kingdom hath beauty, and great beauty. Since whatever hath beauty, hath beauty from Thee, how great beauty hath Thy whole kingdom! Let not the kingdom frighten us: it hath beauty also, wherewith to delight us. For what is that beauty, which the saints shall hereafter enjoy, to whom it shall be said, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, enjoy the kingdom"? Whence shall they come? whither shall they come? Behold, brethren, and, if ye can, as far as ye can, think of the beauty of that kingdom which is to come; whence our prayer saith, "Thy kingdom come." For that kingdom we desire may come, that kingdom the saints proclaim to be coming. Observe this world: it is beautiful. How beautiful are earth, sea, air, heavens, stars. Do not all these frighten him who considereth them? Is not the beauty of them so conspicuous, that it seemeth as though nothing more beautiful could be found? And here, in this beauty, in this fairness almost unspeakable, here worm and mice and all creeping things of the earth live with thee, they live with thee in all this beauty. How great is the beauty of that kingdom where none but angels live with Thee! There is a greatness of a certain beauty; let it be loved before it is seen, that when it is seen, it may be retained.

12. "Thy kingdom. What kingdom mean I? "a kingdom of all ages. For the kingdom of this age too hath its own beauty, but there is not in it that greatness of beauty, such as in the "kingdom of all ages. "And Thy dominion is in every generation and generation" (ver. 13). This is the repetition we noticed, signifying either every generation, or the generation which will be after this generation. "Faithful is the Lord in His words, and holy in all His works. "Faithful is the Lord in His words: for what hath He promised that He hath not given? "Faithful is the Lord in His words. Hereto there are certain things which He hath promised, and hath not given; but let Him be believed from the things which He hath given. We might well believe Him, if He only spake: He willed not that we should believe Him speaking, but that we should have His Scriptures in our hands: ...as though a kind of bond of God's, which all who pass by might read, and might keep to the path of its promise. And how great things hath He already paid in accordance with that bond! Do men hesitate to believe Him concerning the Resurrection of the dead and the Life to come, which alone now remaineth to be paid, when, if He come to reckon with the unbelievers, the unbelievers must blush? If God say to thee, "Thou hast My bond:

I have promised judgment, the separation of good and bad, everlasting life for the faithful, and wilt thou not believe? There in My bond read all that I have promised, reckon with me: verily even by counting up what I have paid, thou canst believe that I shall pay what still I owe. In that bond thou hast My only-begotten Son promised, "Whom I spared not, but gave Him up for you all: reckon this then among what is paid. Read the bond: I promised therein that I would give by My Son the earnest of the Holy Spirit: reckon that as paid. I promised therein the blood and the crowns of the glorious Martyrs; let the White Mass remind you that My debt has been paid. ...He setteth before the eyes of all His payment of His debts: some He hath paid in the time of our ancestors, which we saw not: some He hath paid in our times, which they saw not; throughout all generations He hath paid what was written. And what remaineth? Do men not believe Him, when He hath paid all this? What remaineth? Behold thou hast reckoned: all this He hath paid: is He become unfaithful for the few things which remain? God forbid! Wherefore? Because "the Lord is faithful in His words, and holy in all His works."

13. "The Lord strengtheneth all that are falling" (ver. 14). But who are "all that are falling"? All indeed fall in a general sense, but he meaneth those who fall in a particular way. For many fall from Him, many also fall from their own imaginations. If they had evil imaginations, they fall from them, and "God strengthened all that are falling." They who lose anything in this world, yet are holy, are as it were dishonoured in this world, from rich become poor, from honoured of low estate, yet are they God's saints; they are, as it were, falling. But "God strengtheneth." For "the just falleth seven times, and riseth again; but the wicked shall be weakened in evils." When evils befall the wicked, they are weakened thereby; when evils befall the righteous, "the Lord strengtheneth all that are falling." ..."And lifteth up all those that have been cast down:" all, that is, who belong to him; for "God resisteth the proud."

14. "The eyes of all hope upon Thee, and Thou givest them food in due season" (ver. 15). Just as when thou refreshest a sick man in due season, when he ought to receive, then Thou givest, and what he ought to receive, that Thou givest. Sometimes then men long, and he giveth not: he who tendeth, knoweth the time to give. Wherefore say I this, brethren? Lest any one be faint, if perchance he hath not been heard, when making some righteous request of God. For when he maketh any unrighteous request, he is heard to his punishment: but when making some righteous request of God, if perchance he have not been heard, let him not be down-hearted, let him not faint, let his eyes wait for the food, which He giveth in due season. When He giveth not, He therefore giveth not, lest that which He giveth do harm. ..."Thou givest them meat in due season."

15. "Thou openest Thine Hand, and fillest every living thing with blessing" (ver. 16). Though sometimes Thou givest not, yet "in due season" Thou givest: Thou delayest, not deniest, and that in due season." "Righteous is the Lord in all His ways, and holy in all His works" (ver. 17). Both when He smiteth and when He healeth, He is righteous, and in Him unrighteousness is not. Finally, all His saints, when set in the midst of tribula-

tion, have first praised His righteousness, and so sought His blessings. They first have said, "What Thou doest is righteous." So did Daniel ask, and other holy men: "Righteous are Thy judgments: rightly have we suffered: deservedly have we suffered." They laid not unrighteousness to God, they laid not to Him injustice and folly. First they praised Him scourging, and so they felt Him feeding.

16. "The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon Him" (ver. 18). Where then is that, "Then shall they call upon Me, and I will not hear them"? See then what follows: "all who call upon Him in truth." For many call upon Him, but not in truth. They seek something else from Him, but seek not Himself. Why lovest thou God? "Because He hath made me whole." That is clear: it was He that made thee so. For from none else cometh health, save Him. "Because He gave me," saith another, "a rich wife, whereas I before had nothing, and one that obeyeth me." This too He gave: thou sayest true. "He gave me," saith another, "sons many and good, He gave me a household, He gave me all good things." Dost thou love Him for this? ...Therefore if God is good, who hath given thee what thou hast, how much more blessed wilt thou be when He hath given thee Himself! Thou hast desired all these things of Him: I beseech thee desire of Him Himself also. For these things are not truly sweeter than He is, nor in any way are they to be compared to Him. He then who preferreth God Himself to all the things which he has received, whereat he rejoiceth, to the things he has received, he "calleth upon God in truth." ...

17. "He will perform the will of them that fear Him" (ver. 19). He will perform it, He will perform it: though He perform it not at once, yet He will perform it. Certainly if therefore thou fearest God, that thou mayest do His will, behold even He in a manner ministereth to thee; He doeth thy will. "And He shall hear their prayer, and save them." Thou seem that for this purpose the Physician hears, that He may save. When? Hear the Apostle telling thee. "For we are saved in hope: but hope which is seen is not hope: but if what we see not we hope for, then do we with patience wait for it: "the salvation," that is, which Peter calleth "ready to be revealed in the last time."

18. "The Lord guardeth all that love Him, and all sinners He will destroy" (ver. 20). Thou seest that there is severity with Him, with whom is so great sweetness. He will save all that hope in Him, all the faithful, all that fear Him, all that call upon Him in truth: "and all sinners He will destroy." What "all sinners," save those who persevere in sin; who dare to blame God, not themselves; who daily argue against God; who despair of pardon for their sins, and from this very despair heap up their gins; or who perversely promise themselves pardon, and through this very promise depart not from their sins and impiety? The time will come for all these to be separated, and for the two divisions to be made of them, one on the right hand, the other on the left; and for the righteous to receive the everlasting Kingdom, the wicked to go into everlasting fire. Since this is so, and we have heard the blessing of the Lord, the works of the Lord, the wondrous things of the Lord, the mercies of the Lord, the severity of the Lord, His Providence over all His works, the confession of all

His works; observe how He concludeth in His praise, ”My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless His holy Name for ever and ever” (ver. 21).

Psalm 146

1. ...Behold the Psalm soundeth; it is the voice of some one (and that some one are ye, if ye will), of some one encouraging his soul to praise God, and saying to himself, "Praise the Lord, O my soul" (ver. 1). For sometimes in the tribulations and temptations of this present life, whether we will or no, our soul is troubled; of which troubling he speaketh in another Psalm. But to remove this troubling, he suggesteth joy; not as yet in reality, but in hope; and saith to it when troubled and anxious, sad and sorrowing, "Hope in God, for I will yet confess to Him." ...

2. But who saith it, and to whom saith he it? What shall we say, brethren? Is it the flesh that saith, "Praise thou the Lord, O my soul"? And can the flesh suggest good counsel to the soul? However much the flesh be conquered, and subjected as a servant to us through strength which the Lord imparteth, that it serve us entirely as a bond slave, enough for us that it hinder us not. ...For the body, inasmuch as it is the body, is even beneath the soul; and every soul, however vile, is found more excellent than the most excellent body. And let not this seem to you to be wonderful, that even any vile and sinful soul is better than any great and most surpassing body. It is better, not in deserts, but in nature. The soul indeed is sinful, is stained with certain defilements of lusts; yet gold, though rusted, is better than the most polished lead. Let your mind then run over every part of creation, and ye will see that what we are saying is not incredible, that a soul, however blameable, is yet more praiseworthy than a praiseworthy body. There are two things, a soul and a body. The soul I chide, the body I praise: the soul I chide, because it is sinful; the body I praise, because it is sound. Yet it is in its own kind that I praise the soul, and in its own kind that I blame the soul:

and so in its own kind I praise the body, or blame it. If you ask me which is better, what I have blamed or what I have praised, wondrous is the answer thou wilt receive. ...So you speak of the best horse and the worst man: yet thou preferrest the man thou findest fault with to the horse thou praisest. ...The nature of the soul is more excellent than the nature of the body: it surpasseth it by far, it is a thing spiritual, incorporeal, akin to the substance of God. It is somewhat invisible, it ruleth the body, moveth the limbs, guideth the senses, prepareth thoughts, putteth forth actions, taketh in images of countless things; who is there, in short, beloved brethren, who may suffice for the praises of the soul? And yet such is the

grace given to it, that this man saith, ”Praise the Lord, O my soul.” ...It is not the flesh that saith it. Let the body be angel-like, still it is inferior to the soul, it cannot give advice to its superior. The flesh when duly obedient is the handmaid of the soul: the soul rules, the body obeys; the soul commands, the body performs; how then can the flesh give this advice to the soul? Is it then perchance the soul herself, who saith to herself, and in a manner commandeth herself, and exhorteth and asketh herself? For through certain passions in one part of her nature she wavered;

but in another part, which they call the reasonable mind, the wisdom whereby she thinks, clinging to God, and now sighing towards Him, she perceives that certain inferior parts of her are troubledby worldly emotions, and by a certain excitement of earthly desires, betake them to outward things, leaving God who is within; so she recalleth herself from things outward to inward, from lower to higher, and says, ”Praise the Lord, O my soul.” ...The soul itself giveth itself counsel from the light of God by the reasonable mind, whereby it conceiveth the wisdom fixed in the everlasting nature of its Author. It readeth there of somewhat to be feared, to be praised, to be loved, to be longed for, and sought after: as yet it graspeth it not, it comprehendeth it not; it is, as it were, dazzled with brightness; it has not strength to abide there. Therefore it gathers itself, as it were, into a sound state, and saith, ”Praise the Lord, O my soul.” ...And then the soul, weighed down, as it were, and unable to stand up as is fitting, answereth the mind, ”I will praise the Lord in my life” (ver. 2). What is, ”in my life”? Because now I am in my death. Therefore first encourage thyself, and say, ”Praise the Lord, O my soul. Thy soul answereth thee, I do praise so far as I can, slightly, poorly, weakly. Wherefore? Because, ”while we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord.” ...

3. ”In my life.” Now what has it? It might answer thee, ”My death.” Whence, ”My death”? because I am absent from the Lord. For if to cling to Him is life, to depart from Him is death. But what comforteth thee? Hope. Now thou livest in hope: in hope praise, in hope sing. Thy death is from the sadness of this life, thou livest in hope of a future life. And how wilt thou praise thy Lord? ”I will sing unto my God, as long as I have my being.” What sort of praise is this, ”I will sing unto my God as long as I have being”? Behold, my brethren, what sort of being this will be; where there will be everlasting praise, there will be also everlasting being. Behold, now thou hast being: dost thou sing unto God as long as thou hast being? Behold, thou wast singing, and hast turned thyself away to some business, thou singest no longer, yet thou hast being: thou hast being, yet thou singest not. It may be also thy desire turneth thee to somewhat; not only dost thou not sing, but thou even offendest His ears, yet thou hast being. What praise will that be, when thou praisest as long as thou bast being? But what meaneth, ”as long as I have being”? Will there be any time when he will not be? Nay, rather, that ”long” will be everlasting, and therefore it will be truly ”long.” For whatever hath end in time, however prolonged it is, is yet not ”long.” ...

4. ”Put not your trust in princes” (ver. 3). Brethren, here we receive a mighty task; it is a voice from heaven, from above it soundeth to us. For now through some kindof weakness

the soul of man, whensoever it is in tribulation here, despaireth of God, and chooseth to rely on man. Let it be said to one when set in some affliction, "There is a great man, by whom thou mayest be set free;" he smileth, he rejoiceth, he is lifted up. But if it is said to him, "God freeth thee," he is chilled, so to speak, by despair. The aid of a mortal is promised, and thou rejoicest; the aid of the Immortal is promised, and art thou sad? It is promised thee that thou shalt be freed by one who needeth to be freed with thee, and thou exultest, as at some great aid: thou art promised that Liberator, who needeth none to free Him, and thou despairest, as though it were but a fable. Woe to such thoughts: they wander far; truly there is sad and great death in them. Approach, begin to long, begin to seek and to know Him by whom thou wast made. For He will not leave His work, if He be not left by His work.

5. ..."His breath shall go forth, and he shall return to his earth: in that day shall all his thoughts perish" (ver. 4). Where is swelling? where is pride? where is boasting? But perhaps he will have passed to a good place, if indeed he have passed. For I know not whither he who spake thus hath passed. For he spake in pride; and I know not whither such men pass, save that I look into another Psalm, and see that their passage is an evil one. "I beheld the wicked lifted up above the cedars of Libanus, and I passed by, and, lo, he was not; and I sought him, and his place was not found." The good man, who passed by, and found not the wicked, reached a place where the wicked is not. Wherefore, brethren, let us all listen: brethren, beloved of God, let us all listen; in whatsoever tribulation, in whatsoever longing for the heavenly gift, "let us not trust in princes, nor in sons of men, in whom is no salvation." All this is mortal, fleeting, perishable.

What then must we do, if we are not to hope in sons of men, nor in princes? What must we do? "Blessed is he whose Helper is the God of Jacob" (ver. 5): not this man or that man; not this angel or that angel; but, "blessed is he whose Helper is the God of Jacob: for to Jacob also so great an Helper was He, that of Jacob He made him Israel. O mighty help! now he is Israel, "seeing God. While then thou art placed here, and a wanderer not yet seeing God, if thou hast the God of Jacob for thy Helper, from Jacob thou wilt become Israel, and wilt be "seeing God," and all toil and all groans shall come to an end, gnawing cares shall cease, happy praises shall succeed. "Blessed is he whose Helper is the God of Jacob; of this Jacob. Wherefore is he happy? Meanwhile, while yet groaning in this life, "his hope is in the Lord his God." ...Who is this, "Lord his God"? ..."To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things. Therefore let Him be thy hope, even the Lord thy God; in Him let thy hope be. His hope too is in the lord his god, who worshippeth Saturn; his hope is in the lord his god, who worshippeth Neptune or Mercury; yea more, I add, who worshippeth his belly, of whom is said, "whose god is their belly.

The one is the god of the one, the other of the other. Who is this "blessed" one? for "his hope is in the Lord his God. But who is He? "Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them" (ver. 6). My brethren, we have a great God; let us bless His holy Name, that He hath deigned to make us His possession. As yet thou seest not God; thou canst not

fully love what as yet thou seest not. All that thou seest, He hath made. Thou admirest the world; why not the Maker of the world? Thou lookestup to the heavens, and art amazed: thou considerest the whole earth, and tremblest; when canst thou contain in thy thought the vastness of the sea? Look at the countless number of the stars, look at all the many kind of seeds, all the different sorts of animals, all that swimmeth in the water, creepeth on the earth, flieth in the sky, hovereth in the air; how great are all these, how beautiful, how fair, how amazing! Behold, He who made all these, is thy God. Put thy hope in Him, that thou mayest be happy. "His hope is in the Lord his God. Observe, my brethren, the mighty God, the good God, who maketh all these things. ...If he mentioned these things only, perhaps thou wouldest answer me, "God, who made heaven and earth and sea, is a great God: but doth He think of me? It would be said to thee, "He made thee.

How so? am I heaven, or am I earth, or am I sea? Surely it is plain; I am neither heaven, nor earth, nor sea: yet I am on earth. At least thou grantest me this, that thou art on earth. Hear then, that God made not only heaven and earth and sea: for He "made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them. If then He made all that is in them, He made thee also. It is too little to say, thee; the sparrow, the locust, the worm, none of these did He not make, and He careth for all. His care refers not to His commandment, for this commandment He gave to man alone. ...As regards then the tenor of the commandment, "God doth not take care for oxen: as regards His providential care of the universe, whereby He created all things, and ruleth the world, "Thou, Lord, shall save both man and beast. Here perhaps some one may say to me, "God careth not for oxen," comes from the New Testament: "Thou, Lord, shalt save both man and beast," is from the Old Testament. There are some who find fault and say, that these two Testaments agree not with one another. ...Let us hear the Lord Himself, the Chief and Master of the Apostles: "Consider," saith He, "the fowls of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them.

Therefore even beside men, these animals are objects of care to God, to be fed, not to receive a law. As far then as regards giving a law, "God careth not for oxen: as regards creating, feeding, governing, ruling, all things have to do with God. "Are not two sparrows sold for one farthing? saith our Lord Jesus Christ, "and one of them shall not fall to the ground without the will of your Father: how much better are ye than they. Perhaps thou sayest, God counteth me not in this great multitude. There follows here a wondrous passage in the Gospel: "the hairs of your head are all numbered."

6. Who keepeth truth for ever." What "truth for ever"? what "truth" doth He "keep," and wherein doth "He keep it for ever"? "Who executeth judgment for them that suffer wrong" (ver. 7). He avengeth them that suffer wrong. There cometh at once to thee the voice of the Apostle: "now therefore there is altogether a fault among you, that ye go to law one with another: why do ye not rather suffer wrong?" He urged thee not to suffer annoyance, but to suffer wrong: for not every annoyance is wrong. For whatever thou sufferest lawfully is not a wrong; lest perchance thou shouldest say, I also am among those who have suffered wrong,

for I have suffered such a thing in such a place, and such a thing for such a reason. Consider whether thou hast suffered a wrong. Robbers suffer many things, but they suffer no wrong. Wicked men, evil doers, house-breakers, adulterers, seducers, all these suffer many evils, yet is there no wrong. It is one thing to suffer wrong; it is another to suffer tribulation, or penalty, or annoyance, or punishment. Consider where thou art; see what thou hast done; see why thou art suffering; and then thou seest what thou art suffering. Right and wrong are contraries. Right is what is just. For not all that is called right, is right. What if a man lay down for you unjust right? nor indeed is it to be called right, if it is unjust. That is true right, which is also just. Consider what thou hast done, not what thou art suffering. If thou hast done right, thou art suffering wrong; if thou hast done wrong, thou art suffering right. ...

7. "Who giveth food to the hungry. Behold, from thee I look for nothing: "God giveth food to the hungry. Who are "the hungry"? All. What is, all? To all things that have life, to all men He giveth food: doth He not reserve some food for His beloved? If they have another kind of hunger, they have also another kind of food. Let us first enquire what their hunger is, and then we shall find their food. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. We ought to be God's hungry ones. ..."The Lord looseth them that are lettered; the Lord lifteth up them that are dashed down; the Lord maketh wise them that are blind" (ver. 8). Perfectly hath he by this last sentence explained to us all the preceding ones: lest perchance, when he had said, "the Lord looseth them that are fettered," we should refer it to those fettered ones, who for some crime are bound in irons by their masters: and in that he said, "He lifteth up them that are dashed down," there should occur to our minds some one stumbling or falling, or thrown from a horse. There is another kind of fall, there are other kinds of fetters, just as there is other darkness and other light. Whereas he said, "He maketh the blind wise;

he would not say, He enlightened the blind, lest thou shouldest understand this also in reference to the flesh, as the man was enlightened by the Lord, when He anointed his eyes with clay made with spittle, and so healed him: that thou mightest not look for anything of this sort, when He is speaking of spiritual things, he pointeth to a sort of light of wisdom, wherewith the blind are enlightened. Therefore in the same way as the blind are enlightened with the light of wisdom, so are the fettered set free, and those who are dashed down are lifted up. Whereby then have we been fettered? whereby dashed down? Our body was once an ornament to us: now, we have sinned, and thereby have had fetters put on us. What are our fetters? Our mortality. ..."TheLord loveth the righteous. And who are the "righteous"? How far are they righteous now? Just as thou hast; "the Lord, guardeth proselytes" (ver. 9). "Proselytes" are strangers. Every Church of the Gentiles is a stranger. For it cometh in to the Fathers, not sprung of their flesh, but their daughter by imitating them. Yet the Lord, not any man, guardeth them. "The orphan and widow He will take up. Let none think that He taketh up the orphan for his inheritance, or the widow for any business of hers. True, God doth help them; and in all the duties of the human race, he doeth a good work, who taketh care of an orphan, who abandoneth not a widow:

but in a certain way we are all orphans, not because our Father is dead, but because He is absent. . ...

8. ”And the way of sinners He shall root out. What is, ”the way of sinners”? To mock at these things which we say. ”Who is an orphan, who a widow? What kingdom of heaven, what punishment of hell is there? These are fables of the Christians. To what I see, to that will I live: ”let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Beware lest such men persuade you of aught: let them not enter through your ears into your heart; let them find thorns in your ears: let him, who seeketh to enter thus, go away pierced: for ”evil communications corrupt good manners. But here perhaps thou wilt say, ”Wherefore then are they prosperous? Behold, they worship not God, and commit every kind of evil daily: yet they abound in those things, through want of which I toil. Be not envious against sinners. What they receive, thou seest; what is in store for them, seest thou not? ...Wilt thou not believe even the Lord thy God, who saith, ”Broad and spacious is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that walk by it”? This ”way the Lord will root out. And, when ”the way of sinners” has been ”rooted out,” what remaineth for us? ”Come, ye blessed of My father, enjoy the Kingdom; ”The Lord shall reign for ever” (ver. 10). ”O Sion, thy God” shall reign for ever; surely thy God will not reign without thee. ”For generation and generation. He hath said it twice, because he could not say it for ever.

And think not that eternity is bounded by finite words. The word eternity consists of four syllables; in itself it is without end. It could not be commended to thee, save thus, ”for generation and generation. Too little hath he said: if he spoke it all day long, it were too narrow: if he spoke it all his life, must he not at length hold his peace? Love eternity: without end shalt thou reign, if Christ be thine End, with whom thou shalt reign for ever and ever. Amen.

Psalm 147

1. It is said to us, ”Praise the Lord” (ver. 1). This is said to all nations, not to us alone. And these words, sounded forth through separate places by the Readers, each Church heareth separately; but the one same Voice of God proclaimeth unto all, that we praise Him. And as though we asked wherefore we ought to praise the Lord, behold what reason he hath brought forward: ”Praise the Lord,” he saith,”for a Psalm is good.” Is this all the rewardof them that praise? ...The ”Psalm” is praise of God. This then he saith, ”Praise the Lord, for it is good to praise the Lord.” Let us not thus pass over the praise of the Lord. It is spoken, and hath passed: it is done, and we are silent: we have praised, and then rested; we have sung, and then rested. We go forth tosome business which awaits us, and when other employments have found us, shall the praise of God cease in us? Not so: thy tongue praiseth but for a while, let thy life ever praise. Thus then ”a Psalm is good.”

2. For a ”Psalm” is a song, not any kind of song, but a song to a psaltery. A psaltery is a kind of instrument of music, like the lyre and the harp, and such kinds of instruments, which were invented for music. He therefore who singeth Psalms, not only singeth with his voice, but with a certain instrument besides, which is called a psaltery, he accompanieth his voice with his hands. Wilt thou then sing a Psalm? Let not thy voice alone sound the praises of God; but let thy works also be in harmony with thy voice. ...To please then the ear, sing with thy voice; but with thy heart be not silent, with thy life be not still. Thou devisest no fraud in thy heart: thou singest a Psalm to God. When thou eatest and drinkest, sing a Psalm: not by intermingling sweet sounds suited to the ear, but by eating and drinking moderately, frugally, temperarely: for thus saith the Apostle, ”whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” ...If by immoderate voracity thou exceedest the due bounds of nature, and gluttest thyself in excess of wine, however great praises of God thy tongue sound, yet thy life blasphemeth Him. After food and drink thou liest down to sleep: in thy bed neither commit any pollution, nor go beyond the license given by the law of God: let thy marriage bed be kept chaste with thy wife: and if thou desire to beget children, yet let there not be unbridled sensuality of lust: in thy bed give honour to thy wife, for ye are both members of Christ, both made by Him, both renewed by His Blood: so doing thou praisest God, nor will thy praise be altogether silent. What, when sleep has come over thee? Let not an evil conscience rouse thee from rest: so doth the innocence of thy sleep praise God. ...

3. ”Let praises be pleasant to our God.” How? If He be praised by our good lives. Hear that then praise will be pleasant to Him. In another place it is said, ”Praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner.” If then in the mouth of a sinner praise is not seemly, neither is it pleasant, for that only is pleasant which is seemly. ...For praise may be pleasant to a man, when he heareth one praising with neat and clever sentiments, and with a sweet voice; but ”let praise be pleasant to our God,” whose ears are open not to the mouth, but to the heart; not to the tongue, but to the life of him that praiseth.

4. Who is ”our God,” that praise should be pleasant to Him? He maketh Himself sweet to us, He commendeth Himself to us; thanks to His condescension. ...”But God commendeth His love to us” ...”in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” ...Let us see whether it be the commendation whichthe Apostle speaketh of, that Christ died for the sinners and ungodly: ”the Lord who buildeth up Jerusalem, and gathereth the dispersions of Israel” (ver. 2). For the people of Jerusalem are the people of Israel. It is Jerusalem ”eternal in the heavens,” whereof theAngels are citizens also. ...All the citizens then of that city, through ”seeing God,” rejoice in that great and wide and heavenly city; they gaze upon God Himself. But we are wanderers from that city, driven out by sin, that we should not remain there; weighed down by mortality, that we should not return thither. God looked back on our wandering, and He who ”buildeth up Jerusalem,” restored the part that had fallen. How restored He the part that bad fallen? ...He sent then to our captive estate His Son as a Redeemer. Take with Thee, said He, a bag, bear therein the price of the captives. For He put on Him our mortal flesh, and therein was the Blood, by the shedding of which we were to be redeemed. With that Blood He ”gathered the dispersions of Israel.” And if He gathered them that before were dispersed, how must we strive that they be gathered who now are dispersed? If the dispersed have been gathered, that in the Hand of the Builder they might be fashioned into the building, how should they be gathered who through disquiet have fallen from the Hand of the Builder? Behold whom we praise; behold to whom we owe praise all our life long.

5. How doth He gather? What doeth He in order to gather? ”Who healeth the bruised in heart” (ver. 3). Behold the way in which the dispersions of Israel are gathered, by the healing of the bruised in heart. They who are not of a bruised heart, are not healed. What is to bruise the heart? Let it be known, brethren, let it be done, that ye may be able to be healed. For it is told in many other places of Scripture; ...”the sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit, a bruised and contrite heart God will not despise.” He healeth then the bruised in heart, for He draweth nigh unto them to heal them; as is said in another place, ”the Lord is nigh unto them who have bruised their heart.” Who are they that have ”bruised their heart”? The humble. Who are they that have not ”bruised their heart”? The proud. The bruised heart shall be healed, the puffed up heart shall be dashed down. For for this purpose perhaps is it dashed down, that being bruised it may be healed. Let not our heart then, brethren, desire to be set upright, before it be upright. It is ill for that to be uplifted which is not first corrected. ...

6. What are the means whereby He "bindeth up their bruises"? Just as physicians bind up fractures. For sometimes (observe this, beloved; it is well known to those who have observed it, or have heard it from physicians), sometimes when limbs are sound, but are crooked and distorted, physicians break them in order to set them straight, and make a new wound, because the soundness which was distorted was amiss. ... 7. What are these means whereby He bindeth? The sacraments of this present life, whereby in the mean time we obtain our comfort: and all the words we speak to you, words which sound and pass away, all that is done in the Church in this present time, are the means whereby "He bindeth up our bruises." For just as, when the limb has become perfectly sound, the physician taketh off the bandage; so in our own city Jerusalem, when we shall have been made equal to the Angels, think ye that we shall receive there, what we have received here? Will it be needful then that the Gospel be read to us, that our faith may abide? or that hands be laid upon us by any Bishop? All these are means of binding up fractures; when we have attained perfect soundness, they will be taken off; but we should never attain it, if they were not bound up.

8. "Who telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names" (ver. 4). What great matter is it for God to "tell the number of the stars"! Men even have endeavoured to do this; whether they have been able to achieve it, is their concern; they would not however attempt it, did they not think that they should achieve it. Let us leave alone what they can do, and how far they have attained; for God I think it no great matter to count all the stars. Or doth He perhaps go over the number, lest He should forget it? Is it any great thing for God to number the stars, by whom "the veryhairs of your head are numbered"? The stars are certain lights in the Church comforting our night;all-of whom the Apostle saith, "In the didst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding the Word of life. These stars God counteth; all who shall reign with Him, all who are to be gathered into the Body of His only-begotten Son, He hath counted, and still counteth them. Whoso is unworthy, is not even counted. Many too have believed, or rather may, with a kind of shadowy appearance of faith, have attached themselves to His people: yet He knoweth what He counteth, what He winnoweth away. For so great is the height of the Gospel, that it hath come to pass as was said, "I have declared, and have spoken: they are multiplied above number:

there are then among the people certain supernumeraries, so to speak. What do I mean by supernumeraries? More than will be there. Within these walls are more than will be in the kingdom of God, in the heavenly Jerusalem; these are above the number. Let each one of you consider whether he shineth in darkness, whether he refuseth to be led astray by the dark iniquity of the world; if he be not led astray, nor conquered, he will be, as it were, a star, which God already humbereth. "And calling them all by their names,"he saith. Herein is our whole reward. We may have certain names with God, that God know our names, this we ought to wish, for this to act, for this to busy ourselves, as far as we are able; not to rejoice in other things, not even in certain spiritual gifts. ...When the disciples returned from their mission exulting, and saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us in Thy Name" -then He (knowing that many would say, "have we not in Thy Name cast out devils? to whom He

should say, "I know you not") said, "In this rejoice not, that the devils are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

9. "Great is our Lord" (ver. 5). The Psalmist is filled with joy, he hath poured out his words wonderfully: yet somewhat he was unable to speak, and how availed he to think on it? "And great is His power, and of His understanding is no numbering" He who "numbereth the stars," Himself cannot be numbered. Who can expound this? who can worthily even imagine what is meant by, "and of His understanding is no number"? ...Whatsoever then that is infinite this world containeth, though it be infinite to man, yet is not to God: too little is it to say, to God: even by the angels it is numbered. His understanding surpasses all calculators; it cannot be counted by us. Numbers themselves who numbereth? What than is there with God? wherewith made He all things, and where made He all things, to whom it is said, "Thou hast arrayed all things in measure, number, and weight"? Or who can number, or measure, or weigh, measure and number and weight themselves, wherein God hath ordered all things? Therefore, "of His understanding is no number. Let human voices be hushed, human thoughts still: let them not stretch themselves out to incomprehensible things, as though they could comprehend them, but as though they were to partake of them, for partakers we shall be. ...Partakers then we shall be: let none doubt it: Scripture saith it. And of what shall we be partakers, as though these were parts in God, as though God were divided into parts?

Who then can explain how many become partakers of one single substance? Require not then that which I think ye see cannot fitly be said: but return to the healing of the Saviour, bruise your heart. He will guide it, He will bind it up where it is broken, He will make it perfectly sound; and then those things will not be impossible with us, which now are impossible. For it is good that he confess weakness, who desireth to attain to the divine nature.

10. "The Lord taketh up the gentle" (ver. 6). For example; thou understandest not, thou failest to understand, canst not attain: honour God's Scripture, honour God's Word, though it be not plain: in reverence wait for understanding. Be not wanton to accuse either the obscurity or seeming contradiction of Scripture. There is nothing in it contradictory: somewhat there is which is obscure, not in order that it may be denied thee, but that it may exercise him that shall afterward receive it. When then it is obscure, that is the Physician's doing, that thou mayest knock. He willed that thou shouldest be exercised in knocking; He willed it, that He might open to thee when thou knockest. By knocking thou shalt be exercised; exercised, thou shalt be enlarged; enlarged, thou shall contain what is given. Be not then indignant for that it is shut; be mild, be gentle. Kick not against what is dark, nor say, It were better said, if it were said thus. For how canst thou thus say, or judge how it is expedient it be said? It is said as it is expedient it be said. Let not the sick man seek to amend his remedies: the Physician knoweth how to temper them: believe Him who careth for thee. Therefore what cometh next? ..."The Lord taketh up the gentle, but humbleth the sinners even to the ground," he intended a certain sort of sinners to be understood, from

the gentleness mentioned first. By sinners then in this place, we understand the fierce, and those who are not gentle. Wherefore doth He "humble them even to the l earth"? They carp at objects of understanding, they shall perceive only things earthly.

11. "Begin to the Lord in confession" (ver. 7). Begin with this, if thou wouldest arrive at a clear understanding of the truth. If thou wilt be brought from the road of faith to the profession of the reality, "begin in confession." First accuse thyself: accuse thyself, praise God. What after confession? Let good works follow. "Sing unto our God upon the harp." What is, "Upon the harp"? As I have already explained, just like the Psalm upon the psaltery, so also is the "harp:" not with voice only, but with works.

12. ..."Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth" (ver. 8). Now thou art alarmed, because thou canst not see the heaven: when it hath rained thou shalt gather fruit, and shalt see clear sky. Perhaps our God hath done this. For had we not the obscurity of Scripture as an occasion, we should not say to you those things wherein ye rejoice. This then perhaps is the rain whereat ye rejoice. It would not be possible for it to be expressed to you by our tongue, were it not that God covereth with clouds of figures the heaven of the Scriptures. For this purpose willed He that the words of the Prophets should be obscure, that the servants of God might afterwards have that by interpreting which they might flow over the ears and hearts of men, that they might receive from the clouds of God the fatness of spiritual joy. "Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains, and herb for the service of men. Behold the fruit of the rain. "Who maketh," saith he, "grass to grow upon the mountains. Doth it not also grow upon the low ground? Yes, but it is a great thing that it groweth "on the mountains." ...For nothing could be more barren than the hard mountains. "And herb for the service of men. What "service"? Listen to Paul himself. "And ourselves," saith he, "your servants for Jesus Christ's sake.

He who said, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things? yet said, that he was a "servant. For we are your servants, brethren. Let none of us speak of himself, as though he were greater than you. We shall be greater if we are more humble. "But whosoever will be great among you" (it is the Lord's saying), "shall be your servant. Paul the Apostle, indeed, living by his own labour, refused even to receive "the grass of the mountains; he chose to want; nevertheless, the mountains gave "grass. Because he chose not to receive, ought the mountains therefore not to give, and so to remain barren? Fruit is due to the rain, food is due to the servant, as the Lord saith, "Eat such things as they give you: and that they should not think that they gave aught of their own, He added, "for the labourer is worthy of his hire."

13. ...Just now has been read, "Give to every one that asketh of thee;" and in another place Scripture saith, "Let alms sweat in thy hand, till thou findest a righteous man to whom to give it." One there is who seeketh thee, another thou oughtest to seek. Leave not indeed him who seeketh thee empty, for, "give to every one that asketh of thee;" yet still there is another whom thou oughtest to seek; "find a righteous man to whom to give it." Ye will never do this, unless ye have somewhat set aside from your substance, each what pleaseth

him according to the needs of his family, as a sort of debt to be paid to the treasury. If Christ have not a state of His own, neither hath He a treasury? ...Cut off then and prune off some fixed sum either from thy yearly profits or thy daily gains, else thou seemest as it were to give of thy capital, and thy hand must needs hesitate, when thou puttest it forth to that which thou hast not vowed. Cut off some part of thy income; a tenth if thou choosest, though that is but little. For it is said that the Pharisees gave a tenth; "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." And what saith the Lord? "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." He whose righteousness thou oughtest to exceed, giveth a tenth: thou givest not even a thousandth. How wilt thou surpass him whom thou matchest not? "Who prepareth rain for the earth."

14. "And giveth unto the cattle their food" (ver. 9). These are the cattle he meaneth, even God's flocks. God defraudeth not His flock of their food through men, for whose "service He maketh the grass to grow." "And to the young of the ravens that call upon Him." Shall we perchance think this, that the ravens call upon God to give them their food? Think not that the unreasoning creature calls upon God: no creature knows how to call upon God, save the reasonable alone. Consider it as spoken in a figure, lest thou think, as some evil men say, that the souls of men migrate into cattle, dogs, swine, ravens. Give this no place in your hearts or in your faith. The soul of man is made after the image of God: He will not give His image to dog or swine. Who are "the young of the , ravens"? The Israelites used to say that they alone were righteous, because to them the Law had been given: all other men of every nation they used to call sinners. And in truth all nations were given up to sin, to idolatry, to the worship of stones and stocks: but did they continue so? Although the ravens themselves, our fathers, did not, yet we, "the young of the ravens," do call upon God. ...For "the young of the ravens," who seemed to worship the images of their forefathers, have advanced, and turned to God. And now thou hearest "the young of the ravens" calling upon the one God. What then? Sayest thou to "the young of the ravens," "hast thou left thy father?" Plainly I have, saith he; for he is a raven who calls not upon God.I, "the young of the raven," do call upon God.

15. "In the power of an horse He will not take pleasure" (ver. 10). The power "of an horse" is pride. For the horse seemeth adapted as it were to bear a man aloft, that he may be more uplifted as he goes. And in truth he has a neck which typifieth a sort of pride. Let not men exalt themselves upon their worth, let them not think themselves uplifted by their distinctions; let them beware test they be thrown by an untamed horse. ..."Nor in the tabernacle of a man will He delight." For the tabernacle of the Lord is the Holy Church spread throughout the whole world. Heretics, separating themselves from the Church's tabernacles, have set up tabernacles for themselves. For if perchance it be the lot of any, who is good and pious, who confesseth his own weakness, who is "the young of a raven that calleth on God," not to enjoy worldly distinction, he goeth not out of the Church, he setteth not up for himself a tent outside the Church, wherein God will not delight. But what saith he? "I have chosen to be cast away in the house of God, rather than to dwell in the tents of sinners."

16. But what addeth he? "The Lord will delight in them that fear Him, and in them that hope in His mercy" (ver. 11). A robber is feared, and a wild beast is feared, and an unjust and powerful man is much feared. "The Lord will delight in them that hope in His mercy." Behold, Judas, who betrayed our Lord, feared, but he did not hope in His mercy. ...It is well indeed that thou hast feared, but only if thou trustedst in His mercy, whom thou hast feared. He in despair "went and hanged himself." In such wise then fear the Lord, that thou trust in His mercy. ...

17. "Praise in unison, O Jerusalem, thy God" (ver. 12). Abiding yet in captivity, they behold those flocks, or rather, the one flock of all its citizens, gathered from all sides into that city; they see the joy of the mass, now after threshings and winnowings placed in the garner, fearing nothing, suffering no toil nor trouble; and, as yet abiding here, in the midst of the threshing they send forward their joy of hope, and pant for it, joining as it were their hearts to the Angels of God, and to that people which shall abide with them in joy for ever. For what wilt thou then do, O Jerusalem? Surely toil and groaning will pass away. What wilt thou do? wilt thou plough, or sow, or plant vines, or make voyages, or trade? What wilt thou do? Will it still be thy duty to be engaged in the works thou now doest, good though they are, and spring from mercy? Consider thy numbers, consider on all sides thy company: see whether any hungers, for thee to give bread to; see whether any thirsts, for thee to give a cup of cold water to; see whether any is a stranger, for thee to take in; see whether any is sick, for thee to visit; see whether any is at strife, for thee to reconcile him; see whether any is dying, for thee to bury him. What then wilt thou do? "Praise in unison, O Jerusalem, thy God." Behold, this is thy business. As is wont to be said in inscriptions, "Use it and be happy."

18. Be ye Jerusalem; remember of whom it is said, "Lord, in Thy city their image Thou shall bring to nought. These are they who now rejoice in such pomps; among them are they who have not come hither to-day because there is a show. To whom is it a gift? to whom is it a loss? or why is it a gift? why is it a loss? For not they only who exhibit such shows are smitten with loss, but with much greater loss are they smitten who delight in gazing on them. The former have their chest drained of its gold, the latter have their breast robbed of the riches of righteousness. Most of the exhibiters of shows have to mourn for selling their estates; how ought the sinners to mourn, for losing their souls: Was it then for this that the Lord cried out on the Lord's Day, "Watch ye," that to-day men should watch in this way. I beseech you, ye citizens of Jerusalem, I beseech you by the peace of Jerusalem, by the Redeemer, the Builder, the Ruler of Jerusalem, that ye address your prayers to God for them. May they see, may they feel, that they are trifling; and, intent as they are on the sights which please them, may at length look on themselves, and be displeased. For in many we rejoice that this has already been done: and once we too sat there and were mad:

and how many think we now sit there, who shall yet be, not only Christians, but also Bishops! From what is past, we conjecture what is to be: from what has already been done, we announce beforehand what God will do. Let your prayers be wakeful, ye groan not for

nothing. Certainly they who have already escaped, praying for those who are still in danger, because they too having been among those in danger, are heard; and God shall drag His people out of the captivity of Babylon; by all means He shall redeem and deliver them, and the number of the saints who bear the image of God shall be perfected. ..."Praise in unison," because thou consistest of many: "praise," because thou hast been made one. "We being many," saith the Apostle, "are one in Christ. As then we are many, "we praise in unison; as we are one, we "praise. The same are many and one, because He in whom they are one is ever One.

19. Wherefore, saith this Jerusalem, do I praise in unison the Lord, and, as Sion, praise my God? Jerusalem is the same as Sion. For different reasons has it the two names. Jerusalem meaneth "visions of peace; Sion meaneth "watching. See whether these words do not sound like sights; that the Gentiles may not think that they have sights and we haste none. Sometimes after the theatre or amphitheatre breaks up, when the crowd of lost ones begins to be vomited forth from that den, sometimes, retaining in their minds images of their vain amusements, and feeding their memory with things not only useless but even hurtful, rejoicing in them as if they were sweet, while they are really deadly; they see often, it may be, the servants of God pass by, they recognise them by their garb or headdress, or they know them by sight, and they say to one another, or inwardly, "Wretched people,how much they lose! Brethren, let us return their good will (for they do mean it well) with prayers to the Lord. They wish us well; but "he that loveth iniquity, hateth his own soul. If he hateth his own soul, how shall he love my soul? Yet with a perverse, and empty, and vain good will, if indeed it may be called good will, they grieve that we lose what they love: let us pray that they lose not what we love. Behold of what character that Jerusalem is to be which he exhorteth to praise, or rather foreseeth will praise.

For the praises of that city, when we shall see and love and praise, will not need to be urged on and stirred up by the voice of prophecy; but the Prophets now say this, to drink in as far as while they remain in this flesh they can, the future joys of the blessed, and then giving them forth into our ears, to arouse in us love of that city. Let us burn with longing, let us not be slothful in spirit. "Praise thy God, O Sion."

20. He saith, "He hath made strong the bars of thy gates" (ver. 13). The making bars strong is not for open gates, but shut ones, wherefore most manuscripts read, "He hath made strong the bolts of thy gates." Observe, beloved. He biddeth Jerusalem when closed in to praise the Lord. We praise in unison now, we praise now; but it is amid offences. Many where we wish not, enter in: many though we wish it not, go out: therefore offences are frequent. "And because iniquity hath abounded," saith the Truth, "the love of many waxeth cold:" because men come in whom we cannot discern, because men go out whom we cannot retain. Wherefore is this? Because not yet is there perfection, not yet is there the bliss that shall be. Wherefore is this? Because as yet it is the threshing-floor, not yet the garner. What therefore will be then, save no fear that aught of this kind will happen? He said not only, He hath set, but, "He hath made strong the bars of thy gates." Let none. go out, let none

come in. Let none go out, we rejoice: let none come in, we fear. Nay, fear not this: when thou hast entered it will be said: only be thou in the number of virgins, who carried their oil with them. ...

21. "He hath blessed thy children within thee." Who? He "who hath set peace as thy borders." How ye all exult! Love peace, my brethren. Greatly are we delighted, when the love of peace crieth from your hearts. How greatly doth it delight you! I had said nothing: I had explained nothing: I but read the verse, and ye shouted. What was it that shoutedin you? The love of peace. ...children of the kingdom, O citizens of Jerusalem, in Jerusalem is the vision of peace: and all who love peace are blest in her, and they enter in, when the doors are being shut, and the bars made strong. This, which when but named ye so love and esteem, this follow after, this long for: this love in your home, in your business, in your wives, in your sons, in your slaves, in your friends, in your enemies. ... 22. What ye cried out a while ago at the very mention of peace, ye cried from longing: your cry was from thirst, not from fulness; for there will be perfect righteousness where will be perfect peace. Now we hunger and thirst after righteousness. "They shall be filled." How shall they be filled? When we have arrived at peace. Therefore when he had said, "Who hath set peace for thy borders," because there is fulness and no want, he added at once, "and filleth thee with the fat of wheat" (ver. 14). ...

23. "Who sendeth forth His Word to the earth" (ver. 15). Behold, on earth we toil, weary, fainting, sluggish, cold: when should we be raised up to the fat of wheat that satisfieth, did not He send His Word to the earth, whereby we were weighed down, to the earth, whereby we were hindered from returning? He sent. His Word, He deserted us not even in the wilderness, He rained manna from heaven. "Who sendeth forth His Word to the earth;" and to earth His Word came. How? or what is His Word? "Even unto swiftness His Word runneth." He said not, "His Word is swift," but, "His Word runneth even unto swiftness." Let us understand, my brethren: He could not have chosen a better word. He who is hot grows hot by heat, he who is cold grows cold by cold, he who is swift becometh swift by swiftness. ...To what degree then doth it run? "Even to swiftness." Increase as much as you will the swiftness of the Word, and say, It is as swift as this or that, as birds, as the winds, as the Angels; is any of these as great as swiftness itself, "even unto swiftness"? What is swiftness itself, brethren? It is everywhere; it is not in part. This belongeth to the Word of God, not to be in part, to be everywhere by Himself the Word, whereby He is "the Power of God and the Wisdom of God," before He had taken flesh upon Him. If we think of God in the Form of God, the Word equal to the Father, this is the Wisdom of God, of which is said, "It reacheth from one end to the other mightily." What mighty speed! "It reacheth from one end to the other mightily." ...

24. We then are burdened by the sluggishness of this cold body, and the bonds of this earthly and corruptible life; have we no hope of receiving "the Word," which "runneth even unto swiftness"? or hath abandoned us, though by the body we are depressed to the lowest depths? Did not He predestinate us, before we were born in this mortal and sluggish body?

He then, who predestinated us, gave snow to the earth, even ourselves. For now let us come to those somewhat obscure verses of the Psalm, let those entanglements begin to be unrolled. Behold, we are sluggish on this earth, and are as it were frozen here. And just as happens to the flakes of snow, for they freeze above, then fall down; so as love groweth cold, human nature falleth down to this earth, and involved in a sluggish body becometh like snow. But in that snow are predestined sons of God. For, "He giveth snow like wool" (ver. 16). What is "like wool"? It meaneth, of the snow which He hath given, of these, who are as yet slow in spirit and cold, whom He hath predestinated, He is about to make somewhat. For wool is the material of a garment: when we see wool, we look on it as a sort of preparation for a garment.

Therefore since He hath predestinated these, who at present are cold and creep on earth, and as yet glow not with the spirit of love (for as yet He speaketh of predestination), God hath given these as a sort of wool: He is about to make of them a garment. Rightly did the "raiment" of Christ "shine" on the mountain, "like snow. The raiment of Christ did shine like snow, as though of that snow a garment had already been made: of which wool, that is, of the snow which He gave like wool, they being as yet predestined, were sluggish: but wait, see what followeth. Since He gave them as wool, a garment is made of them. For as the Church is called the Body of Christ, so is the Church also called the garment of Christ: hence cometh that which is said by the Apostle, "that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle. Let Him then present unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle; let Him make Himself a garment of that wool, which He had predestinated in the snow. While men are yet unbelieving. and cold, and sluggish, let Him make a garment of this wool. That it may be washed from spots, let it be cleansed by faith: that it may have no wrinkle, let it be stretched out upon the cross. ...

25. "He scattereth mist like ashes." "He scattereth," saith the Psalmist, "mist like ashes." Who? He "who giveth snow like wool." For whom He predestined, He calleth to repentance; for "whom He predestined, them He also called." But "ashes" are connected with repentance. Hear Him calling to repentance, when He upbraided certain cities, saying, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they had long ago repented in dust and ashes." Therefore, "He scattereth mist like ashes." What is, "He scattereth mist like ashes"? When a man is called to learn about God, and it is said to him, "Receive the truth;" he beginneth to wish to receive the Truth, but is not able; he seeth that He is under a sort of darkness, which before he saw not. ...Wander not in the mist, follow in faith. But forasmuch as thou endeavourest to see and art not able, repent of thy sins, for mist is scattered like ashes. Repent thee now of having been obstinate against God, repent of having followed thine own evil ways. Thou hast come into this state where it is difficult for thee to see the vision of bliss, and the mist will be healthful to thee, which God scattereth like ashes. Thou thyself art as yet a mist, but like ashes. For they that are penitent, as yet roll themselves in ashes, my brethren, testifying, as it were, that they are like it, saying unto God, "I am ashes." For a certain Scripture saith, "I have despised myself, and wasted away, I have reckoned myself earth

and ashes." This is the humility of the penitent. When Abraham speaketh to his God, and wisheth the burning of Sodore to be disclosed to him, he saith, "I am but earth and ashes." How hath this humility ever been found in great and holy men!

26. "Who sendeth His crystal like morsels of bread" (ver. 17). We need not spend our toil again in saying what crystal is. We have already said it, and I do not think that ye, beloved, have forgotten it. What is then, "He sendeth His crystal like morsels of bread"? What is "crystal"? It is very hard, it is very tightly congealed; it can not, like snow, be easily melted. Snow, hardened by many years' duration, and by the successionof ages, is called "crystal," and this "He sendeth like morsels of bread. What meaneth this? They were too hard, no longer fit to be compared to snow, but to crystal; but they too are predestinated and called, and some of them even so as to feed others, to be useful to others also. And what need is there to enumerate many, whom we happen to know, this one and that one? Every one when he thinks can recall to mind how hardened and obstinate some of those whom he knows have been, how they have struggled against the truth; yet now they preach the truth, they have been made morsels of bread. Who is that one Bread? "We being many," saith the Apostle, "are one Body in Christ; he saith also, "we being many are one Bread and one Body. If then the whole Body of Christ is one Bread, the members of Christ are morsels of Bread.

Of some that are hard He maketh members of Himself, and useful for feeding others. ...Behold, the Apostle Paul was a crystal, hard, resisting the truth, crying out against the Gospel, hardening himself, as it were, against the sun. ...Since then he was crystal, he appeared clear and white, but he was hard and very cold. How was he bright and white? "An Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee. Behold the brightness of crystal. Now hear the hardness of crystal. "As touching zeal, persecuting the Church" of Christ. Among the stoners of the holy martyr Stephen, was he, hard, perhaps harder than all. "For he kept the raiment of all who were stoning," so that he stoned by the hands of all.

27. Thus then we see "the snow, the mist, the crystal: it is good that He blow and thaw them. For if He blow not, if He Himself thaw not the hardness of this ice, "in the face of His cold who shall stand? He abandoneth a sinner, behold, He calleth him not; behold, He openeth not his perception; behold, He poureth not in grace; let the man thaw himself, if he can, from the ice of folly. He cannot. Wherefore can he not? "In the face of His cold who shall stand? Behold him then growing harder, and saying, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Behold, I am growing cold, behold, I am growing hard, what heat shall thaw me that I may run? "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?. ...In the face of His cold who shall stand? And who shall free himself, if God abandon him? Who is it that freeth? "The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Are we then to despair? God forbid. For it goeth on, "He shall send out His Word, and melt them" (ver. 18). Let not then the snow despair, nor the mist, nor the crystal. For of the snow, as of wool, a garment is being made. That mist findeth safety in repentance: for, "whom He predestinated, them He also called.

But even though they be the very hardest among the predestinated, though they have been for a long time hardening, and are become crystal, they will not be hard to the mercy of God. "He shall send out His Word, and melt them. What is "melt"? Understand not "melt" in an ill sense: it meaneth, He shall liquefy, He shall thaw them. For they are hard through pride. Rightly is pride called also dulness: for whatever is dull, is also cold. ...Despair not even of the crystal. Hear a saying of the crystal. "Who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. But whereof ore doth God melt the crystal? That the snow despair not of itself. For he saith, "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them that hereafter should believe on Him unto eternal life. God then calleth unto the Gentiles, "Be melted, O crystal; come, ye snows. "His Spirit shall blow, and the waters shall flow. Lo, the "crystal" and the "snows" are melted, they turn into water, "let them that thirst, come and drink. Saul, hard as crystal, persecuted Stephen unto death; Paul, now in the living water, calleth the Gentiles to the Fount. ...

28. "Announcing His Word unto Jacob, His Righteousnesses and Judgments unto Israel" (ver. 19). What "Righteousnesses," what "Judgments"? Because whatever mankind had suffered here before, when it was "snow" and "mist" and "crystal," it suffered for the deserts of its pride and uplifting against God. Let us go back to the origin of our fall, and see that most truly is it sung in the Psalm, "Before I was troubled I went wrong." But he who says, "Before I was troubled I went wrong," saith also, "It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy Righteousnesses." These righteousnesses Jacob learnt from God, who made him to wrestle with an Angel; under the guise of which Angel, God Himself wrestled with him He held Him, he exerted violence to hold Him he prevailed to hold Him: He caused Himself to be held, in mercy, not in weakness. Jacob therefore wrestled, and prevailed: he held Him and when he seemed to have conquered Him asked to be blessed of Him? How did he understand with Whom he had wrestled, Whom he had held? Wherefore did he wrestle violently, and hold Him? Because "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Wherefore then did he wrestle? Because it is with toil. Wherefore do we with difficulty hold, what we so easily lose? Lest, easily getting back what we have lost, we learn to lose that which we hold. Let man have toil to hold: he will hold firmly, what he has only held after toil. These His judgments therefore God manifested to Jacob and Israel. ...

29. "He hath not done so to the whole race" (ver. 20). Let none deceive you: it is not announced to any nation, this judgment of God; namely, how the righteous and the unrighteous suffer, how all suffer for their deserts, how the righteous themselves are freed by the grace of God, not in their own merits. This is not announced to the whole race, but only to Jacob, only to Israel. What then do we, if He hath not announced it to the whole race, but only to Jacob, only to Israel? Where will we be? In Jacob. "He hath not manifested His judgments to them." To whom? To all nations. How then are the "snows" called, when the crystal is melted? How are the nations called, now Paul is justified? How, save to be in Jacob? The wild olive is cut off from its stock, to be grafted into the olive: now they belong to the olive, no longer ought they to be called nations, but one nation in Christ, the nation

of Jacob, the nation of Israel ...What is Israel? "Seeing God." Where shall he see God? In peace. What peace? The peace of Jerusalem; for, saith he, "He hath set peace for thy borders." There shall we praise: there shall we all be one, in One, unto One: for then, though many, we shall not be scattered.

Psalm 148

1. The subject of our meditation in this present life should be the praises of God; for the everlasting exaltation of our life hereafter will be the praise of God, and none can become fit for the life hereafter, who hath not practised himself for it now. So then now we praise God, but we pray to Him too. Our praise is marked by joy, our prayer by groans. ...On account of these two seasons, one, that which now is in the temptations and tribulations of this life, the other, that which is to be hereafter in everlasting rest and exultation; we have established also the celebration of two seasons, that before Easter and that after Easter. That which is before Easter signifieth tribulation, in which we now are; that which we are now keeping after Easter, signifieth the bliss in which we shall hereafter be. The celebration then which we keep before Easter is what we do now: by that which we keep after Easter we signify what as yet we have not. Therefore we employ that time in fastings and prayer, this present time we spend in praises, and relax our fast. This is the Halleluia which we sing, which, as you know, meaneth (in Latin), Praise ye the Lord. Therefore that period is before the Lord's Resurrection, this, after His Resurrection: by which time is signified the future hope which as yet we have not: for what we represent after the Lord's Resurrection, we shall have after our own.

For in our Head both are figured, both are set forth. The Baptism of the Lord setteth forth to us this present life of trial, for in it we must toil, be harassed, and, at last, die; but the Resurrection and Glorification of the Lord setteth forth to us the life which we are to have hereafter, when He shall come to recompense due rewards, evil to the evil, good to the good. And now indeed all the evil men sing with us, Halleluia; but, if they persevere in their wickedness, they may utter with their lips the song of our life hereafter; but the life itself, which will then be in the reality which now is typified, they cannot obtain, because they would not practise it before it came, and lay hold on what was to come.

2. "Halleluia." "Praise the Lord," thou sayest to thy neighbour, he to thee: when all are exhorting each other, all are doing what they exhort others to do. But praise with your whole selves: that is, let not your tongue and voice alone praise God, but your conscience also, your life, your deeds. For now, when we are gathered together in the Church, we praise: when we go forth each to his own business, we seem to cease to praise God. Let a man not cease to live well, and then he ever praiseth God. ...It is impossible for a man's acts to be evil,

whose thoughts are good. For acts issue from thought: nor can a man do anything or move his limbs to do aught, unless the bidding of his thought precede: just as in all things which ye see done throughout the provinces, whatsoever the Emperor biddeth goeth forth from the inner part of his palace throughout the whole Roman Empire. How great commotion is caused at one bidding by the Emperor as he sits in his palace! He but moveth his lips, when he speaketh: the whole province is moved, when what he speaketh is being executed. So in each single man too, the Emperor is within, his seat is in the heart. If he be good and biddeth good things, good things are done: if he be bad and biddeth evil things, evil things are done. When Christ sitteth there, what can He bid, but what is good? When the devil is the occupant, what can he bid, but evil? But God hath willed that it should be in thy choice for whom thou wilt prepare room, for God, or for the devil: when thou hast prepared it, he who is occupant will also rule. Therefore, brethren, attend not only to the sound; when ye praise God, praise with your whole selves: let your voice, your life, your deeds, all sing.

3. "Praise ye the Lord from heaven" (ver. 1). As though he had found things in heaven holding their peace in the praise of the Lord, he exhorteth them to arise and praise. Never have things in heaven held their peace in the praises of their Creator, never have things on earth ceased to praise God. But it is manifest that there are certain things which have breath to praise God in that disposition wherein God pleaseth them. For no one praiseth aught, save what pleaseth him. And there are other things which have not breath of life and understanding to praise God, but yet, because they also are good, and duly arranged in their proper order, and form part of the beauty of the universe, which God created, though they themselves with voice and heart praise not God, yet when they are considered by those who have understanding, God is praised in them; and, as God is praised in them, they themselves too in a manner praise God. ...

4. "Praise ye the Lord from heaven: praise Him in the high places." First he saith, "from heaven," then from earth; for it is God that is praised, who made heaven and earth. All in heaven is calm and peaceful; there is ever joy, no death, no sickness, no vexation; there the blessed ever praise God; but we are still below: yet, when we think how God is praised there, let us have our heart there, and let us not hear to no purpose, "Lift up your hearts." Let us lift up our heart above, that it become not corrupted on earth: for we take pleasure in what the Angels do there. We do it now in hope: hereafter we shall in reality, when we have come thither. "Praise Him" then "in the high places."

5. "Praise Him, all ye angels of His, praise Him, all His powers" (ver. 2). ". Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all ye stars and light" (ver. 3). "Praise Him, ye heaven of heavens, and waters that are above the heavens" (ver. 4). "Let them praise the Name of the Lord" (ver. 5). When can he unfold all in his enumeration? Yet he hath in a manner touched upon them all summarily, and included all things in heaven praising their Creator. And as though it were said to him, "Why do they praise Him? what hath He conferred on them, that they should praise Him?" he goeth on, "for He spake, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created." No wonder if the works praise the Worker, no wonder if the things that

are made praise the Maker, no wonder if creation praise its Creator. In this Christ also is mentioned, though we seem not to have heard His Name. ...By what were they made? By the Word? How doth he show in this Psalm, that all things were made by the Word? "He spake, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created." No one speaketh, no one commandeth, save by word.

6. "He hath established them for the age, and for age upon age" (ver. 6). All things in heaven, all things above, all powers and angels, a certain city on high, good, holy, blessed; from whence because we are wanderers, we are wretched; whither because we are to return, we are blessed in hope; whither when we shall have returned, we shall be blessed indeed; "He hath given them a law which shall not pass away." What sort of command, think ye, have things in heaven and the holy angels received? What sort of command hath God given them? What, but that they praise Him? Blessed are they whose business is to praise God! They plough not, they sow not, they grind not, they cook not; for these are works of necessity, and there is no necessity there. They steal not, they plunder not, they commit no adultery; for these are works of iniquity, and there is no iniquity there. They break not bread for the hungry, they clothe not the naked, they take not in the stranger, they visit not the sick, they set not at one the contentious, they bury not the dead; for these are works of mercy, and there there is no misery, for mercy to be shown to. O blessed they! Think we that we too shall be like this? Ah! let us sigh, let us groan in sighing. And what are we, that we should be there? mortal, outcast, abject, earth and ashes! But He, who hath promised, is almighty. ...

7. Let him then turn himself to things on earth too, since he hath already spoken the praises of things in heaven. "Praise ye the Lord from the earth" ever. 7). For wherewith began he before? "Praise ye the Lord from heaven: and he went through things in heaven: now hear of things on earth. "Dragons and all abysses. "Abysses" are depths of water: allthe seas, and this atmosphere of clouds, pertain to the "abyss. Where there are clouds, where there are storms, where there is rain, lightning, thunder, hail, snow, and all that God willeth should be done above the earth, by this moist and misty atmosphere, all this he hath mentioned under the name of earth, because it is very changeable and mortal; unless ye think that it raineth from above the stars. All these things happen here, close to the earth. Sometimes even men are on the tops of mountains, and see the clouds beneath them, and often it raineth: and all commotions which arise from the disturbance of the atmosphere, those who watch carefully see that they happen here, in this lower part of the universe. ...Thou seest then what kind all these things are, changeable, troublous, fearful, corruptible: yet they have their place, they have their rank, they too in their degree fill up the beauty of the universe, and so they praise the Lord. He turns then to them, as though He would exhort them too, or us, that by considering them we may praise the Lord.

"Dragons" live about the water, come out from caverns, fly through the air; the air is set in motion by them: "dragons" are a huge kind of living creatures, greater there are not upon the earth. Therefore with them he beginneth, "Dragons and all abysses. There are caves of

hidden waters, whence springs and streams come forth: some come forth to flow over the earth, some flow secretly beneath; and all this kind, all this damp nature of waters, together with the sea and this lower air, are called abyss, or "abysses," where dragons live and praise God. What? Think we that the dragons form choirs, and praise God? Far from it. But do ye, when ye consider the dragons, regard the Maker of the dragon, the Creator of the dragon: then, when ye admire the dragons, and say, "Great is the Lord who made these," then the dragons praise God by your voices.

8. "Fire, hail, snow, ice, wind of storms, which do His word" (ver. 8). Wherefore added he here, "which do His word"? Many foolish men, unable to contemplate and discern creation, in its several places and rank, performing its movements at the nod and commandment of God think that God doth indeed rule all things above, but things below He despiseth, casteth aside, abandoneth, so that He neither careth for them, nor guideth, nor ruleth them; but that they are ruled by chance, how they can, as they can: and they are influenced by what they say sometimes to one another: e.g. "If it were God that gave rain, would He rain into the sea? What sort of providence," they say, "is this? Getulia is thirsty, and it rains into the sea. They think that they handle the matter cleverly. One should say to them, "Getulia does at all events thirst, thou dost not even thirst. For good were it for thee to say to God, "My soul hath thirsted for Thee. For he that thus argueth is already satisfied; he thinketh himself learned, he is not willing to learn, therefore he thirsteth not. For if he thirsted, he would be willing to learn, and he would find that everything happeneth upon earth by God's Providence, and he would wonder at the arrangement of even the limbs of a flea. Attend, beloved. Who hath arranged the limbs of a flea and a gnat, that they should have their proper order, life, motion?

Consider one little creature, even the very smallest, whatever thou wilt. If thou considerest the order of its limbs, and the animation of life whereby it moveth; how doth it shun death, love life, seek pleasures, avoid pain, exert divers senses, vigorously use movements suitable to itself! Who gave its sting to the gnat, for it to suck blood with? How narrow is the pipe whereby it sucketh! Who arranged all this? who made all this? Thou art amazed at the smallest things; praise Him that is great. Hold then this, my brethren, let none shake you from your faith or from sound doctrine. He who made the Angel in heaven, the Same also made the worm upon earth: the Angel in heaven to dwell in heaven, the worm upon earth to abide on earth. He made not the Angel to creep in the mud, nor the worm to move in heaven. He hath assigned dwellers to their different abodes; incorruption He assigned to incorruptible abodes, corruptible things to corruptible abodes. Observe the whole, praise the whole. He then who ordered the limbs of the worm, doth He not govern the clouds? And wherefore raineth Heinto the sea? As though there are not in the sea things which are nourished by rain; as though He made not fishes therein, as though He made not living creatures therein. Observe how thefishes run to sweet water. And wherefore, saithhe, doth He give rain to the fishes, and sometimes giveth not rain to me?

That thou mayest consider that thou art in a desert region, and in a pilgrimage of life; that so this present life may grow bitter to thee, that thou mayest long for the life to come: or else that thou mayest be scourged, punished, amended. And how well doth He assign their properties to regions. Behold, since we have spoken of Getulia, He raineth here nearly every year, and giveth corn every year; here the corn cannot be kept, it soon rotteth, because it is given every year; there, because it is given seldom, both much is given, and it can be kept for long. But dost thou perchance think that God there deserteth man, or that they do not there after their own manner of rejoicing both praise and glorify God? Take a Getulian from his country, and set him amid our pleasant trees; he will wish to flee away, and return to his bare Getulia. To all places then, regions, seasons, God hath assigned and arranged what fits them. Who could unfold it? Yet they who have eyes see many things therein: when seen, they please; pleasing, they are praised; not they really, but He who made them; thus shall all things praise God.

9. It was in thought of this that the spirit of the Prophet added the words, "which do His word. Think not then that these things are moved by chance, which in every motion of theirs obey God. Whither God willeth, thither the fire spreads, thither the cloud hurries, whether it carry in it rain, or snow, or hail. And wherefore cloth the lightning sometimes strike the mountain, yet strikes not the robber? ...Perhaps He yet seeketh the robber's conversion, and therefore is the mountain which feareth not smitten, that the man who feareth may be changed. Thou also sometimes, when maintaining discipline, smitest the ground to terrify a child. Sometimes too He smiteth a man, whom He will. But thou sayest to me, Behold, He smiteth the more innocent, and passeth over the more guilty. Wonder not; death, whencesoever it come, is good to the good man. And whence dost thou know what punishment is reserved in secret for that more guilty man, if he be unwilling to be converted? Would not they rather be scorched by lightning, to whom it shall be said in the end, "Depart into everlasting fire"? The needful thing is, that thou be guileless. Why so? Is it an evil thing to die by shipwreck, and a good thing to die by fever? Whether he die in this way or in that, ask what sort of man he is who dieth;

ask whither he will go after death, not how he is to depart from life. ...Whatever then happeneth here contrary to our wish, thou wilt know that it happeneth not, save by the will of God, by His providence, by His ordering, by His nod, by His laws: and if we understand not why anything is done, let us grant to His providence that it is not done without reason: so shall we not be blasphemers. For when we begin to argue concerning the works of God, "why is this? "why is that? and, "He ought not to have done this," "He did this ill; where is the praise of God? Thou hast lost thy Halleluia. Regard all things in such wise as to please God and praise the Creator. For if thou wert to happen to enter the workshop of a smith, thou wouldest not dare to find fault with his bellows, his anvils, his hammers. But take an ignorant man, who knows not for what purpose each thing is, and he findeth fault with all. But if he have not the skill of the workman, and have but the reasoning power of a man, what saith he to himself? Not without reason are the bellows placed here: the workman

knoweth wherefore, though I know not. In the shop he dareth not to find fault with the smith, yet in the universe he dareth to find fault with God.

Therefore just as "fire, hail, snow, ice, wind of storms, which do His word," so all things in nature, which seem to foolish persons to be made at random, simply "do His word," because they are not made save by His command.

10. Then he mentioneth, that they may praise the Lord, "mountains and hills, fruitful trees and all cedars" (ver. 9): "beasts and all cattle, creeping things, and winged fowls" (ver. 10). Then he goeth to men; "kings of the earth and all people, princes and all judges of the earth" (ver. 11): "young men and maidens, old men and young, let them praise the Name of the Lord" (ver. 12). Ended is the praise from heaven, ended is the praise from earth. "For His Name only is exalted" (ver. 13). Let no man seek to exalt his own name. Wilt thou be exalted? Subject thyself to Him who cannot be humbled. "His confession is in earth and heaven" (ver. 14). What is "His confession"? Is it the confession wherewith He confesseth? No, but that whereby all things confess Him, all things cry aloud: the beauty of all things is in a manner their voice, whereby they praise God. The heaven crieth out to God, "Thou madest me, not I myself. Earth crieth out, "Thou createdst me, not I myself. How do they cry out? When thou regardest them, and findest this out, they cry out by thy voice, they cry out by thy regard. Regard the heavens, it is beautiful: observe the earth, it is beautiful: both together are very beautiful. He made them, He ruleth them, by His nod they are swayed, He ordereth their seasons, He reneweth their movements, by Himself He reneweth them.

All these things then praise Him, whether in stillness or in motion, whether from earth below or from heaven above, whether in their old state or in their renewal. When thou seest all these things, and rejoicest, and art lifted up to the Maker, and gazest on "His invisible things understood by the things which are made," "His confession is in earth and heaven: that is, thou confesseth to Him from things on earth, thou confesseth to Him from things in heaven. And since He made all things, and nought is better than He, whatsoever He made is less than He, and whatsoever in these things pleaseth thee, is less than He. Let not then what He hath made so please thee, as to withdraw thee from Him who made: if thou lovest what He made, love much more Him who made. If the things which He hath made are beautiful, how much more beautiful is He who made them. "And He shall exalt the horn of His people. Behold what Haggai and Zachariah prophesied. Now the "horn of His people" is humble in afflictions, in tribulations, in temptations, in beating of the breast; when will He "exalt the horn of His people"? When the Lord hath come, and our Sun is risen, not the sun which is seen with the eye, and "riseth upon the good and the evil," but That whereof is said, To you that hear God, "the Sun of Righteousness shall rise, and healing in His wings;

and of whom the proud and wicked shall hereafter say, "The light of righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the sun of righteousness rose not upon us. This shall be our summer. Now during the winter weather the fruits appear not on the stock; thou observest, so to say, dead trees during the winter. He who cannot see truly, thinketh the vine dead; perhaps there is one near it which is really dead; both are alike during winter; the one is alive, the

other is dead, but both the life and death are hidden: summer advanceth; then the life of the one shineth brightly, the death of the other is manifested: the splendour of leaves, the abundance of fruit, cometh forth, the vine is clothed in outward appearance from what it hath in its stock. Therefore, brethren, now we are the same as other men: just as they are born, eat, drink, are clothed, pass their life, so also do the saints. Sometimes the very truth deceiveth men, and they say, "Lo, he hath begun to be a Christian: hath he lost his headache? or, "because he is a Christian, what gaineth he from me? O dead vine, thou observest near thee a vine that is bare indeed in winter, yet not dead. Summer will come, the Lord will come, our Splendour, that was hidden in the stock, and then "He shall exalt the horn of His people," after the captivity wherein we live in this mortal life. ...

11. "An hymn to all His Saints." Know ye what an hymn is? It is a song with praise ofGod. If thou praisest God and singest not, thou utterest no hymn: if thou singest and praisest not God, thou utterest no hymn: if thou praisest aught else, which pertaineth not to the praise of God, although thou singest and praisest, thou utterest no hymn. An hymn then containeth these three things, song, and praise, and that of God. Praise then of God in song is called an hymn. What then meaneth, "An hymn to all His Saints"? Let His Saints receive an hymn: let His hints utter an hymn: for this is what they are to receive in the end, an everlasting hymn. ...

Psalm 149

1. Let us praise the Lord both in voice, and in understanding, and in good works; and, as this Psalm exhorteth, let us sing unto Him a new song. It beginneth: ”Sing ye to the Lord a new song. His praise is in the Church of the Saints” (ver. 1). The old man hath an old song, the new man a new song. The Old Testament is an old song, the New Testament a new song. In the Old Testament are temporal and earthly promises. Whoso loveth earthly things singeth an old song: let him that desireth to sing a new song, love the things of eternity.Love itself is new and eternal; therefore is it ever new, because it never groweth old. ...And this song is of peace, this song is of charity. Whoso severeth himself from the union of the saints, singeth not a new song; for he hath followed old strife, not new charity. In new charity what is there? Peace, the bond of an holy society, a spiritual union, a building of living stones. Where is this? Not in one place, but throughout the whole world. This is said in another Psalm, ”Sing unto the Lord, all the earth. From this is understood, that he who singeth not with the whole earth, singeth an old song, whatever words proceed out of his mouth. ...We have already said, brethren, that all the earth singeth a new song.

He who singeth not with the whole earth a new song, let him sing what he will, let his tongue sound forth Halleluia, let him utter it all day and all night, my ears are not so much bent to hear the voice of the singer, but I seek the deeds of the doer. For I ask, and say, ”What is it that thou singest? He answereth, ”Halleluia. What is ”Halleluia”? ”Praise ye the Lord. Come, let us praise the Lord together. If thou praisest the Lord, and I praise the Lord, why are we at variance? Charity praiseth the Lord, discord blasphemeth the Lord.” ...

2. The field of the Lord is the world, not Africa. It is not with the Lord’s field, as it is without these fields of ours, where Getulia bears sixty or an hundred fold, Numidia only ten fold: everywhere fruit is borne to Him, both an hundred fold, and sixty fold, and thirty fold: only do thou choose what thou wilt be, if thou thinkest to belong to the Lord’s Cross. ”The Church” then ”of the saints” is the Catholic Church. The Church of the saints is not the Church of heretics. The Church of the saints is that which God first prefigured before it was seen, and then set forth that it might be seen. The Church of the saints was heretofore in writings, now it is in nations: the Church of the saints was heretofore only read of, now it is both read of and seen. When it was only read of, it was believed; now it is seen, and is

spoken against. His praise is in the "children of the kingdom," that is, "the Church of the saints."

3. "Let Israel rejoice in Him who made Him" (ver. 2). What is, "Israel"? "Seeing God. He who seeth God, rejoiceth in Him by whom he was made. What is it then, brethren? we have said that we belong to the Church of the saints: do we already see God? and how are we Israel, if we see not? There is one kind of sight belonging to this present time; there will be another belonging to the time hereafter: the sight which now is, is by faith; the sight which is to be will be in reality. If we believe, we see; if we love, we see: see what? God. Ask John: "God is love; let us bless His holy Name, and rejoice in God by rejoicing in love. Whoso hath love, why send we him afar to see God? Let him regard his own conscience, and there he seeth God. ..."And let the sons of Sion exult in their King. The sons of the Church are Israel. For Sion indeed was one city, which fell: amid its ruins certain saints dwelt after the flesh: but the true Sion, the true Jerusalem (for Sion and Jerusalem are one), is "eternal in the heavens," and is "our mother. She it is that hath given us birth, she is the Church of the saints, she hath nourished us, she, who is in part a pilgrim, in partabiding in the heavens.

In the part which abideth in heaven is the bliss of angels, in the part which wandereth in this world is the hope of the righteous. Of the former is said, "Glory to God in the highest; of the latter, "and on earth peace to men of good will. Let those then who, being in this life, groan, and long for their country, run by love, not by bodily feet; let them seek not ships but wings, let them lay hold on the two wings of love. What are the two wings of love? The love of God, and of our neighbour. For now we are pilgrims, we sigh, we groan. There has come to us a letter from our country: we read it to you. "And the sons of Sion shall exult in their King. The Son of God, who made us, was made one of us: and He rules us as our King, because He is our Creator, who made us. But He by whom we were made is the same as He by whom we are ruled, and we are Christians because He is Christ. He is called Christ from Chrism, that is, Anointing. ...Give to the Priest somewhat to offer. What could man find which he could give as a clean victim? What victim? what clean thing can a sinner offer? O unrighteous, O sinful man, whatever thou offerest is unclean, and somewhat that is clean must be offered for thee. ...Let then the Priest that is clean offer Himself, and cleanse thee.

This is what Christ did. He found in man nothing clean for Him to offer for than: He offered Himself as a clean Victim. Happy Victim, true Victim, spotless Offering. He offered not then what we gave Him; yea rather, He offered what He took of us, and offered it clean. For of us He took flesh, and this He offered. But where took He it? In the womb of the Virgin Mary, that He might offer it clean for us unclean. He is our King, He is our Priest, in Him let us rejoice.

4. "Let them praise His Name in chorus" (ver. 3). What meaneth "chorus"? Many know what a "chorus" is: nay, as we are speaking in a town, almost all know. A "chorus" is the union of singers. If we sing "in chorus," let us sing in concord. If any one's voice is out of harmony in a chorus of singers, it offendeth the ear, and throweth the chorus into confusion. If the voice of one echoing discordantly tronbleth the harmony of them who sing, how doth

the discord of heresy throw into confusion the harmony of them who praise. The whole world is now the chorus of Christ. The chorus of Christ soundeth harmoniously from east to west. "Let them sing a psalm unto Him with timbrel and psaltery. Wherefore taketh he to him the "timbrel and psalter)"? That not the voice alone may praise, but the works too. When timbrel and psaltery are taken, the hands harmonize with the voice. So too do thou, whensoever thou singest "Halleluia," deal forth thy bread to the hungry, clothe the naked, take in the stranger: then doth not only thy voice sound, but thy hand soundeth in harmony with it, for thy deeds agree with thy words. Thou hast taken to thee an instrument, and thy fingers agree with thy tongue. Nor must we keep back the mystical meaning of the "timbrel and psaltery. On the timbrel leather is stretched, on the psaltery gut is stretched; on either instrument the flesh is crucified.

How well did he "sing a psalm on timbrel and psaltery," who said, "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"? This psaltery or timbrel He wishes thee to take up, who loveth a new song, who teacheth thee, saying to thee, "Whosoever willeth to be My disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. Let him not set down his psaltery, let him not set down his timbrel, let him stretch himself out on the wood, and be dried from the lust of the flesh. The more the strings are stretched, the more sharply do they sound. The Apostle Paul then, in order that his psaltery might sound sharply, what said he? "Stretching forth unto those things which are before," etc. He stretched himself: Christ touched him; and the sweetness of truth sounded.

5. "For the Lord hath dealt kindly among His people" (ver. 4). What dealing so kindly, as to die for the ungodly? What dealing so kindly, as with righteous Blood to blot out the handwriting against the sinner? What dealing so kindly, as to say, "I regard not what ye were, be ye now what ye were not"? He dealeth kindly in converting him that was turned away, in aiding him that is fighting, in crowning the conqueror. "And the meek He shall lift up in salvation." For the proud too are lifted up, but not in salvation: the meek are lifted in salvation, the proud in death: that is, the proud lift up themselves, and God humbleth them: the meek humble themselves, and God lifteth them up.

6. "The saints shall exult in glory" (ver. 5). I would say somewhat important about the glory of the saints. For there is no one who loveth not glory. But the glory of fools, popular glory as it is called, hath snares to deceive, so that a man, influenced by the praises of vain men, shall be willing to live in such fashion as to be spoken of by men, whosoever they be, in whatsoever way. Hence it is that men, rendered mad, and puffed up with pride, empty within, without swollen, are willing ever to ruin their fortunes by bestowing them on stage-players, actors, men who fight with wild beasts, charioteers. What sums they give, what sums they spend! They lavish the powers not only of their patrimony, but of their minds too. They scorn the poor, because the people shouteth not that the poor should be given to, but the people to shout that the fighter with wild beasts be given to. When then no shout is raised to them, they refuse to spend; when madmen shout to them, they are mad too: nay, all are mad, both performer, and spectator, and the giver. This mad glory is blamed by the

Lord, is offensive in the eyes of the Almighty. ...Thou choosest to clothe the fighter with wild beasts, who may be beaten, and make thee blush: Christ is never conquered; He hath conquered the devil, He hath conquered for thee, and to thee, and in thee; such a conqueror as this thou choosest not to clothe. Wherefore? Because there is less shouting, less madness about it. They then who delight in such glory, have an empty conscience. Just as they drain their chests, to send garments as presents, so do they empty their conscience, so as to have nothing precious therein.

7. But the saints who "exult in glory," no need is there for us to say how they exult: just hear the verse of the Psalm which followeth: "The saints shall exult in glory, they shall rejoice in their beds:" not in theatres, or amphitheatres, or circuses, or follies, or market places, but "in their chambers." What is, "in their chambers"? In their hearts. Hear the Apostle Paul exulting in his closet: "For this is our glory, the testimony of our conscience." On the other hand, there is reason to fear lest any be pleasing to himself, and so seem to be proud, and boast of his conscience. For every one ought to exult with fear, for that wherein he exulteth is God's gift, not his own desert. For there be many that please themselves, and think themselves righteous; and there is another passage which goeth against them, which saith, "Who shall boast that he hath a clean heart, and that he is pure from sin?" There is then, so to speak, a limit to glorying in our conscience, namely, to know that thy faith is sincere, thy hope sure, thy love without dissimulation. "The exultations of God are in their mouths" (ver. 6). In such wise shall they "rejoice in their closets," as not to attribute to themselves that they are good, but praise Him from whom they have what they are, by whom they are called to attain to what they are not, and from whom they hope for perfection, to whom they give thanks, because He hath begun.

8. "And swords sharpened on both sides in their hands. This sort of weapon contains a great mystical meaning, in that it is sharp on both sides. By "swords sharpened on both sides," we understand the Word of the Lord: it is one sword, but therefore are they called many, because there are many mouths and many tongues of the saints. How is it two edged? It speaks of things temporal, it speaks also of things eternal. In both cases it proveth what it saith, and him whom it strikes, it severeth from the world. Is not this the sword whereof the Lord said, "I am not come to send peace upon earth, but a sword"? Observe how He came to divide, how He came to sever. He divideth the saints, He divideth the ungodly, He severeth from thee that which hindereth thee. The son willeth to serve God, the father willeth not: the sword cometh, the Word of God cometh, and severeth the son from the father. ...Wherefore then is it in their hands, not in their tongues? "And swords," it saith, "sharpened on both sides in their hands. By "in their hands," he meaneth in power. They received then the word of God in power, to speak where they would, to whom they would, neither to fear power, nor to despise poverty. For they had in their hands a sword; where they would they brandished it, handled it, smote with it: and all this was in the power of the preachers.

For if the Word be not in their hands, why is it written, "The Word of the Lord was put in the hand of the Prophet Haggai"? Surely, brethren, God set not His Word in His fingers. What is meant by, "was put in his hand"? It was put into his power to preach the Word of the Lord. Lastly, we can understand these "hands" in another way also. For they who spake had the word of God in their tongues, they who wrote, in their hands.

9. Now, brethren, ye see the saints armed: observe the slaughter, observe their glorious battles. For if there be a commander, there must be soldiers; if soldiers, an enemy; if a warfare, a victory. What have these done who had in their hands swords sharpened on both sides? "To do vengeance on the nations." See whether vengeance have not been done on the nations. Daily is it done: we do it ourselves by speaking. Observe how the nations of Babylon are slain. She is repaid twofold: for so is it written of her, "repay her double for what she hath done." How is she repaid double? The saints wage war, they draw their "swords twice sharpened;" thence come defeats, slaughters, severances: how is she repaid double? When she had power to persecute the Christians, she slew the flesh indeed, but she crushed not God: now she is repaid double, for the Pagans are extinguished and the idols are broken. ...And lest thou shouldest think that men are really smitten with the sword, blood really shed, wounds made in the flesh, he goeth on and explaineth, "upbraidings among the peoples." What is "upbraidings"? Reproof. Let the "sword twice sharpened" go forth from you, delay not. Say to thy friend, if yet thou hast one left to whom to say it, "What kind of man art thou, who hast abandoned Him by whom thou wast made, and worshippest what He made? Better is the Workman, than that which He worketh." When he beginneth to blush, when he beginneth to feel compunction, thou hast made a wound with thy sword, it hath reached the heart, he is about to die, that he may live.

10. "That they may bind their kings in fetters, and their nobles in bonds of iron" (ver. 8). "To execute upon them the judgment written" (ver. 9). The kings of the Gentiles are to be bound in fetters, "and their nobles in fetters," and that "of iron." ...For these verses which we are beginning to explain are obscure. For for this purpose God willed to set down some of His verses obscurely, not that anything new should be dug out of them, but that what was already well known, might be made new by being obscurely set forth. We know that kings have been made Christians; we know that the nobles of the Gentiles have been made Christians. They are being made so at this day; they have been, they shall be; the "swords twice sharpened" are not idle in the hands of the saints. How then do we understand their being bound in fetters and chains of iron?

Ye know, beloved and learned brethren (learned I call you, for ye have been nourished in the Church, and are accustomed to hear God's Word read), that "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the strong, and the foolish things of the world hath God chosen to confound the wise, and things which are not, just as things which are, that the things which are may be brought to nought." ...It is said by the Lord, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come, follow Me, and thou shall have treasure in heaven. Many of the nobles did this, but they ceased to be nobles of the Gentiles,

they chose rather to be poor in this world, noble in Christ. But many retain their former nobility, retain their royal powers, and yet are Christians. These are, as it were, ”in fetters and in bonds of iron. How so? they received fetters, to keep them from going to things unlawful, the ”fetters of wisdom,” the fetters of the Word of God. Wherefore then are they bonds of iron and not bonds of gold? They are iron so long as they fear: let them love, and they shall be golden. Observe, beloved, what I say. Ye have heard just now the Apostle John, ”There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. This is the bond of iron.

And yet unless a man begin through fear to worship God, he will not attain to love. ”The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The beginning then is bonds of iron, the end a collar of gold. For it is said of wisdom, ”a collar of gold around thy neck.” ...There cometh to us a man powerful in this world, his wife offendeth him, and perhaps he hath desired another man’s wife who is more beautiful, or another woman who is richer, he wisheth to put away the one he hath, yet he doeth it not. He heareth the words of the servant of God, he heareth the Prophet, he heareth the Apostle, and he doeth it not; he is told by one in whose hands is a ”sword twice sharpened,” ”Thou shalt not do it: it is not lawful for thee: God alloweth thee not to put away thy wife, ”save for the cause of fornication. He heareth this, he feareth, and doeth it not. ...Listen, young men; the bonds are of iron, seek not to set your feet within them; if ye do, ye shall be bound more tightly with fetters. Such fetters the hands of the Bishop make strong for you. Do not men who are thus fettered fly to the Church, and are here loosed? Men do fly hither, desiring to be rid of their wives: here they are more tightly bound: no man looseth these fetters. ”What God joined together, let not man put asunder. But these bonds are hard.

Who but knows it? This hardness the Apostles grieved at, and said, ”If this be the case with a wife, it is not good to marry. If the bonds be of iron, it is not good to set our feet within them. And the Lord said, ”All men cannot receive this saying, but let him that can receive it, receive it. ”Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be freed,” for thou art bound with bonds of iron. ”Art thou free from a wife, seek not a wife; bind not thyself with bonds of iron.

11. ”To do in them the judgment that is written.” This is the judgment which the saints rio throughout all nations. Wherefore ”written”? Because these things were before written, and now are fulfilled. Behold now they are being done: erst they were read, and were not done. And he hath concluded thus, ”this glory have all His saints.” Throughout the whole world, throughout entire nations, this the saints do, thus are they glorified, thus do they ”exalt God with their mouths,” thus do they ”rejoice in their beds,” thus do they ”exult in their glory,” thus are they ”lifted up in salvation,” thus do they ”sing a new song,” thus in heart and voice and life they say Halleluia. Amen.

Psalm 150

1. Although the arrangement of the Psalms, which seems to me to contain the secret of a mighty mystery, hath not yet been revealed unto me, yet, by the fact that they in all amount to one hundred and fifty, they suggest somewhat even to us, who have not as yet pierced with the eye of our mind the depth of their entire arrangement, whereon we may without being over-bold, so far as God giveth, be able to speak. Firstly, the number fifteen, whereof it is a multiple this number fifteen, I say, signifieth the agreement of the two Testaments. For in the former is observed the Sabbath, which signifieth rest; in the latter the Lord's Day, which signifieth resurrection. The Sabbath is the seventh day, but the Lord's Day, coming after the seventh, must needs be the eighth, and is also to be reckoned the first. For it is called the first day of the week, and so from it are reckoned the second, third, fourth, and so on to the seventh day of the week, which is the Sabbath. But from Lord's Day to Lord's Day is eight days, wherein is declared the revelation of the New Testament, which in the Old was as it were veiled under earthly promises. Further, seven and eight make fifteen. Of the same number too are the Psalms which are called "of the steps," because that was the number of the steps of the Temple. Further too, the number fifty in itself also containeth a great mystery.

For it consisteth of a week of weeks, with the addition of one as an eighth to complete the number of fifty. For seven times seven make forty-nine, whereto one is added to make fifty. And this number fifty is of so great meaning, that it was after the completion of that number of days from the Lord's Resurrection, that, on the fiftieth day exactly, the Holy Spirit came upon those who were gathered together in Christ. And this Holy Spirit is in Scripture especially spoken of by the number seven, whether in Isaiah or in the Apocalypse, where the seven Spirits of God are most directly mentioned, on account of the sevenfold operation of one and the self-same Spirit. And this sevenfold operation is mentioned in Isaiah. ...Hence also the Holy Spirit is spoken of under the number seven. But this period of fifty the Lord divided into forty and ten: for on the fortieth day after His Resurrection He ascended into heaven, and then after ten days were completed He sent the Holy Spirit: under the number forty setting forth to us the period of temporal sojourn in this world. For the number four prevaileth in forty; and the world and the year have each four parts; and by the addition of the number ten, as a sort of reward added for the fulfilment of the law in

good works, eternity itself is figured. This fifty the number one hundred and fifty containeth three times, as though it were multiplied by the Trinity.

Wherefore for this reason too we make out that this number of the Psalm is not unsuitable.

2. Now in that some have believed that the Balms are divided into five books, they have been led by the fact, that so often at the end of Psalms are the words, ”so be it, so be it. But when I endeavoured to make out the principle of this division, I was not able; for neither are the five parts equal one to another, neither in quantity of contents, nor yet even in number of Psalms, so as for each to contain thirty. And if each book end with, ”so be it, so be it,” we may reasonably ask, why the fifth and last book hath not the same conclusion. We however, following the authority of canonical Scripture, where it is said, ”For it is written in the book of Psalms,” know that there is but one book of Psalms. And I see indeed how this can be true, and yet the other be true also, without contravening it. For it may be that there was some custom in Hebrew literature, whereby that is called one book which yet consists of more than one, just as of many churches one church consisteth, and of many heavens one heaven, ...and one land of many lands. For it is our everyday habit to say, ”the globe of the earth,” and ”the globe of the lands.

And when it is said, ”It is written in the book of Psalms,” though the customary way of speaking is such that he seem to have wished to suggest that there is but one book, yet to this it may be answered, that the words mean ”in a book of the Psalms,” that is, ”in any one of those five books. And this is in common language so unprecedented, or at least so rare, that we are only convinced that the twelve Prophets made one book, because we read in like manner, ”As it is written in the book of the Prophets. There are some too who call all the canonical Scriptures together one book, because they agree in a very wondrous and divine unity. ...

3. Whichever then of these is understood, this book, in its parts of fifty Psalms each, gives an answer important and very worthy of consideration. For it seems to me not without significance, that the fiftieth is of penitence, the hundredth of mercy and judgment, the hundred and fiftieth of the praise of God in His saints. For thus do we advance to an everlasting life of happiness, first by condemning our own sins, then by living aright, that, having condemned our ill life, and lived a good life, we may attain to everlasting life. Our predestination is not wrought in ourselves, but in secret with Him, in His foreknowledge. But we are called by the preaching of repentance. We are justified in the calling of mercy and fear of judgment. He feareth not judgment, who hath previously attained salvation. Being called, we renounce the devil by repentance, that we may not continue under his yoke: being justified, we are healed by mercy, that we may not fear judgment: being glorified, we pass into everlasting life, where we praise God without end. ...The verse wherewith this Psalm concludeth is the voice of life everlasting.

4. ”Praise the Lord in His saints,” that is, in those whom He hath glorified: ”praise Him in the firmament of His power” (ver. 1). ”Praise Him in His deeds of strength;” or, as others

have explained it, "in His deeds of power: praise Him according to the multitude of His greatness" (ver. 2). All these His saints are; as the Apostle saith, "But we may be the righteousness of God in Him." If then they be the righteousness of God, which He hath wrought in them, why are they not also the strength of Christ which He hath wrought in them, that they should rise again from the dead? For in Christ's resurrection, "strength" is especially set forth to us, for in His Passion was weakness, as the Apostle saith. And well doth it say, "the firmament of His power." For it is the "firmament of His power" that He "dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him." Why should not they also be called "the works of" God's "strength," which He hath done in them: yea rather, they themselves are the works of His strength; just as it is said, "We are the righteousness of God in Him." For what more powerful than that He should reign for ever, with all His enemies put under His feet? Why should not they also be "the multitude of His greatness"? not that whereby He is great, but whereby He hath made them great, many as they are, that is, thousands of thousands. Just as righteousness too is understood in two ways, that whereby He is righteous, and that which He worketh in us, so as to make us His righteousness. These same saints are signified by all the musical instruments in succession, to praise God in. For what the Psalmist began with, saying, "Praise the Lord in His saints," that he carrieth out, signifying in various ways these same saints of His.

5. "Praise Him in the sound of the trumpet" (ver. 3): on account of the surpassing clearness of note of their praise. "Praise Him in the psaltery and harp. The psaltery praiseth God from things above, the harp praiseth God from things below; I mean, from things in heaven, and things in earth, as He who made heaven and earth. We have already in another Psalm, explained that the psaltery hath that board, whereon the series of strings rests that it may give a better sound, above, whereas the harp has it below. "Praise Him in the timbrel and choir" (ver. 4). The "timbrel" praiseth God when the flesh is now changed, so that there is in it no weakness of earthly corruption. For the timbrel is made of leather dried and strengthened. The "choir" praiseth God when society made peaceful praiseth Him. "Praise Him on the strings and organ. Both psaltery and harp, which have been mentioned above, have strings. But "organ" is a general name for all instruments of music, although usage has now obtained that those are specially called organ which are inflated with bellows: but I do not think that this kind is meant here. For since organ is a Greek word, applied generally, as I have said, to all musical instruments, this instrument, to which bellows are applied, is called by the Greeks by another name: but it being called organ is rather a Latin and conversational usage.

When then he saith, "on the strings and organ," he seemeth to me to have intended to signify some instrument which hath strings. For it is not psalteries and harps only that have strings: but, because in the psaltery, and harp, on account of the sound from things below and things above, somewhat has been found which can be understood after this distinction, he hath suggested to us to seek some other meaning in the strings themselves: for they too are flesh, but flesh now set free from corruption. And to those, it may be, he added the organ, to signify that they sound not each separately, but sound together in most harmonious

diversity, just as they are arranged in a musical instrument. For even then the saints of God will have their differences, accordant, not discordant, that is, agreeing, not disagreeing, just as sweetest harmony arises from sounds differing indeed, but not opposed to one another.

6. ”Praise Him on the well-sounding cymbals, praise Him on cymbals of jubilation” (ver. 5). Cymbals touch one another in order to sound, and therefore are by some compared to our lips. But I think it better to understand that God is in a manner praised on the cymbal, when each is honoured by his neighbour, not by himself, and then honouring one another, they give praise to God. But lest any should under stand such cymbals as sound without life, therefore I think he added, ”on cymbals of jubilation.” For ”jubilation” that is, unspeakable praise, proceedeth not, save from life. Nor do I think that I should pass over what musicians say, that there are three kinds of sounds,by voice, by breath, by striking: by voice, uttered by throat and windpipe, when man singeth without any instrument; by breath, as by pipe, or anything of that sort: by striking, as by harp, or anything of that kind. None then of these kinds is omitted here: for there is voice in the choir, breath in the trumpet, striking in the harp, representing mind, spirit, body, but by similitudes, not in the proper sense of the words. When then he proposed, ”Praise God in His saints,” to whom said he this, save to themselves? And in whom are they to praise God, save in themselves? For ye, saith he, are ”His saints;” ye are ”His strength,” but that which He wrought in you; ye are ”His mighty works, an d the multitude of His greatness,” which He hath wrought and set forth in you. Ye are ”trumpet, psaltery, harp, timbrel, choir, strings, and organ, cymbals of jubilation sounding well,” because sounding in harmony. All these are ye: let nought that is vile, nought that is transitory, nought that is ludicrous, be here thought of. And since to savour of the flesh is death, ”let every spirit praise the Lord” (ver. 6).

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator’s own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.